



DHARMA / PĀLI

PRAJÑĀ  
WISDOM

BODHIPAKKHIYĀDHAMMĀ

*Namô Tassa Bhagavatô Arahâtô  
Sammâ-Sambuddhassa*

### Taking Refuge in the Triple Gem

बुद्ध *Buddham Saranam Gacchâmi*

I take refuge in the Buddha,  
the qualities of the enlightened mind.

धम्म *Dhammam Saranam Gacchâmi*

I take refuge in the Dharma,  
the teachings of the enlightened ones.

सङ्घ *Sangham Saranam Gacchâmi*

I take refuge in the Sangha,  
the company of wise and noble beings.

3x



SĀKYAMUNI // GAUTAMA THE BUDDHA

### The Development of Wisdom

#### AN:1:76

Insignificant is the loss of relatives, wealth or fame. The worst thing to lose is wisdom.

Insignificant is the increase of relatives, wealth, or fame. The best thing in which to increase is wisdom.

Therefore, wise ones, you should train yourself:  
‘I will increase in wisdom.’

It is in such a way that you should train yourself.



### Greatness of Wisdom // SN:55:62-74

There are these four things, when developed and cultivated, lead to the obtaining of wisdom... to growth and expansion of wisdom... to greatness of wisdom... to extensiveness of wisdom... to vastness of wisdom... to breadth and depth of wisdom... to the state of unequalled wisdom... to abundance of wisdom... to quickness of wisdom... to buoyancy of wisdom... to joyousness of wisdom... to swiftness of wisdom... to sharpness of wisdom... to penetrativeness of wisdom.

What four? 1. Association with wise people, 2. Hearing the true Dharma, 3. Careful attention, and 4. Practice in accordance to the Dharma. These four things, when developed and cultivated, lead to greatness of wisdom.

### SN:48:10

And what, wise ones, is the faculty of wisdom?  
Here the noble seer is wise; one possesses wisdom directed to impermanence, the arising and passing away of all phenomenon, with insight which is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering.

One understands as it actually is: (The Four Noble Truths)

1. 'This is suffering.'
2. 'This is the origin of suffering.'
3. 'This is the cessation of suffering.'
4. 'This is the Way leading to the cessation of suffering.'

This is called the faculty of wisdom.



### **Yourself as an Island // SN:22:43**

Wise ones, dwell with yourselves as an island, with yourselves as a refuge, with no other refuge; with Dharma as an island, with the Dharma as a refuge, with no other refuge. When you dwell in this way, the basis itself should be investigated thus:

‘From what are sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair born? How are they produced?’

The uninstructed worldling, who is unskilled and undisciplined in Dharma, regards *form* as self, or self as possessing *form*, or *form* as in self, or self as in *form*. That *form* of one’s changes and alters. With the change and alteration of *form*, there arise in one sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair.

One regards *feeling... perception... volition... consciousness* as self, or self as possessing *consciousness*, or *consciousness* as in self, or self as in *consciousness*. That *consciousness* of one’s changes and alters. With the change and alteration of *consciousness*, there arise in one sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair.

But, wise ones, when one has understood:

the impermanence of *form*...

the impermanence of *feeling*...

the impermanence of *perception*...

the impermanence of *volition*...

the impermanence of *consciousness*...

...its change, it’s fading away, and cessation, and when one sees as it really is with perfect wisdom thus: ‘In the past and

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also now all these aggregates are impermanent, unsatisfactory, suffering, and subject to change,' then sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair are abandoned. With their abandonment, one does not become agitated. Being un-agitated, one dwells happily. A wise one who dwells happily is said to be quenched.

**SN 22:46**

When one sees this thus as it really is with perfect wisdom, one holds no more views concerning the past. When one holds no more views concerning the past, one holds no more views concerning the future. When one holds no more views concerning the future, one has no more stubborn grasping. When one has no more stubborn grasping, the mind becomes

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dispassionate towards *form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness* and is liberated from impurities by non-clinging.

