

Teachings

The Four Great References

Cattāro mahāpadesā

[AN 4.180]			
ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā bhoganagare viharati ānandacetiye			
On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Bhoganagara near the Ānanda shrine.			
katame bhikkhave cattāro mah'āpadesā?			
mahā-	adj		great, large, powerful
apadesā	noun	masc.nom.pl	reasons, causes, arguments, statements references
What monks are the four great references?			
idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu evaṃ vadeyya — sammukhā m'etaṃ, āvuso, bhagavato sutāṃ sammukhā paṭiggahitaṃ — ayaṃ dhammo, ayaṃ vinayo, idaṃ satthusāsanā'ti.			
idha	ind		here, in this regard, in this case
bhikkhu	noun	masc.nom.s	a monk
evaṃ	ind		thus, this, like this, just as, such
vadeyya	verb	opt.3.s	could say, can speak
sammukhā	ind	(+gen)	face to face (with), in front (of)
me	pron	1.ins.s	by me
etaṃ	pron	nt.nom.s	this
āvuso	noun	masc.voc.pl	brother(s), friend(s)
bhagavato	noun	masc.gen.s	of the Buddha
sutāṃ	pp	nt.nom.s	heard
sammukhā	ind	(+gen)	face to face (with), in front (of)
paṭiggahitaṃ	pp	nt.nom.s	received, got, learned, taken
ayaṃ	noun	masc.nom.s	this
dhammo,	noun	masc.nom.s	Teaching
ayaṃ	noun	masc.nom.s	this
vinayo	noun	masc.nom.s	Discipline
idaṃ	noun	nt.nom.s	this
satthusāsanā'ti	noun	nt.nom.s	Teacher's instruction, Teacher's message Teacher's doctrine
Here a monks could say thus: in the presence of the Buddha this has been heard by me, in (His) presence (this) has been learned - this is the Teaching, this is the Discipline, this is the Teacher's instruction.			
asukasmimṃ nāma āvāse saṅgho viharati sathero sapāmokkho. tassa me saṅghassa sammukhā sutāṃ sammukhā paṭiggahitaṃ.			
asukasmimṃ	adj	masc.loc.s	in such and such; so and so; a certain.

nāma	ind		called, by the name of, namely
āvāse	noun	masc.loc.s	in home, dwelling place, residence
saṅgho	noun	masc.nom.s	Community, assembly of monks
viharati	verb	pr.3.s	lives, stays, remains, continues
sathero	adj	masc.nom.s	including the elders
sapāmokkho.	adj	masc.nom.s	including chiefs, first, excellents, eminents
tassa	pron	masc.gen.s	of that
me	pron	1.ins.s	by me
saṅghassa	noun	masc.gen.s	of Community, assembly of monks
sammukhā	ind		face to face (with), in front (of)
sutaṃ	pp	nt.nom.s	heard
sammukhā	ind		face to face (with), in front (of)
paṭiggahitaṃ	pp	nt.nom.s	received, got, accepted, appropriated, taken

In a certain residence the Community stays, including the elders and eminent monks. In the presence of that Community this was heard by me, in (its) presence this was received by me.

asukasmim nāma āvāse sambahulā therā bhikkhū viharanti bahussutā āgatāgamā dhammadharā vinayadharā mātikādharā tesam me therānaṃ sammukhā sutaṃ sammukhā paṭiggahitaṃ

