

Vandana

Paying Homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, and Sangha

MAHAMEVNAWA
BUDDHIST MONASTERY

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Welcome

We hope that the explanations given throughout this book will make your experience with us more meaningful. If you have any questions, don't be afraid to ask.

The special language we use in our devotional service is called Pali. It is the ancient language that the Buddha's teachings are written in. By continuing to use this language along with a translation we are able to keep a direct connection with the Buddha while at the same time understanding the meaning. It also ensures that as modern languages change we can always go back to the original.

The best way to learn Pāli pronunciation is by listening and chanting along. In brief, it's helpful to know that in TH the H is always silent, and that C and CH are both pronounced with a hard "ch." The Ṃ is pronounced as "ng." Lines over vowels—such as Ā, Ī, Ū—are held out twice as long as usual.

One word we say throughout the service is "Sādhu!" It means "excellent." You will also hear "Namo Buddhaya," which means "Homage to the Buddha."

In the time of the Buddha as well as today, people bow—as we do—to show our respect and humility. We bow to show respect to the Buddha and his monastic followers. Even children are encouraged to bow to their own parents to show respect. As with all of the practices we do here, you are welcome to participate or observe in a way that feels comfortable to you.

Be sure to browse our lending library to find more books to learn the teachings of the Buddha.

If you have any questions, please speak to one of the monks or volunteers. Everyone wants to help you feel at home here.

Vandana

Salutation to the Buddha

This is the same way that people expressed praise and honour to the Buddha even when he was alive.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sam-buddhassa

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sam-buddhassa

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sam-buddhassa

Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the supremely Enlightened One!

Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the supremely Enlightened One!

Homage to the Blessed One, the Worthy One, the supremely Enlightened One!

Going for Refuge

The primary way we express our commitment to follow the teachings of the Buddha is by going for refuge to the Triple Gem: the fully enlightened Buddha; the Dhamma, his liberating teachings; and the Sangha, the people in the past and the present who followed these teachings and also became enlightened.

Buddhaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

Dhammaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

Saṅghaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

Dutiyam'pi Buddhaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

Dutiyam'pi Dhammaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

Dutiyam'pi Saṅghaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

Tatīyam'pi Buddhaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

Tatīyam'pi Dhammaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

Tatīyam'pi Saṅghaṃ saranaṃ gacchāmi.

I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Buddha.

I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Dhamma.

I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Saṅgha.

For the second time ♦ I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Buddha.

For the second time ♦ I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Dhamma.

For the second time ♦ I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Saṅgha.

For the third time ♦ I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Buddha.

For the third time ♦ I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Dhamma.

For the third time ♦ I go for refuge ♦ to the supreme Saṅgha.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Pañcasīla: Observation of the Five Precepts

The Buddha asked us to keep five training rules for as long as we live. He taught that by following these precepts we can avoid many problems and build a firm foundation for developing our minds. We know that we can't break the precepts by accident, for example, when we step on an insect without knowing. If we do break a precept, we make the determination to try to not do it again.

LEADER: To observe the five precepts, say after me,

1. I observe the precept of ♦ abstaining from killing beings.

2. I observe the precept of ♦ abstaining from stealing.

3. I observe the precept of ♦ abstaining from sexual misconduct.

4. I observe the precept of ♦ abstaining from telling lies.

5. I observe the precept of ♦ abstaining from taking ♦ intoxicating drinks and drugs.

I follow these precepts ♦ for happiness in this life ♦ for rebirth in heaven ♦ and to realize the Four Noble Truths ♦ in this Gautama Buddha's Dispensation.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Buddhānussati: Contemplation on the Qualities of the Buddha

The Buddha had nine special qualities. Buddhas are the only ones who have all nine. We often recite them when we place items on the shrine.

1. Iti pi so bhagavā, araham,
2. sammā-sam-buddho,
3. vijjā-carana-sampanno,
4. sugato, 5. lokavidū,
6. anuttaro purisa-damma-sārathi,
7. satthā deva-manussānam,
8. buddho, 9. bhagavā ti.