**SN 22:47**

With the fading away of ignorance, and the arising of true knowledge:

'I am' does not occur to one;  
 'I am this' does not occur to one;  
 'I will be' and 'I will not be' and 'I will consist of form' and  
 'I will be formless'... these do not occur to one.



### Anattā / The Characteristic of Non-self // SN 22:59

Wise ones, form is nonself. For if form were self, this form would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to command it:

‘Let my *form* be thus; let my *form* be not thus.’

But because form is non self, form leads to affliction, and it is not possible to command form in this way. Likewise,

*Feeling* is nonself...

*Perception* is nonself...

*Volitions* are nonself...

*Consciousness* is nonself.

For if *consciousness* were self, this *consciousness* would not lead to affliction, and it would be possible to command it:

‘Let my *consciousness* be thus;  
let my *consciousness* be not thus.’

But because *consciousness* is nonself, *consciousness* leads to affliction, and it is not possible to command *consciousness* in this way.

Wise ones, what do you think? Are *form... feeling... perception... volitions... consciousness...* permanent or impermanent?

“Impermanent, buddha.”

Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?  
“Suffering, buddha.”

Is what is impermanent, suffering, and subject to change fit to be regarded: ‘This is mine, this I am, this is my self?’  
“No, buddha.”

Therefore, wise ones, any kind of *form... feeling... perception... volition... consciousness...* whatsoever, whether past, future or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, interior or superior, far or near, all aggregates should be seen as it really is with perfect wisdom thus:

‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

Seeing thus, wise ones, the instructed noble seer becomes wearied of *form*, wearied of *feeling*, wearied of *perception*, wearied of *volition*, wearied of *consciousness*. Experiencing weariness, one becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, one’s mind is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge that one has gone beyond.

One understands ‘Destroyed is rebirth, the final life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more for this [suffering] state of being.’

**Delight** // SN 22:29

One who seeks delight in *form... feeling... in perception... in volition... in consciousness* seeks delight in suffering.

One who seeks delight in suffering is not freed from suffering.

One who does not seek delight in *form... in feeling... in perception... in volition... in consciousness* does not seek delight in suffering.

One who does not seek delight in suffering is freed from suffering.

**Root of Misery** // SN 22:30

Wise ones, I will teach you misery, and the root of misery. Listen to this...

What is misery? [The Five Aggregates] *Form* is misery; feeling is misery; *perception* is misery; *volitions* are misery; *consciousness* is misery. This is called misery.

And what, wise ones, is the root of misery? It is this craving that leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and desire, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination. This is called the root of misery.



**Darkness // SN 56:46**

Wise ones, there are world crevasses, vacant and abysmal regions of blinding darkness and gloom, where the light of the sun and moon, so powerful and mighty, does not reach. But, there is a darkness greater and more frightful than even that.

Those who do not understand as it is [The Four Noble Truths], they delight in and generate volitional formations (sankhāra) that lead to birth, aging, illness, and death. Doing so, they delight in the path leading to sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair.

Therefore, an exertion should be made to understand as it is, [The Four Noble Truths.]

**SN:56:63-131**

“What do you think, which is more: the little bit of soil under my fingernail, or the great earth?”

“Buddha, the great earth is more. That little bit of soil that you have taken up in your fingernail is trifling. Compared to the great, earth, that little bit of soil is not calculable, does not bear comparison, does not amount to even a fraction.

“So too, wise ones, those beings are few who possess the noble eye of wisdom. But these beings are far more numerous who are immersed in ignorance and confused, thinking, speaking and acting foolishly, thus passing into hell realms, animal realms, the realm of hungry ghosts.



### Acumen // AN:4:186

A wise person of great wisdom does not intend for one's own affliction, or for the affliction of others, or for the affliction of both. Rather, when one thinks, one thinks only of one's own welfare, the welfare of others, the welfare of both, and the welfare of the whole world. It is in this way that one is a wise person of great wisdom.

