

# SPRING RAIN SANGHA

## THE BASICS OF BUDDHISM



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## *Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma-sambuddhassa*

### **THE THREE REFUGES**

*Buddham saranam gacchami*

I take refuge in Buddha.

*Dhammam saranam gacchami*

I take refuge in Dhamma.

*Sangham saranam gacchami*

I take refuge in Sangha.

*Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami*

For a second time, I take refuge in Buddha.

*Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami*

For a second time, I take refuge in Dhamma.

*Dutiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami*

For a second time, I take refuge in Sangha.

*Tatiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami*

For a third time, I take refuge in Buddha.

*Tatiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami*

For a third time, I take refuge in Dhamma.

*Tatiyampi Sangham saranam gacchami*

For a third time, I take refuge in Sangha.

### **THE FIVE PRECEPTS**

**1.** *Panatipata veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the precept to refrain from causing harm to living beings.

**2.** *Adinnadana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the precept to refrain from taking that which is not given.

**3.** *Kamesu micchacara veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the precept to refrain from sexual misconduct.

**4.** *Musavada veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the precept to refrain from incorrect speech.

**5.** *Suramerayamajja pamadatthana veramani sikkhapadam samadiyami*

I undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness.

## THE THREE RESOLUTIONS:

1. To do good
2. To avoid evil
3. To purify the mind

## THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

1. Unsatisfactoriness (suffering) exists
2. Unsatisfactoriness arises from attachment to desires
3. Unsatisfactoriness ceases when attachment to desire ceases
4. Freedom from suffering is possible by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path

### Actualizing the path:

1. Suffering needs to be understood
2. It's causes abandoned
- 3.** Freedom from suffering has to be realized
4. The path needs to be developed

**NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH:** *(Always presented in this order: Sila, Samadhi, Panna)*

Three Qualities	Eightfold Path
Wisdom ( <i>panna</i> )	Right View
.	Right Intention
Morality ( <i>sila</i> )	Right Speech
.	Right Action
.	Right Livelihood
Meditation ( <i>samadhi</i> )	Right Effort
.	Right Mindfulness
.	Right Concentration

## THE THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF EXISTENCE:

1. (*anicca*) Transiency / Impermanence –(not dependable/reliable)
2. (*dukkha*) Suffering / Unsatisfactoriness (unquenchable thirst)
3. (*anatta*) Selflessness / Corelessness (no fixed self in the khandhas)

## FACTORIAL ANALYSIS OF THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

### **Right view (Right understanding)**

understanding suffering  
understanding its origin  
understanding its cessation  
understanding the way leading to cessation

### **Right intention**

intention of renunciation  
intention of good will  
intention of harmlessness

### **Right speech**

abstaining from false speech  
abstaining from slanderous speech  
abstaining from harsh speech  
abstaining from idle chatter

### **Right action**

abstaining from taking life  
abstaining from stealing  
abstaining from sexual misconduct

### **Right livelihood**

abandon wrong livelihood,  
one earns one's living by a right form of livelihood

### **Right effort**

the effort to restrain unwholesome states of mind from arising  
the effort to abandon unwholesome states that have arisen  
the effort to 'give rise to' wholesome states (brahma-viharas)  
the effort to sustain wholesome states

### **Right mindfulness**

mindful contemplation of the body  
mindful contemplation of feelings/sensations  
mindful contemplation of the mind/mental objects  
mindful contemplation of phenomena (dhamma)

### **Right concentration** (Breath practice- keeping the mind on the object of meditation)

the first jhana (Delight)  
the second jhana (Joy)  
the third jhana (Peace)  
the fourth jhana (Equanimity)

## PRACTICES

Spring Rain Sangha offers a variety of practices rooted in the Buddhist tradition. The main practices offered are Samatha-Vipassana, (serenity-insight) and Metta (loving-kindness). A brief description of each follows:

**Samatha-vipassanā:** 'serenity and insight', are identical with concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (paññā) and form the two branches of mental development (bhāvanā)

*There is a method of meditative practice where, in alternating sequence, serenity-meditation and insight-meditation are developed. It is called serenity and insight joined in pairs'.*

**Samatha** (Serenity) is an unperturbed, peaceful and lucid state of mind attained by concentration. Serenity frees the mind from impurities and inner obstacles, and gives it greater penetrative strength.

