

CATURĀRAKKHĀ BHĀVANĀ

FOUR PROTECTIVE MEDITATIONS



EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY ĀNANDAJOTI BHIKKHU

Caturārakkhā Bhāvanā

Four Protective Meditations

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Buddhānussati, mettā ca, asubham, maraṇassati

Recollection of the Buddha, friendliness, unattractiveness, and mindfulness of death -

iti imā caturārakkhā bhikkhu bhāveyya sīlavā.

these are the four protective meditations that a virtuous monk should develop.

Anantavitthāraguṇaṃ guṇatonussaraṃ Muniraṃ,

Recollecting the Sage's virtue, and his endless, extensive, good qualities,

bhāveyya buddhimā bhikkhu Buddhānussati-m-ādito.

the wise monk should develop the recollection of the Buddha first.

Buddhānussati

Recollection of the Buddha
(Ārakkhā Bhāvanā 1)

1. Savāsane kilese so eko sabbe nighātiya,

Alone he destroyed all the corruptions, and (bad) predispositions,

aḥu susuddhasantāno pūjānaṃ ca sadāraho.

and being continually and fully pure he is worthy of worship at all times.

2. Sabbakālagate dhamme sabbe sammā sayamaṃ Muni

° The Sage by himself has, in every way, completely awakened to all things

sabbākārena bujjhitvā, eko sabbaññutaṃ gato.

throughout the whole of time, and alone he has arrived at omniscience.

3. Vipassanādi vijjāhi sīlādi caraṇehi ca,

° Being endowed with great psychic power, good conduct, virtue, and so on,

susamiddhehi sampanno, gaganābhehi nāyako.

true understanding, insight, and so on, the leader was like the shining sky.

4. Sammāgato subhaṃ ṭhānaṃ amoghavacano ca so,

He who never spoke foolish words, has arrived at that glorious state (Nibbāna),

tividhassāpi lokassa ñātā niravasesato.

he knew the threefold world system (completely) without leaving anything out.

5. Anekehi guṇoghehi sabbasattuttamo ahū,

Overflowing with countless good qualities he is supreme among all beings,

anekehi upāyehi naradamme damesi ca.

with countless skilful means he tamed those men who could be tamed.

6. Eko sabbassa lokassa sabbamatthānusāsako,

He alone, to the whole world was the teacher of everything good,

bhāgyaissariyādīnaṃ guṇānaṃ paramo nidhī.

he is the highest treasure, having qualities such as good fortune, mastery, and so on.

7. Paññāssa sabbadhammesu karuṇā sabbajantusu,

Being wise in regard to all things compassionate to everybody,

attatthānaṃ paratthānaṃ sādhiḱā guṇajeṭṭhikā.

he exceeded (others) in the best qualities, (knowing) what was for his own and others' good.

8. Dayāya pāramī citvā paññāyattānam-uddharī,

Through sympathy he set his mind on the perfections through wisdom he raised himself up,

uddharī sabbadhamme ca, dayāyaññe ca uddharī.

he raised himself above all things, through sympathy he raised others too.

9. Dissamāno pi tāvassa rūpakāyo acintayo,

Even his visible form-body was beyond thought,

asādhāraṇāñāpaḍḍhe dhammakāye kathā vakāti?

what can be said of his spiritual body, which was unique, having powerful knowledge?

Mettā Bhāvanā
The Development of Friendliness Meditation
(Ārakkhā Bhāvanā 2)

1. Attūpamāya sabbesaṃ sattānaṃ sukhakāmatāṃ,

In a similar way to oneself, all beings desire happiness,

passivā kamato mettaṃ sabbasattesu bhāvaye.

having seen that one should gradually develop friendliness towards all beings.

2. Sukhī bhaveyyaṃ niddukkho, ahaṃ niccaṃ, ahaṃ viya

May I constantly be happy, free from suffering, and like myself

hitā ca me sukhī hontu, majjhata cātha verino.

may my benefactors be happy, neutral persons, and foes also.

3. Imamhi gāmakkhettamhi, sattā hontu sukhī sadā,

In this village, and its surrounding fields, may beings always be happy,

tato parañ-ca rajjesu, cakkavālesu jantuno.

and those in other countries, and people throughout the universe.

4. Samantā cakkavālesu sattānantesu pāṇino,

° Throughout the entire universe may the countless beings, creatures,

sukhino puggalā bhūtā attabhāvagatā siyūṃ,

persons, and bhūtas, who have attained individuality, be happy,

5. tathā itthī pumā ceva ariyā anariyā pi ca,

and so too (all) women, men, noble ones, and also ignoble ones,

devā narā apāyaṭṭhā, tathā dasadisāsu cāti.

gods, humans, and fallen creatures, and likewise (all beings) in the ten directions.