#### AN:7:67:7

Just as the wall in the kingdom's frontier fortress is high and wide, covered by a coat of plaster, for protecting its inhabitants and for warding off outsiders, so too a noble seer is wise; one possesses the wisdom that discerns the impermanence of arising and passing away, which is noble and penetrative and leads to the complete

destruction of suffering. With wisdom as one's coat of plaster, the noble seer abandons the unwholesome and develops the wholesome, abandons the blameworthy and develops what is blameless, and maintains oneself in purity.

#### AN:9:5

What is the power of wisdom? One has clearly seen and explored with wisdom those qualities that are unwholesome and reckoned as unwholesome; those that are wholesome and reckoned and wholesome those that are blameless and reckoned as blameless; those that are blameable and reckoned as blameable; those that are dark and reckoned as dark; those that are bright and reckoned as bright ... this is called the power of wisdom.



### **Streams of Merit // SN:55:32-33**

Wise ones, there are these four streams of merit, streams of the wholesome, nutriments for happiness. What four?

A noble seer possesses:

1. Confirmed confidence in the Buddha, the one who has liberated oneself, beyond attachment to this world, and perfected the qualities of the enlightened mind.
2. Confirmed confidence in the Dharma, the profound teachings of the enlightened ones which leads to the total liberation from suffering which has been personally experienced by the wise.

3. Confirmed confidence in the Sangha, those wise ones practicing Dharma in a good way, noble guides, generating a field of unsurpassed merit for the world.

4. Wisdom directed at impermanence, the arising and passing away of all phenomenon, insight which is noble and penetrative, leading to the complete destruction of suffering.

A noble seer dwells at home with a mind devoid of the stain of stinginess, freely generous, open-handed, delighting in relinquishment, one devoted to charity, delighted in giving and sharing.



## Verses

**SN:1:52**

Virtue is good by not decaying;  
Faith is good when made secure;  
Wisdom is the precious gem of humans;  
Merit cannot be stolen by thieves.

**SN:1:190+**

It is craving that produces a human;  
One's mind is what runs around;  
A being enters upon samsara;  
Suffering is one's greatest fear.  
Karma determines one's destiny.

The world is lead around by mind;  
By mind it's dragged here and there.  
Mind is the one thing that has  
All under its control.

The world is afflicted by death,  
Enveloped in old age;  
Wounded and ensnared by craving.  
Always burning with desire,  
The world is established upon suffering.

Craving is what one must foresake  
To cut off all bondage.

**SN:10:12**

By faith one crosses over the flood,  
By diligence, the rugged sea.  
By energy one overcomes suffering,  
By wisdom one is purified.

Taking delight in enlightenment,  
A moral one is released from all  
suffering.

Faith is here one's best treasure;  
Dharma practiced well brings happiness;  
Truth is really the sweetest of tastes;  
One living by wisdom lives best.



## 8 Worldly Conditions // AN:8:6

These eight worldly conditions revolve around the world, and the world revolves around these eight worldly conditions. What eight?

Gain and loss, fame and dishonour,  
praise and blame, pleasure and pain.

An uninstructed worldling and also an instructed noble seer meets with these conditions. What is the distinction?

When an uninstructed worldling meets with these conditions, one does not reflect thus: 'This is impermanent, suffering and subject to change.' Thus, these worldly conditions obsess one's mind. One is attracted to gain and repelled by loss...

When an instructed noble seer meets with these worldly conditions, one reflects thus: 'This [gain/loss, fame/dishonour, praise/blame, pleasure/pain] that I have met is impermanent, suffering and subject to change.' Thus one understands it as it really is. The worldly conditions do not obsess one's mind. One is not attracted to gain or repelled by loss... One is not attracted to fame or repelled by dishonour... One is not attracted to praise or repelled by blame... One is not attracted to pleasure or repelled by pain.

Having thus discarded attractions and repulsion, one is freed from birth, from old age, and death, from sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejections, and anguish; one is freed from suffering.



### **Magical Illusion** // SN:22:95

Suppose that in the last month of the hot season, at high noon, a shimmering mirage appears. One with good sight would inspect it, ponder it, and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to one to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in a mirage?

So too, wise ones, whatever kind of perception there is, whether past, present or future, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: a wise one inspects it, ponders it, and carefully investigates it, and it would appear to one to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in perception?

