



# *A Pilgrim's Companion*

*Edited by Ken and Visakha Kawasaki*

*Readings from Buddhist Texts to Enhance  
a Pilgrimage to the Holy Sites*

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# Comment on the Texts

These readings, arranged according to the places where the Buddha stayed and taught, are not intended to represent direct translations of the suttas. Selections taken from the Tipitaka have been considerably shortened and rephrased for easy reading while traveling. The editors hope that these readings will help the pilgrim appreciate the places visited and inspire him or her to read the original texts.



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# *Part One – Readings*

## *Kapilavatthu*

### **Mahanama**

Thus have I heard. On one occasion, the Buddha was staying in Nigrodha Monastery in Kapilavatthu, the Sakyan capital.

At that time, Mahanama approached, paid homage to the Buddha, sat down to one side, and said, “Lord, this Kapilavatthu is rich and prosperous, populous, crowded, with congested thoroughfares. In the evening, when I am entering Kapilavatthu after visiting the Blessed One or the bhikkhus worthy of esteem, I come across a stray elephant, a stray horse, a stray chariot, a stray cart, a stray man. On that occasion, Lord, my mindfulness regarding the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha becomes muddled. At such a time, I wonder, ‘If at this moment I should die, what would be my destination, where would I be reborn?’”

“Don’t be afraid, Mahanama! Your death will not be a bad one, your demise will not be a bad one. A noble disciple who possesses four things slants, slopes, and inclines toward Nibbana. What four? First, a noble disciple possesses confirmed confidence in the Buddha thus: ‘The Blessed One is an arahat, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, well gone, a knower of worlds, the unsurpassed trainer of people to be tamed, a teacher of devas and humans, Enlightened, and Blessed.’ Second, he possesses confirmed confidence in the Dhamma thus: ‘The Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One, directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, to be personally experienced by the wise.’ Third, he possesses confirmed confidence in the Sangha thus: ‘The Sangha of the Blessed One’s disciples is practicing the good way, is practicing the straight way, is practicing the true way, is practicing the proper way; that is, the four pairs of persons, the eight types of individuals—this Sangha of the Blessed One’s disciples is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation; it is the unsurpassed field of merit for the world.’ Fourth, he possesses the virtues dear to the noble ones—unbroken, untorn, unblemished, unmottled, freeing, praised by the wise, ungrasped, leading to concentration.

“Suppose, Mahanama, that a tree was slanting, sloping, and inclining toward the east. If it was cut down at its foot, in what direction would it fall?”

“In whatever direction it was slanting, sloping, and inclining, Lord.”

“So, too, Mahanama, a noble disciple who possesses these four things slants, slopes, and inclines toward Nibbana.

# *Isipatana*

## **Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma**

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Buddha was dwelling in the Deer Park of Isipatana in Baranasi. There the Buddha addressed the group of five thus:

“There are two extremes which should not be followed. What two? The pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, ignoble, and unbeneficial; and the pursuit of self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and unbeneficial. Without veering toward either of these extremes, the Tathagata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision and knowledge, and which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, and to Nibbana.

“And what, bhikkhus, is that middle way which leads to Nibbana? It is the Noble Eightfold Path: that is, Right view, Right thought, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, and Right concentration.

“Here is the noble truth of suffering. Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering, union with what is displeasing is suffering, separation from what is pleasing is suffering, and not to get what one wants is suffering. In brief, the five aggregates of clinging are suffering.

“Here is the noble truth of the origin of suffering. It is craving which leads to renewed existence, along with delight and lust and seeking delight here and there. It is the craving for sensual pleasures, the craving for existence, and the craving for extermination.

“Here is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. It is the complete fading away and cessation of that craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, and non-reliance on it.

“Here is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering. It is the Noble Eightfold Path, mentioned before: Right view, Right thought, Right speech, Right action, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, and Right concentration.

“In regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light: namely,

““This is the noble truth of suffering”;

““This noble truth of suffering is to be fully understood”;

““This noble truth of suffering has been fully understood”;

““This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering”;

““This noble truth of the origin of suffering is to be abandoned”;

““This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been abandoned”;

““This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering”;

““This noble truth of the cessation of suffering is to be realized”;

“‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized’;

“‘This is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering’;

“‘This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering is to be developed’;

“‘This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering has been developed.’