asukasmim	adj	masc.loc.s	in such and such; so and so; a certain.
nāma	ind		called, by the name of, namely
āvāse	noun	masc.loc.s	in home, dwelling place, residence
sambahulā	adj	masc.nom.pl	many, numerous, plenty of, lit. lots together
therā	adj	masc.nom.pl	old, elderly, senior
bhikkhū	noun	masc.nom.pl	monks
viharanti	verb	pr.3.pl	live, stay, remain, continue
bahussutā	adj	masc.nom.pl	well learned, knowledgeable, lit. much heard
āgatāgamā	adj	masc.nom.pl	to whom scriptures has been arrived, heir to the heritage, who has mastered the tradition
dhammadharā	adj	masc.nom.pl	who knows the Dhamma by heart, lit. Dhamma bearer
vinayadharā	adj	masc.nom.pl	expert in vinaya, lit. vinaya bearer
mātikādharā	adj	masc.nom.pl	expert in tabulated summary, in Abhidhamma lit. tabulations bearer
tesam	pron	masc.gen.s	of that
me	pron	1.ins.s	by me
therānaṃ	noun	masc.gen.pl	of elders
sammukhā	ind		face to face (with), in front (of)
sutaṃ	pp	nt.nom.s	heard
sammukhā	ind		face to face (with), in front (of)
paṭiggahitaṃ	pp	nt.nom.s	received, got, accepted, appropriated, taken

In a certain residence many senior monks stay. Who knowledgeable, heir of the heritage, who knows the Dhamma by heart, expert in vinaya and expert in tabulated summary. In the presence of that elders this was heard by me, in (their) presence this was received by me.

asukasmim nāma āvāse eko thero bhikkhu viharati bahussuto āgatāgamo dhammadharo vinayadharo mātikāddharo tassa me therassa sammukhā sutam sammukhā paṭiggahitam

In a certain residence one senior monk stays. Who knowledgeable, heir of the heritage, who knows the Dhamma by heart, expert in vinaya and expert in tabulated summary. In the presence of that elder this was heard by me, in (his) presence this was received by me.

ayam dhammo ayam vinayo idam satthusāsanan'ti

this is the Teaching, this is the Discipline, this is the teacher's instruction.

tassa bhikkhave bhikkhuno bhāsitaṃ n'eva abhinanditabbam nappaṭikkositabbam.

tassa	pron	masc.gen.s	of that
bhikkhuno	noun	masc.gen.s	of monks
bhāsitaṃ	noun	nt.nom.s	saying, speech, statement, utterance, talk, words lit. what was said
neva	ind		neither
abhinanditabbam	ptp	nt.nom.s	can be delighted in, should be approved of applauded
na-	ind		not
paṭikkositabbam	ptp	nt.nom.s	should be rejected, should be disdained

Statement of that monk neither should be approved nor should be rejected.

anabhinanditvā appaṭikkositvā padabyañjanāni sādhuḥkaṃ uggahetvā sutte otāretabbāni, vinaye sandassetabbāni.

anabhinanditvā	verb	abs	having not approved (of), having not applauded
appaṭikkositvā	verb	abs	having not disapproved, having not rejected
pada-	noun		word, phrase, sentence, saying
byañjanāni	noun	nt.acc.pl	words; terms; expressions; phrases
sādhuḥkaṃ	ind		well, thoroughly, fully
uggahetvā	verb	abs	having learned, having grasped
sutte	noun	nt.loc.s	in discourse
otāretabbāni	ptp	nt.nom.pl	should be gone into, should be checked
vinaye	noun	masc.loc.s	in discipline, training
sandassetabbāni	prp	nt.nom.pl	should be compared, verified; lit: should be caused to be seen together with

Having not approved or not disapproved (them), having thoroughly learned (those) words and phrases, they should be checked in discourses, should be compared with discipline.

tāni ce sutte otāriyamānāni vinaye sandassiyamānāni na ceva sutte otaranti na vinaye sandissanti, nitṭham'ettha gantabbam:

tāni	pron	nt.nom.pl	those
ce	ind		if
sutte	noun	nt.loc.s	in discourse
otāriyamānāni	prp	nt.nom.pl	being causing to go into, being checked
vinaye	noun	masc.loc.s	in discipline, training
sandassiyamānāni	prp	nt.nom.pl	being compared, verified; lit: being caused to be seen together with
na	ind		not
ceva	ind		only if, if just
sutte	noun	nt.loc.s	in discourse
otaranti	verb	pr.3.pl	descend (into), go down (into), flow down fit
na	ind		not
vinaye	noun	masc.loc.s	in discipline, training
sandissanti	verb	pr.3.pl	are agree with, live conformably with lit. 'is seen together with'
niṭṭham-	noun	fem.acc.s	end, conclusion, perfection, height, summit
ettha	ind		here, in this place, in this regard
gantabbam	ptp	nt.nom.s	should be made, lit. should be gone
If those (statements) being checked in discourses and being compared with discipline, if those (statements) does not fit to the discourses, does not agree with discipline, in this regard conclusion should be made.			
addhā idaṃ na ceva tassa bhagavato vacanaṃ arahato sammāsambuddhassa; tassa ca therassa duggahitaṃ'ti. iti hetam bhikkhave chaḍḍeyyātha.			
addhā	ind		most certainly! for sure! definitely!
idaṃ	pron	nt.nom.s	this, this thing
na	ind		not
ceva	ind		and even, as well as
tassa	pron	masc.gen.s	of that
bhagavato	noun	masc.gen.s	of the Buddha
vacanaṃ	noun	nt.nom.s	word, utterance, talk, statement
arahato	noun	masc.gen.s	of the arahant, of the worthy one
sammāsambuddhassa;	noun	masc.gen.s	of perfectly awakened one, fully enlightened
tassa	pron	masc.gen.s	of that
ca	ind		but
therassa	noun	masc.gen.s	of elder
duggahitaṃ'ti	adj	nt.nom.s	incorrectly understood, poorly grasped, taken in the wrong way incorrectly understood,
iti	ind		thus, this is, and so
h'etaṃ	ind+pn	nt.acc.s	indeed this, certainly this
chaḍḍeyyātha	verb	opt.2.pl	you should throw away, discard, drop

Definitely this is not the word of the Blessed One, the worthy one, the perfectly enlightened one, but incorrectly understood by that elder. Thus indeed you should discard it.

sutte ceva otaranti vinaye ca sandissanti, niṭṭham'ettha gantabbaṃ – addhā, idaṃ tassa bhagavato vacanaṃ arahato sammāsambuddhassa;

sutte	noun	nt.loc.s	in discourse
ceva	ind		only if, if just
otaranti	verb	pr.3.pl	descend (into), go down (into), flow down fit
vinaye	noun	masc.loc.s	in discipline, training
ca	ind		and
sandissanti	verb	pr.3.pl	are agree with, live conformably with lit. 'is seen together with'
niṭṭham-	noun	fem.acc.s	end, conclusion, perfection, height, summit
ettha	ind		here, in this place, in this regard
gantabbaṃ	ptp	nt.nom.s	should be made, lit. should be gone
addhā	ind		certainly, surely
idaṃ	pron	nt.nom.s	this, this thing
tassa	pron	masc.gen.s	of that
bhagavato	noun	masc.gen.s	of the Buddha
vacanaṃ	noun	nt.nom.s	word, utterance, talk, statement
arahato	noun	masc.gen.s	of the arahant, of the worthy one
sammāsambuddhassa;	noun	masc.gen.s	of perfectly awakened one, fully enlightened

Only if (those statements) are fit the discourses, and agree with discipline, in this regard conclusion should be made: Surely this is the words of the Blessed One, the worthy one, the perfectly enlightened one”

imassa ca bhikkhuno suggahitaṃ

imassa	pron	masc.gen.s	of this, his
ca	ind		and
bhikkhuno	noun	masc.gen.s	of monk
suggahitaṃ	adj	nt.nom.s	well learned, well grasped

It has been learned well by that monk.

tassa ca saṅghassa suggahitaṃ

It has been learned well by that Community.

tesañ'ca therānaṃ suggahitaṃ

It has been learned well by those elders.

tassa ca therassa suggahitaṃ'ti

It has been learned well by that elder.

ime kho bhikkhave cattāro mahāpadesā ti

Indeed, o monks, these are the four great references.

next chant > [Principles of Cordiality](#)