1. Such Indeed is the Blessed One, ♦ Arahant, worthy one,
2. supremely enlightened,
3. endowed with knowledge and virtue,
4. follower of the Noble Path,
5. knower of worlds,
6. the peerless trainer of persons,
7. teacher of gods and humans,
8. the Enlightened Teacher,
9. the Blessed One.

Dhammānussati: Contemplation on the Qualities of the Dhamma

As well, the Buddha's teaching, known as the Dhamma, has six special qualities that make it possible to get the same happiness that the Buddha did.

1. Svākkhāto Bhagavatā dhammo,
2. sanditthiko, 3. akāliko,
4. ehipassiko, 5. opanayiko,
6. paccattam vedittabbo viññūhīti.

1. Well taught by the Blessed One ♦ is the Dhamma,
2. visible here and now,
3. timeless,
4. open to all,
5. learned and applied to oneself,
6. understood by the wise each for himself.

Sanghānussati: Contemplation on the Qualities of the Sangha

The group of people who followed the Buddha's teaching to the goal of enlightenment are known as the Sangha. In this group are eight types of people: ones who have achieved the four different levels of enlightenment and ones who are on the way guaranteed to achieve these four levels. The Buddha taught that just as seeds planted in a field without weeds will bring a great harvest, in the same way gifts given to this group of people will bring great results.

1. Su-paṭipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-sangho.
2. Uju-paṭipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-sangho.
3. Ñāya-paṭipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-sangho.
4. Sāmīci-paṭipanno Bhagavato sāvaka-sangho.

Yadidam cattāri purisa-yugāni ♦ aṭṭha purisa-puggalā ♦ esa Bhagavato sāvaka-sangho:

5. āhu-neyyo 6. pāhu-neyyo
7. dakkhi-neyyo 8. anjali-karanīyo
9. anuttaram puññak-khettam ♦ lokassā ti.

1. Of pure conduct is the Order of Disciples ♦ of the Blessed One,
2. of upright conduct is the Order of Disciples ♦ of the Blessed One,
3. of wise conduct is the Order of Disciples ♦ of the Blessed One,
4. of generous conduct is the Order of Disciples ♦ of the Blessed One.

Those four pairs of persons ♦ the eight kinds of individuals: ♦ that is the Order of Disciples ♦ of the Blessed One.

5. They are worthy of offerings,
6. they are worthy of hospitality,
7. they are worthy of gifts,
8. they are worthy of reverential salutations,
9. an incomparable field of merit for the world.

Satta Buddha Vandanā: Homage to the Seven Buddhas

Only one Buddha ever exists in the world at a time. After his teachings disappear from the world, sometimes eons pass by without another Buddha attaining enlightenment. From our Buddha named Sidhartha Gautama, we learn that there have only been seven Buddhas in the last 91 eons. They all discovered the very same Dhamma and taught it to disciples who also attained enlightenment. The verses below are found in the Āṭānāṭiya Sutta, from the Long Discourses of the Buddha.

1. Vipassissa namatthu, cakkhu-mantassa sirīmato.
Sikhissapi namatthu, sabba-bhū-tā-nukampino.
2. Vessabhussa namatthu, nahā-takassa tapassino.
Namatthu Kakusandhassa, Māra-senā-pamaddino.
3. Koṇāgamanassa namatthu, brāhmaṇassa vusīmato.
Kassapassa namatthu, vip-pamut-tassa sabbadhi.
4. Aṅgīrasassa namatthu, sakya-puttassa sirīmato.
Yo imaṃ dhamma-madesesi, sabba-dukkhā-panūdanam.
5. Ye cāpi nibbutā loke, yathā-bhūtaṃ vipassisum.
- Te janā apisuṇā, mahantā vītasāradā.
6. Hitaṃ deva-manussānam, yaṃ namassanti Gotamaṃ
Vijjā-caraṇa-sampannam, mahantaṃ vītasāradaṃ.
Vijjā-caraṇa-sampannam, Buddhaṃ vandāma Gotamaṃ'ti.