“As long as my knowledge and vision of these Four Noble Truths as they really are in these three phases and twelve aspects was not thoroughly purified in this way, I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Maras, and Brahmas, in this generation with its ascetics and brahmins and with its devas and humans. When my knowledge and vision of these Four Noble Truths as they really are in these three phases and twelve aspects was thoroughly purified in this way, however, then I claimed to have awakened to that unsurpassed perfect enlightenment. The knowledge and vision arose in me: ‘Unshakable is the liberation of my mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more renewed existence.’”

The group of five were elated and delighted in the Buddha’s words. During this discourse, there arose in Venerable Kondañña the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma: “Whatever is subject to origination is subject to cessation.”

When the Wheel of the Dhamma had thus been set in motion by the Buddha, the earth-dwelling devas raised a cry: “In the Deer Park of Isipatana in Baranasi, this unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One! It cannot be stopped by any ascetic, brahmin, deva, Mara, or Brahma, nor by anyone in the world!” Having heard this, the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings raised the same cry. Having heard their cry, the Tavatimsa devas raised the same cry. Thus, it continued through the Yama devas, the Tusita devas, the Nimmanarati devas, the Paranimmitavasavatti devas, and the devas of Brahma’s company.

Thus, at that very moment, the cry spread as far as the Brahma world, this ten thousandfold world system shook, and an immeasurable glorious radiance, surpassing the majesty of the devas, appeared in the world.

Then the Buddha declared: “Kondañña has indeed understood!” Thereafter, Venerable Kondañña was known as “Añña Kondañña–Kondañña Who Has Understood.”

–Samyutta Nikaya 56, 11, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

# *Part Two – Meditations*

## *Day Two*

Taking refuge

Paying homage to the Triple Gem

### **A Handful of Leaves**

Once, in a grove of simsapa trees in Kosambi, the Blessed One picked up a few leaves in his hand and asked the bhikkhus, “How do you conceive this? Which is more, the few leaves that I have picked up in my hand or those on the trees?”

“The leaves that the Blessed One has picked up in his hand are few, Lord; those on the trees are far more.”

“So, too, the things that I have known by direct knowledge are more; the things that I have told you are only a few. Why have I not told them? Because they bring no benefit, no advancement in the Holy Life. They do not lead to dispassion, to fading, to ceasing, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, and to Nibbana. That is why I have not told them.

“What have I told you? ‘This is suffering; this is the origin of suffering; this is the cessation of suffering; and this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’ That is what I have told you. Why have I told it? Because it brings benefit, and advancement in the Holy Life. It leads to dispassion, to fading, to ceasing, to stilling, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, and to Nibbana. Therefore, let your task be this: ‘This is suffering; this is the origin of suffering; this is the cessation of suffering; and this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.’”

## **Meditation on Death**

Understand death. Be familiar with death.

Death approaches. Just as each step a calf takes toward the slaughterhouse takes him closer to death, so death approaches with each passing day.

Death is inevitable, like the sun, after rising in the east, moves steadily to set in the west.

Death is like a river, always flowing, rushing downstream.

Death is like the drop of water on the tip of a blade of grass, evaporated by the sun.

Death is like the stream that dries up in the summer, leaving only its banks, bereft of water.

Death is like water poured into the sand, disappearing without a trace.

Death is like the overripe fruit that finally falls from the tree.

Death is like the clay vessel which the potter smashes with his hammer.

Just as a mushroom emerges with a cap of soil, when we are born, we carry our death with us.

## **Dedication of Merit, Veneration, and Aspiration**

May all devas share this merit. Long may they protect the Buddha Sasana for the welfare of the world.

By this merit, never may I live with fools, but have fellowship with the wise until Nibbana is won.

May this merit bring about the extinction of defilements in me.

By this meritorious deed, may I attain Nibbana.

May this merit be passed to my departed relatives! May my relatives be happy!

By this practice, according with Truth, I revere the Buddha.

By this practice, according with Truth, I revere the Dhamma.

By this practice, according with Truth, I revere the Sangha.

By this practice, according with Truth, may I be liberated from the bondage of birth and death.

Well done! Well done!! Well done!!!



# *Day Eleven*

Taking refuge  
Paying homage to the Triple Gem

## Five ways to put away anger Taught by Venerable Sariputta

“Anger,” Venerable Sariputta said, “whenever it arises, must always be put away, and there are five ways of doing so.

“One might get angry with a person whose ways are impure in deed but pure in word.

“One might get angry with a person whose ways are impure in word but pure in deed.