Suppose that a magician would display a magical illusion at a crossroads. One with good sight would inspect it, ponder it, and carefully investigate it, and it would appear to one to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in a magical illusion?

So too, wise ones, whatever kind of consciousness there is, whether past, present or future... a wise one inspects it, ponders it, and carefully investigates it, and it would appear to one to be void, hollow, insubstantial. For what substance could there be in consciousness?

Seeing thus, the instructed noble seer experiences detachment towards consciousness. Experiencing detachment, one becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, one's mind is liberated.

## Bodhipakkhiyādhammā / Qualities of Enlightenment

## Prajñā / Paññā / Wisdom

Form is like a lump of foam,  
Feeling like a water bubble;  
Perception is like a mirage,  
Volitions like a plantain trunk,  
and consciousness like an illusion.

However one may ponder it  
And carefully investigate it,  
It appears but hollow and void  
When one views it carefully.

When vitality, heat and consciousness  
Depart from this physical body,  
Then it lies there cast away:  
Food for others, without volition.

Such is this continuum,  
this illusion, beguiler of fools.  
Here no substance can be found.

A wise one with energy aroused  
Should look upon the aggregates thus,  
Whether by day or at night,  
Comprehending, ever mindful.

One should discard all the fetters  
And make a refuge for oneself;  
Let one fare as with head ablaze,  
Yearning for the imperishable state.

**MN:131**

Let not a person chase the past  
Or build hopes on the future;  
For the past is left behind  
And the future has not been reached.  
Instead with insight let one see  
Each presently arisen state;  
Let one know that and be sure of it,  
Invincibly, unshakeably.  
Today the effort must be made:  
Tomorrow Death may come, who knows?  
No bargain with Mortality  
Can keep death and its hordes away,  
But one who dwells in wisdom,  
Has had an auspicious day.



### Crushing Mountains // SN:3:25

Just as a mighty mountain range,  
Scraping the sky with rocky crags,  
Might advance from four directions,  
Crushing everything before it —

So also do old age and death  
Roll over all living beings.

Royalty, preists and working folk,  
Peasants, outcastes and scavengers —  
None of them can escape [this end]:  
Everybody inevitably gets crushed.

Nothing on earth can defeat them:  
Not elephants, chariots or troops;  
Nor the use of a magic spell;  
Nor by paying them gold.

So the person who is firm and wise,  
Seeing what is best for themselves,  
Will place their faith in wisdom.

One who practices the teaching,  
With body and speech and with mind —  
That one is praised here in this world,  
And after enjoys the pure realms.

### MN:74:9

This body made of material form,  
consisting of four great elements,  
procreated by a mother and father, and  
built up out of boiled rice and porridge, is  
subject to impermanence, to being worn  
and rubbed away, to dissolution and  
disintegration. It should be regarded as  
impermanent, as suffering, as a disease,  
as a tumour, as a dart, as a calamity, as  
an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating,  
as void, as not self. When one regards  
this body thus, one abandons desire and  
subservience to the body.





### Gone Beyond // SN:35

O wise ones, there are forms cognizable by the senses that are desirable, lovely, agreeable, pleasing, sensually enticing, tantalizing. This is called “the ocean” in the Noble One’s Discipline.

Here this world with its devas, Māra, and Brahmā, this generation with its spiritual wanderers, devas and humans, for the most part is submerged, become like tangled hair, like a knotted ball of thread, like matted reeds and rushes, and cannot pass beyond the plane of misery, the bad destinations, the nether world, samsāra.

One who has expunged greed and hate, and all ignorance has crossed this ocean so hard to cross, with its dangers of sharks, demons, waves. The knowledge-master who has lived the holy life, reached the world’s end, is called one “gone beyond.”

The tie-surmounter, death-forsaker, without acquisitions, this one has abandoned suffering for no renewed existence. Passed away, and immeasurable, I say: This one has bewildered the King of Death.

#### MN:19:27

Meditate, O wise ones, do not delay or else you will regret it later. This is all the enlightened ones’ instruction to you.