1. Homage to Vipassi the Buddha ♦ possessed of the eye of wisdom and splendor. Homage to Sikhi the Buddha ♦ compassionate towards all beings.
2. Homage to Vessabhu the Buddha ♦ free from all defilements ♦ and possessed of great energy. Homage to Kakusanda the Buddha ♦ the conqueror of the army of Māra.
3. Homage to Konagamana the Buddha ♦ who has shed all defilements ♦ and has lived the holy life. Homage to Kassapa the Buddha ♦ who is fully freed from all defilements.
4. Homage to Aṅgirasa ♦ the Buddha Gotama ♦ son of the Sākyas ♦ full of radiance ♦ who proclaimed the Dhamma ♦ that dispels all suffering.
5. Those in the world ♦ who have extinguished the flames of passion ♦ and have realized through insight ♦ things as they really are ♦ they never slander anyone ♦ they are mighty men ♦ who are free from fear.
6. Gotama the Buddha ♦ dear to gods and humans ♦ endowed with knowledge and virtue ♦ mighty and fearless ♦ we pay homage to our Great teacher ♦ Supreme Buddha.

Cetiya Vandana: Homage to Stupas and Bodhi Tree

There are several physical objects we use as a focus for our devotion to our teacher, the Buddha. One is the parts of his body, such as bones and hair, that remained after he died. These are often placed in burial mounds called cetias or stupas. Another is the tree he sat under when he attained enlightenment. The third is statues and paintings of the Buddha.

Vandāmi cetiyaṃ sabbaṃ—Sabba-ṭhānesu patiṭṭhitaṃ

Sārīrika-dhātu-Mahā-bodhiṃ—Buddha-rūpaṃ sakalaṃ sadā.

Yassa mūle nisinno va—Sabbāri vijayaṃ akā,

Patto sabbaññutaṃ Satthā—Vande taṃ Bodhi-pādapaṃ.

Ime ete Mahā-Bodhi—Loka-nāthena pūjitā,
Aham-pi te namassāmi—Bodhi-Rājā nam’atthu te!

I show my humble reverence ♦ to all the stupas ♦
in all of the places ♦ that they stand ♦
the bodily relics ♦ the Great Bodhi Tree ♦
and all the Buddha images forever.

I show my reverence ♦ to this Bodhi-tree ♦
seated under which ♦ the Teacher attained full Enlightenment ♦
by overcoming all defilements.

I, too, honor ♦ this great Bodhi-tree ♦
which was honoured ♦ by the Leader of the World ♦
My homage to thee ♦ O king of Bodhi-trees
Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Buddha Puja: Offering for the Supreme Buddha.

One way we show our gratitude to our teacher the Buddha is by making offerings. Of course the Buddha is no longer alive and does not actually receive these gifts. By remembering his special qualities as we make the offerings we develop a stronger sense of who he is and what he was able to do. As our faith in the enlightenment of the Buddha grows, these actions become more meaningful.

In the Vimanavatthu 4.9, we learn, “If people offer something to the Supreme Buddha when he is alive or after he has passed away, as long as they have the same confident mind on both occasions, the results will be the same. Beings are reborn in heaven because of their confident minds.”

My great teacher ♦ Supreme Buddha ♦ eradicated passion ♦
hatred and delusion. My great teacher ♦ Supreme Buddha ♦

Eradicated the desire of ♦ seeing forms.

Eradicated the desire of ♦ hearing sounds.

Eradicated the desire of ♦ smelling odors.

Eradicated the desire of ♦ tasting flavors.

Eradicated the desire of ♦ touching tangibles.

Eradicated the desire of ♦ thinking thoughts.

Supreme Buddha ♦ controlled sense faculties ♦ guarded sense faculties ♦
restrained sense faculties.