"What now is the power of serenity? It is the one-pointedness and non-distractedness of the mind due to freedom from desire and ill will." —The Buddha

Samatha is the fixing of the mind on a single object; a one-pointedness of mind.

**Vipassanā** (Insight) is the penetrative understanding, by direct meditative experience, of the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and non-self or egolessness of all material and mental phenomena. It is *insight* that leads to final liberation.

"Two things are conducive to knowledge: serenity and insight. If serenity is developed, what profit does it bring? The mind is developed. If the mind is developed, what profit does it bring? All clinging is abandoned."

"If insight is developed, what profit does it bring? Wisdom is developed. If wisdom is developed, what profit does it bring? All ignorance is abandoned" —The Buddha

Vipassana is a meditation practice that examines and identifies the patterns of the mind and the world it projects. The resultant wisdom (or perfect knowledge) thoroughly and clearly discerns phenomena. This moment to moment investigation of the mind/body process allows us to experience life with less fear and clinging. Seeing life as a constantly changing process one begins to accept with equanimity, pain and pleasure; loss and gain; blame and praise; ill-repute and fame. Insight awakens our innate wisdom and compassion.

**Metta** (Loving-Kindness) is one of four “brahma-vihāras” the 4 'sublime' or 'Divine Abodes', also called the 4 Boundless States: Loving-kindness (*mettā*), Compassion (*karunā*), Appreciative Joy (*muditā*), Equanimity (*upekkhā*).

Metta (Loving-Kindness) is a practice that opens the heart. The four brahma-vihara practices of love, compassion, appreciative joy and equanimity help ease the burdens of life's inevitable difficulties. The Buddha referred to the “brahma-viharas” as “Boundless or Divine Abodes”. Entering wholeheartedly into the practice of Metta allows us to directly experience immeasurable, unconditional love.

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## THE FIVE HINDRANCES:

HINDRANCE	ANTIDOTE
1. Sensual Desire	Reflect on the impermanence of the object desired.
2. Hatred, Ill will	Metta -if necessary picture the person suffering, or as a child.
3. Sloth & torpor	Bring light into body/mind, open eyes, stand, brisk walk, reflect on rare opportunity to be born human and have this chance to practice Dhamma.
4. Restlessness & worry	Slow the breath, keep bringing mindfulness to the breath.
5. Skeptical doubt	Investigate the dhamma- the three characteristics of existence.

## FIVE WAYS FOR THE REMOVAL OF DISTRACTING THOUGHT:

1. **Substitute:** reflect on a different object, which is connected with skill... Like an experienced carpenter or carpenter's apprentice, striking hard at, pushing out, and getting rid of a coarse peg with a fine one, should the bhikkhu in order to get rid of the adventitious object, reflect on a different object which is connected with skill.
2. **Reflect:** ponder on the disadvantages of unskilful thoughts thus: Truly these thoughts of mine are unskilful, blameworthy, and productive of misery.
3. **Ignore:** endeavour to be without attention and reflection as regards them.
4. **Remove the cause:** one should reflect on the removal of the *source* of those unskilful thoughts.
5. **Suppress:** If evil, unskilful thoughts continue to arise in spite of reflection on the removal of a source of unskilful thoughts, one should with clenched teeth and the tongue pressing on the palate, restrain, and subdue the (evil) mind by the (good) mind. (*Suppression used as a last resort so one does not act out one's anger/hatred*)