Asubhasaññā
Perception of the Unattractive
(Ārakkhā Bhāvanā 3)

1. Aviññāpasubhanibham saviññāpasubham imam,

With consciousness it is unattractive, just as it is without (i.e. dead),

kāyam asubhato passam, asubham bhāvaye yati.

seeing this body as unattractive, a monk should develop (the recollection) of the unattractive.

2. Vaṇṇasaṅghānagandhehi āsayokāsato tathā,

Thus by way of colour, shape, smell, location, and appearance,

paṭikkūlāni kāye me kuṇapāni dvisoḷasa.

the thirty-two (parts) in my body (are like) repulsive corpses.

3. Patitamhā pi kuṇapā, jeguccham kāyanissitam,

The (parts) that depend on this body are contemptible, as is what falls from a corpse,

ādhāro hi 'suci tassa, kāye tu kuṇape ṭhitam.

for their receptacle is impure, they are situated in this corpse of a body.

4. Mīlhe kimi va kāyoyam asucimhi samuṭṭhito,

Like a worm in excrement this body arose in what is impure (i.e. the womb),

anto asucisampunṇo punṇavaccakuṭi viya.

inside it is full of impurities just like a full lavatory.

5. Asucisandate niccam yathā medakathālikā,

Always the impurities overflow like fat (overflows) from a frying pan,

nānākimikulāvāso, pakkhacandanikā viya.

various kinds of worms dwell in it, the same as in a cesspool.

6. Gaṇḍabhūto, rogabhūto, vaṇabhūto, samussayo,

This bodily heap is like a boil, like a disease, or like a sore,

atekiccho ti jeguccho pabhinnakuṇapūpamo ti.

it is incurable, contemptible, just like a rotting corpse.

Maraṇānussati
Recollection of Death
(Ārakkhā Bhāvanā 4)

1. Pavādadīpatulyāya, sāyusantatiyā khayam,

By comparing a lamp in a breeze, with the destruction of the life continuum,

parūpamāya sampassam, bhāvaye maraṇassatiṃ.

through seeing oneself as similar to others, one should develop mindfulness of death.

2. Mahāsampattisampattā yathā sattā matā idha,

Just as people who have attained great good fortune here have died,

tathā aham marissāmi maranam mama hessati.

in the same way will I die death is (surely) coming to me.

3. Uppattiyā sahevedam maraṇam āgataṃ sadā,

Indeed death always comes along with that which has arisen,

marañatthāya okāsam vadhako viya esati.

it is like a murderer who is seeking an opportunity to kill.

4. Īsakam anivattam tam satatam gamanussukam,

° This life is slowly, without turning back, continually, eagerly,

jīvitam udayā attham suriyo viya dhāvati.

going its way, it rises and falls just as the sun runs its course (and sets).

5. Vijjububbulaussāva, jalarāji parikkhayam,

(Like) lightning, a bubble, dew, a line drawn on water, life (quickly goes to) destruction,

ghātako varipūtassa sabbatthā pi avāriyo.

like an executioner in regard to his rival (death) can never be constrained.

6. Suyasatthāmapuññiddhī buddhivuddhī Jinadvayam,

Even the two kinds of Victors, who are famous, strong, meritorious, powerful, and of great intelligence,

ghātesī maraṇam khippam, kā tu mādisake kathā?

were quickly slaughtered by death, so what to say about one like me?

7. Paccayānañ-ca vekalyā bāhirajjhattupaddavā,

When conditions fail there are internal and external adversities,

marāmoram nimesā pi maramāno anukkhapaṇ-ti.

dying at each and every moment I will die in less (time) than a blink of an eye.

Aṭṭhasamvegavatthūni The Eight Bases for Urgency

1. Bhāvetvā caturārakkhā āvajjeyya anantaram

Having developed these four protections one should consider next

mahāsamvegavatthūni, aṭṭha aṭṭhitavīriyo.

the eight great bases for urgency, having non-stop energy.

2. Jātijarāvyādhicutī apāyā,

Birth, old age, sickness, death, the lower realms,

atīta-appattakavaṭṭadukkhāṃ,

the past and future suffering in the round,

idāni āhāragaveṭṭhidukkhāṃ

the suffering in having to seek food in the present -

samvegavatthūni imāni aṭṭha.

these are the eight bases for urgency.

3. Pāto ca sāyamapi ceva imāṃ vidhiñño,

If, in the morning and in the evening, one who knows the way,

āsevate satatamatta hitābhilāsi,

who desires his own benefit, practises (these meditations) continually,

pappoti so ti vipulaṃ hata pārīpantho,

° then after destroying (even) extensive obstacles, that sage

setṭham sukham muni viṣiṭṭhamataṃ sukhena cāti.

easily attains great happiness, and the distinction of the deathless.