Supreme Buddha ♦ is free from defilements.

My great teacher ♦ Supreme Buddha ♦ purified his body ♦ speech and mind.

In this way ♦ my great teacher ♦ Supreme Buddha ♦ is an Arahant.

Supreme Buddha ♦ understood suffering ♦ as a Noble Truth.

... eradicated the origin of suffering ♦ as a Noble truth.

... attained the cessation of suffering ♦ as a Noble Truth.

... followed the Path ♦ leading to the cessation of suffering ♦ as a Noble Truth.

In this way ♦ Supreme Buddha ♦ realized the Four Noble Truths ♦
without anyone's help ♦ escaped from suffering ♦ and achieved true happiness.

I offer with great respect ♦ these beautiful flowers ♦ sweet fragrance ♦
sweet drinks ♦ and bright light ♦ to my great teacher ♦ Supreme Buddha.

Sādhu! Sādhu! Sādhu!

Invitation to the Deities

As we know, the Buddha taught not only humans the path to freedom from suffering but also gods and divine beings. As fellow disciples, we invite them to come and listen to the Buddha's teachings being recited.

Samantā cakka-vālesu—Atrā-gacchantu devatā
Sad-dhammaṃ muni-rājassa—Sunantu sagga-mokkha-dam
Parittas savanna-kālo ayam bhadantā
Parittas savana-kālo ayam bhadantā
Paritta Dhammas-savana-akālo ayam bhadantā

Translation:

*In the universe in their entirety, let the deities come here;
The good doctrine of the King of Sages
That gives heaven and release.
This is the time to listen to the protective discourses.
This is the time to listen to the protective discourses.
This is the time to listen to the protective Dhamma discourses.*

Namaskara: Salutation to the Buddha

This is the same homage that we recited at the beginning.

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sam-buddhassa
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sam-buddhassa
Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sam-buddhassa

Next we recite a scripture from the brown Mahamevnawa Pali-English Paritta Chanting Book. Most of the passages in that book are sermons preached by the Buddha.

After that we will do loving-kindness meditation. This will be a guided meditation, so you can listen silently, cultivating the wholesome wish that all being would be free from suffering.

Kammā Vācanā: Asking for Forgiveness

The Buddha taught that we benefit from recognizing our faults and abandoning them. Although the Triple Gem cannot actually forgive us, developing a wish to overcome our shortcomings can lead to our happiness and well-being.

Kāyena vācā cittaena, pamādena mayā kataṃ
Accayaṃ khama me bhante, Bhūri-pañña tathāgata
Kāyena vācā cittaena, pamādena mayā kataṃ
Accayaṃ khama me dhamma, Sanditthika akālika.
Kāyena vācā cittaena, pamādena mayā kataṃ
Accayaṃ khama me saṅgha, puñña-kettaṃ anuttara.

Translation:

*If, due to negligence, I have done some wrong, by body, speech, or mind,
Forgive me of that offense, O Bhante, perfect One of vast wisdom.*

*If, due to negligence, I have done some wrong, by body, speech, or mind,
Forgive me of that offense, O Dhamma, visible and unaffected by time.*

*If, due to negligence, I have done some wrong, by body, speech, or mind,
Forgive me of that offense, O Sangha, supreme field of merit.*

Blessings chanted by the monks

Abhivādana-sīlissa—Niccaṃ vuḍḍhāpacāyino;
Cattāro dhammā vaḍḍhanti—Āyu vaṇṇo sukhaṃ balaṃ.
Āyurā rogya sampatti—sagga sampatti mevaca
ato nibbāna sampatti—imina te samijjhatu

Translation:

*For the person who worships virtuous people
And always reveres and serves the elders,
Four things increase: long life, beauty, happiness, and power.*

May you have long life and be free from illness.

May you have rebirth in heaven.

May you one day attain Nibbāna!

Asking for Forgiveness and Sharing Merit with Bhantes

At the end of the devotional service we ask forgiveness from and share merit with senior monks. We will do the same thing after the Dhamma talk.