## **THE FIVE KHANDHAS:** (*Clusters of craving that beings cling to as self*)

- 1.** Form
2. Sensations
3. Perceptions
4. Mental formations: (Thinking, Planning, memory ect)
- 5.** Consciousnesses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking

*The five aggregates, monks, are impermanent; whatever is impermanent, that is unsatisfactory; whatever is unsatisfactory, that is without self. What is without self, that is not mine, that I am not, that is not my self. Thus should it be seen by perfect wisdom as it really is. Who sees by perfect wisdom, as it really is, that person's mind, not grasping, is detached from taints; and is liberated. SN22.45*

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## **THE SEVEN SETS:**

*(This set of seven form the core teachings of the Buddha)*

### **1. Four Foundations of Mindfulness:**

1. Mindfulness of body
2. Mindfulness of feeling (affective tone: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings)
- 3.** Mindfulness of mental objects (thinking, ordinary and higher states of mind)
- 4.** Dhammas: the three characteristics of existence, the hindrances, the khandhas, sense spheres, awakening factors, the four noble truths)

### **2. The Four Right Endeavors:**

1. to prevent the arising of un-arisen unwholesome states;
2. to abandon unwholesome states that have already arisen;
3. to arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen;
4. to maintain and perfect wholesome states already arisen.

### **3. The Four Bases for Power:** *The Four Iddhipada*

1. *Chanda*, will or aspiration, satisfaction and joy in learning.
2. *Virya*, diligent energy, cultivating the effort and exertion required.
3. *Citta*, attending wholeheartedly to learning with active thoughtfulness.

4. *Vimamsa*, investigation, and examination, reasoning and testing for oneself the material being learned.

#### **4. The Five Spiritual Faculties:**

1. Faith
2. Energy
3. Mindfulness
4. Concentration
5. Wisdom

#### **5. The Five Spiritual Powers:**

- 1.** Faith
- 2.** Energy
- 3.** Mindfulness
- 4.** Concentration
5. Wisdom

Note: the five spiritual faculties (*indriya*) become the five spiritual powers (*bala*) when they become unshakable; this particular aspect distinguishing them from the corresponding 5 spiritual faculties. The five spiritual powers are unshakable by their opposites: (1) the power of faith is unshakable by faithlessness (unbelief); (2) energy, by laziness; (3) mindfulness, by forgetfulness; (4) concentration, by distractedness; (5) wisdom, by ignorance.

#### **6. Seven Factors of Enlightenment:**

1. Mindfulness
2. Investigation
3. Energy
4. Rapturous Joy
5. Tranquility/Serenity
6. Concentration
7. Equanimity

#### **7. The Eightfold Noble Path**

1. Right view (Right understanding)
2. Right intention
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

## PRACTICING THE BRAHMA-VIHARAS (*Boundless Abodes*)

The boundless states or *brahma-viharas* help in dissolving self view (the idea of a separate permanent self).

1. Loving kindness (*metta*)
2. Compassion (*karuna*)
3. Appreciative Joy (*mudita*)
4. Equanimity (*upekkha*)

The near enemy is a quality that can masquerade as the brahma-vihara. The far enemy is clearly the opposite quality. The boundless states serve as antidotes for both the near and far enemies.

Pali	English	Description	Near Enemy	Far Enemy
<i>metta</i>	loving kindness	good-will, friendship, unconditional love for all beings	selfish love (love with attachment)	hatred
<i>karuna</i>	compassion	empathy, to feel with someone instead of for someone	pity	cruelty
<i>mudita</i>	sympathetic joy	spontaneous joy in response to others' successes	hypocrisy	envy
<i>upekkha</i>	equanimity	even-mindedness based on insight into the true nature of existence	indifference	anxiety

## TEN PERFECTIONS (*PARAMIS*)

1. Generosity (*dana*)
2. Morality (*sila*)
3. Renunciation (*nekkhamma*)
4. Wisdom (*panna*)
5. Energy (*viriya*)
6. Patience (*khanti*)
7. Truthfulness (*sacca*)
8. Resolution (*adhitthana*)

9. Loving-Kindness (*metta*)
10. Equanimity (*upekkha*)

## TWELVE LINKS OF DEPENDENT ORIGATION

There is no existing phenomenon that is not the effect of dependent origination. All phenomena arise dependent upon a number of causal factors, called conditions. The basic principle of dependent origination is simplicity itself. The Buddha described it by saying:

When there is this, that is.  
With the arising of this, that arises.  
When this is not; neither is that.  
With the cessation of this, that ceases.