“One might get angry with a person whose ways are impure in both deed and word but, from time to time, obtains mental clarity and mental calm.

“One might get angry with a person whose ways are impure in both deed and word and never obtains mental clarity and mental calm.

“One might get angry with a person whose ways are pure in both deed and word and often obtains mental clarity and mental calm.

“In the case of a person whose ways are impure in deed but pure in word, how should anger with him be put away? Suppose a bhikkhu, who wears only rag-robles, were to see a piece of cloth on the road. He would hold it down with his left foot, spread it out with his right, pick it up, make use of the best part of it, and go on his way. In the same way, with a person whose ways are impure in deed, but pure in word, one should ignore his impure deeds and concentrate on only his words which are pure. In this way, anger with him should be put away.

“In the case of a person whose ways are impure in word but pure in deed, how should anger with him be put away? Suppose a man, tortured by heat, overcome by heat, weary, thirsty, and craving for water, were to come to a pond overgrown with mossy slime and water plants. He would plunge into that pond, scattering with both hands the moss and plants hither and thither, cup his hands, drink, and go on his way. In the same way, with a person whose ways are impure in word but pure in deed, one should ignore his impure words and concentrate on only his deeds which are pure. In this way, anger with him should be put away.

“In the case of a person whose ways are impure in both deed and word but, from time to time, obtains mental clarity and mental calm, how should anger with him be put away? Suppose a man, tortured by heat, overcome by heat, weary, thirsty, and craving for water, were to come upon a puddle in a cow's footprint.

He might think, 'If I drink from this puddle by hand or cup, I will stir it up and make it unfit to drink.' Instead, he crouches on all fours, lies down, sups like a cow, and goes on his way. In the same way, with a person whose ways are impure in both deed and word but, from time to time, obtains mental clarity and mental calm, one should ignore both his impure words and his impure deeds and concentrate on only the mental clarity and the mental calm, that he obtains from time to time. In this way, anger with him should be put away.

“In the case of a person whose ways are impure in both deed and word and never obtains mental clarity and mental calm, how should anger with him be put away? Suppose a man who was grievously ill, were to go along the highway with no village near ahead or near behind. He would be unable to find proper food, proper medicine, proper assistance, or a guide to lead him to a village. Now suppose another man, going along that road, were to see that man. The first man might raise pity, compassion, and commiseration in that second man, so that he might say to himself, 'Alas for this man! He needs food, medicine, assistance, or a guide to lead him to a village, lest he suffer even more or die here.' In the same way, with a person whose ways are impure in both deed and word and never obtains mental clarity and mental calm, pity, compassion, and commiseration should arise, so that one says to himself, 'Alas for that person! He should give up his bad habits in both deed and word and develop good habits in both, so that, on the breaking up of the body, after death, he is not reborn in a miserable realm.' In this way, anger with him should be put away.

“In the case of a person whose ways are pure in both deed and word and often obtains mental clarity and mental calm, how should anger with him be put away? Suppose a man, tortured by heat, overcome by heat, weary, thirsty, and craving for water, were to come to a pool, clear, sweet, cool, and limpid, a lovely resting-place, shaded by all manner of trees. He might plunge into that pool, bathe, and drink. Then he would come out and sit or lie there in the shade of the trees. In the same way, with a person whose ways are pure in both deed and word and often obtains mental clarity and mental calm, one should think about and remember his words which are pure, his deeds which are pure, and the mental calm and clarity which he often has. In this way, anger with him should be put away. When one becomes completely calm, the mind also becomes calm.

Verily, these are the five ways of putting away anger which should always be put away.”

## **Subduing anger**

When anger arises, there are five ways by which one can subdue it, and by which he should wipe it out completely.

When anger arises, one should develop loving-kindness toward the other person.

When anger arises, one should develop compassion for the other person.

When anger arises, one should develop equanimity toward the other person.

When anger arises, one should ignore the other person and not pay any attention to him.

When anger arises, one should direct one's thoughts to the fact of the other person's being the product of his kamma: "This person is the owner of his kamma, heir of his kamma, born of his kamma, related to his kamma, and abides supported by his kamma. Whatever kamma he does, for good or for evil, to that he will fall heir."

These are five ways by which one can subdue anger whenever it arises and by which one should wipe it out completely.

–Anguttara Nikaya 5, 161, Aghatapativinaya Sutta

## **Dedication of Merit, Veneration, and Aspiration**

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Well done! Well done!! Well done!!!