Okāsa vandāmi Bhante. (bow once)

Mayākatam puññaṃ, sāminā anumodi tabbaṃ.

Please, Bhante, kindly allow me to share with you the merit I have collected.

(Bhantes: Sādhu, Sādhu, anumodāmi!)

Good, good, I rejoice!

Saminā katam puññaṃ, mayham dātabbaṃ

Please Bhante, kindly share with me the merit you have collected.

(Bhantes: Sādhu, Sādhu, anumodetha!)

Good, good, I share!

Sādhu, Sādhu anumodāmi!

Good, good, I appreciate!

Okāsa! Dvārattena katam sabbaṃ accayaṃ khamatha me Bhante

Forgive me, oh Bhante, of any offences I may have committed by body, speech, or mind.

(Bhantes: Kamāmi kamitabbaṃ)

I forgive

Okāsa khamāmi Bhante!(bow)

I ask for forgiveness, oh Bhante!

Dutiyam'pi okāsa khamāmi Bhante!

For a second time, I ask forgiveness, oh Bhante!

Tatīyam'pi okāsa khamāmi Bhante!

For a third time, I ask forgiveness, oh Bhante!

Loving Kindness Meditation

- (1) May I be free from anger.
May I be free from ill will.
May I be free from jealousy.
May I be free from mental suffering.
May I be free from physical suffering.
May I live in peace. May I live happily.
- (2) May all beings in this monastery
... be free from anger.
... be free from ill will.
... be free from jealousy.
... be free from mental suffering.
... be free from physical suffering.
May they live in peace.
May they live happily.
- (3) May all beings in this city
... be free from anger.
... be free from ill will.
... be free from jealousy.
... be free from mental suffering.
... be free from physical suffering.
May they live in peace.
May they live happily.
- (4) May all beings in this province
... be free from anger
... be free from ill will.
... be free from jealousy.
... be free from mental suffering.
... be free from physical suffering.
May they live in peace.
May they live happily.
- (5) May all beings in this country
... be free from anger.
... be free from ill will.
... be free from jealousy.
... be free from mental suffering.
... be free from physical suffering.
May they live in peace.
May they live happily.
- (6) May all beings in this world
... be free from anger.
... be free from ill will.
... be free from jealousy.
... be free from mental suffering.
... be free from physical suffering.
May they live in peace.
May they live happily.
- (7) May all beings
... be free from anger.
... be free from ill will.
... be free from jealousy.
... be free from mental suffering.
... be free from physical suffering.
May they live in peace.
May they live happily....
live happily... live happily...

Glossary

bhante: a respectful way of addressing a monk

bhikkhu: monk. Female version: bhikkhuni

deva: can refer to all heavenly beings in general or specifically the lower class of heavenly beings, the other being brahmas. (Not to be confused with brahmins, the priestly caste in India.)

kamma: (Sanskrit: karma) intentional actions we do that have good or bad results based on the type of action.

lay people: followers of the Buddha who live ordinary lives while practicing the teachings, as opposed to ordained monks and nuns.

Mahamevnawa: (maha MAY oo NA wa) “Garden of the Great Cloud.” This is the name of the most ancient monastery in Sri Lanka and also the name of our organization. In tropical countries clouds are often the only relief from the burning sun.

Māra: A non-human being who tries to prevent people from practicing the Dhamma

merit: all kinds of good actions that lead to good results.

Namo Buddhaya: “Homage to the Buddha.”

Pāli: the ancient language of the Buddha’s teachings.

saddhā: (Sanskrit: shraddha) faith, confidence.

sādhu: excellent, very good.

saṃsāra: the cycle of death and rebirth that only comes to an end with full enlightenment.

sutta: (Sanskrit: sutra) the scriptures taught by the Buddha and his enlightened disciples who lived when he did.

Theravāda: “Teaching of the Elders,” the oldest tradition of Buddhism, common in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Burma, and Laos.