Dependent origination is essentially and primarily a teaching to understand suffering and the cessation of suffering. The twelve links of dependent origination provide a detailed description of the cause of suffering and rebirth. They are:

1. **Ignorance** is the condition for mental formation.
2. **Mental formation** is the condition for consciousness
3. **Consciousness** is the condition for name and form.
4. **Name and form** is the condition for the six senses.
5. **The six senses** are the conditions for contact
6. **Contact** is the condition for feeling
7. **Sensation (feeling)** is the condition for craving.
8. **Craving** is the condition for clinging
9. **Clinging** is the condition for becoming.
10. **Becoming** is the condition for birth.
11. **Birth** is the condition for aging and death.
12. **Aging and death** is the condition for ignorance.

All twelve links are inter-related and dependent on each other; thus there is no beginning or ending point. They are cyclic phenomena. Each link is a cause on one hand, and an effect on the other.

**Ignorance:** Ignorance means the lack of right understanding. One is ignorant and takes oneself as real, independent, and a permanent entity of "I." We do not understand who and what we are or what the universe is. Right understanding allows us to live in accordance with the way things are. Then one can live harmoniously. Ignorance is the condition for mental formations.

**Mental Formation**; Mental formations arise from ignorance. Mental impurities (the result of past actions of body, speech and mind) give rise to habitual actions in the present life, which conform to the patterns established in the past (karma). This is why some people are born into more fortunate conditions than others. Mental formations are the condition for consciousness.

**Consciousness**: Consciousness arises from mental formations. Literally, it means perceiving, comprehending, recognizing, differentiating, etc. Usually it is interpreted to be our mind. Consciousness is the condition for name and form.

**Name and Form**: the combination of mentality and corporeality, (mind and body). Name and form refer to the Five Aggregates, i.e. form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. Name and form is the condition for the six senses.

**The Six Senses**: The six senses arise from name and form. They are eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind. Through these six organs contact with external objects is possible. The six senses are the condition for contact.

**Contact**: Contact arises from the six senses. It is the experience created by the six senses, objects and consciousness. Therefore contact is the condition for feeling. Without contact, there is no feeling. Suffering is dependent upon contact because it gives rise to feeling.

**Feeling**: Feeling arises from contact. It is the affective tone arising from contact. There are three kinds of feeling, namely: **pleasant, unpleasant and neutral**. Feeling is the condition for craving.

**Craving**: Craving arises from contact. Craving is the sensuous desire, the pursuit of pleasures, the identification with attachment to gain and the fear of loss. Craving is the condition for clinging.

**Clinging**: Clinging arises from craving. Clinging is an attachment to objects. We have the desire to keep it, possess it permanently. However, all phenomena are impermanent. Therefore we are bound to suffer because of our ignorance. Clinging is the condition for becoming.

**Becoming**: Becoming arises from grasping/clinging. Becoming means to give birth, create and exist. Because of attachment to phenomena we assume that there is a self. However, this 'self' is conditioned and impermanent. Becoming is the condition for birth.

**Birth**: Birth arises from becoming. Birth implies existence. This moment to moment becoming is the condition for old age and death.

**Old Age and Death**: Old age and death are conditioned by birth. Death is one of the greatest afflictions and fears of the untrained, undisciplined worldling. Death is the condition for ignorance.

## THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

Siddhartha Gautama was born in the sixth century BCE in what is now Nepal. His father, Suddhodana, was the ruler of the Sakya people, and Siddhartha grew up living the extravagant life of a young prince. Tradition tells us that Suddhodana had feared that the prince might leave the palace to take up the life of a religious wanderer. So he arranged for him to be sheltered from all the harsh realities of life. When the prince reached the age of sixteen, Suddhodana arranged for him to be married to his cousin, a charming princess named Yasodhara.

One day, however, Siddhartha ventured out into the world and was confronted with the inevitability of aging, illness, and death. Overcome by dismay, the young prince wondered if there might be a happiness that was not subject to change and decay. Then, seeing a forest wanderer, he decided that only by taking up the wilderness life could he find the answer to his question. That night, at the age of twenty-nine, he left his kingdom and newborn son and entered the wilderness.

For six years, Siddhartha submitted himself to rigorous ascetic practices. First he studied with different religious teachers, but, dissatisfied with what they saw as their highest goal, he set out to practice extreme physical austerities on his own. Yet even through the ultimate in self-denial, he did not reach his goal. Then one day he remembered a state of calm mental absorption he had experienced while sitting under a tree as a child, and realized that only through such a state of calm could liberation be found. And yet the strength of that calm could not be reached when the body was weak through austerities. The path to true happiness required balance—the middle way—rather than extremes of indulgence or self-denial. So on that day he ended his extreme austerities and accepted a gift of rice-milk offered to him by a young woman.

That night Siddhartha sat under the bodhi tree and meditated until dawn. In the first watch of the night he remembered his past lives; in the second watch, around midnight, he saw how beings die and are reborn through the power of their karma, which in turn was shaped by the skilfulness of their intentions; in the third watch, toward dawn, he purified his mind of all cravings, attachments, and defilements, and finally of all intentions, both skilful and not. With that, he attained awakening at the age of thirty-five, thus earning the title Buddha, or "Awakened One."

For the remainder of his life, the Buddha taught the dharma to others—men, women, and children; rich and poor; people from all walks of life and all levels of society—so that they, too, might attain awakening. He established a sangha, or community of monks and nuns, to maintain his teachings after his death. Then, one full moon night in May when he had reached the age of eighty, he lay down between two trees in a forest park and gave his last teachings to the assembled followers, counseling them to be heedful in completing their practice of the dharma. With that, he entered total nirvana.

And when the Buddha had passed away, Sakka, the chief of the deities, uttered the following:

*Impermanent are all component things,  
They arise and cease, that is their nature:  
They come into being and pass away,  
Release from them is bliss supreme.*

## **THE FIVE SUBJECTS FOR DAILY RECOLLECTION**

There are other recollections which one can make and which help one to appreciate the state of a human being. People tend to be in denial about decay, disease and death while greatly attached to sentient beings and insentient objects. Some people try also to ignore moral responsibility for their actions. The recollections below bring these subjects into the light and make us face them squarely. Therefore, the Buddha has said we should reflect daily upon these five recollections.

I am of the nature to age.  
I have not gone beyond aging.  
I am of the nature to sicken.  
I have not gone beyond sickness.  
I am of the nature to die.  
I have not gone beyond dying.

All that is mine, beloved and pleasing, will become otherwise, will become separated from me

I am the owner of my kamma,  
Heir to my kamma,  
Born of my kamma,  
Related to my kamma,  
Abide supported by my kamma.  
Whatever kamma I shall do, for good or for ill, of that I will be the heir.  
Thus we should frequently recollect.

***Note:** This booklet was compiled by Spring Rain Sangha for our Dharma Study Group. The material was gathered from many different sources including translations of the suttas, Buddhist websites, Access to Insight and other sources. Spring Rain Sangha would like to express its sincere and deepest gratitude for all those who made this booklet possible. May it inspire us to delve deeper into the Buddha's Dharma.*

***May all beings find Peace!***