



**Conserve Buddhism by  
only learning, practicing, and spreading the Words of  
the Buddha.**

## Preface

After more than 2,500 years, Buddhism teachings have become vastly varied with the emergence of various sects, each develops its own references and applications, causing inconsistency even on similar subject matters. This, however, is not because the teachings of the Buddha are with flaws.

So who should one believe and follow? Let's search for a simple answer by considering 10 suttas as addressed by the Tathagata as a caution as well as ways to prevent and rectify the setback in Dhamma of Buddhism.

A question for one to ponder is "Is it time for followers of the Buddha to have only ONE true reference, that is "the Buddha's Own Words" – being the Dhamma of the father of the Sangha, by which all common practitioners can thus learn and master?"

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**Suttas of the Importance for Buddhists to Study only the Buddha's own words.**

### 1. The Buddha spoke with concentration of mind so his words are without errors.

Aggivessana,...,the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma to others only to give them knowledge. When the talk is finished, Aggivessana, then I **steady my mind internally, quieten it, bring it to singleness, and concentrate it** on that same sign of concentration as before, in which I constantly abide.

Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1995, p.342

## 2. Words of the Buddha are immediately effective, that is, being true and unbound by time

...Bhikkhus, so you have been guided by me with this Dhamma, which is **visible here and now, immediately effective, inviting inspection**, onward leading, to be **experienced by the wise for themselves**.

Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1995, p.358

## 3. All of the words of the Buddha from the day of enlightenment are just.

Monks,...whatever the Wayfarer utters, speaks and proclaims between the day of his enlightenment and the day on which he passes utterly away, **-all that is just so** and not otherwise....

Masefield, Peter, The Itivuttaka, the Pali Text Society, Oxford, 2001, p.198

## 4. The Buddha addressed the possible cause of the vanishing of his teachings, comparing with a kettle drum.

“Bhikkhus, once in the past the Dasarahas had a kettle drum called the Summoner(Anaka). When the Summoner became cracked, **the Dasarahas inserted another peg**. Eventually the time came when **the Summoner’s original drumhead had disappeared and only a collection of pegs remained**.

So too, bhikkhus, the same thing will happen with the bhikkhus in the future. **When those discourses spoken by the Tathagata that are deep, deep in meaning, supramundane, dealing with emptiness, are being recited, they will not be eager to listen to them, nor lend an ear to them, nor apply their minds to understand them; and will not think those teachings should be studied and mastered**. But when those discourses that are mere poetry, beautiful in words and phrases, created by outsiders, spoken by [their] disciples, are being recited, they will be eager to listen, will lend an ear to them, will apply their minds to understand them ; and they will think those teachings should be studied and mastered.

**In this way, bhikkhus, those discourses spoken by the Tathagata that are deep, deep in meaning, supramundane, dealing with emptiness, will disappear.**

Bodhi Bhikkhu, The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya, Vol I, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2000, p.708-709

#### **5. The Buddha emphasized the learning of the discourses uttered by him and not by others’.**

Herein, monks, in whatsoever company the monks listen not to those discourses made by poets, tricked out with fair sounding phrases, discourses external to Dhamma uttered by their followers, when they are recited: where they lend not a ready ear to them, apply not to them a mind bent on understanding, consider not that those teachings are something to be learned by heart and mastered;

**But to those uttered by the Tathagata, discourses deep and deep in meaning, transcendental, dealing with the Void – when such are recited, they listen thereto, lend a ready ear to them, apply to them a mind bent on understanding and consider that those teachings are something to be learned by heart and mastered,** - and having mastered that teaching question each other about it, open up discussion thus: " What is this? What is the meaning of this?"- when such open up the unrevealed, explain the unexplained and dispel doubts on divers doubtful points of doctrine

Woodward, F.L., MA, The Book of Gradual Sayings (Anguttara-Nikaya) Vol. I, The Pali Text Society, Lancaster, 2006, p.68-69

And what, monks, is the company **“trained in bluster, not inquiry”**?

Herein, monks, in whatsoever company the monks listen not to the discourses uttered by the Tathagata, discourses deep and deep in meaning, transcendental, dealing with the Void, when they are recited: where they lend not a ready ear to them, apply not to them a mind bent on understanding, consider not that those teachings are something to be learned by heart and mastered: but when those discourses made by poets, tricked out with fair sounding phrases, discourses external to Dhamma uttered by their followers, when such are recited they listen thereto, lend a ready ear to them, apply to them a mind bent on

understanding and consider that those teachings are something to be learned by heart and mastered,- and when they have mastered that teaching they do not question each other about it, do not open up a discussion thus: "What is this? What is the meaning of this?" -when they neither open up the unrevealed nor explain the unexplained, nor dispel doubts on divers doubtful points of doctrine,- such a company, monks, is called "**trained in bluster, not in inquiry.**"

And what, monks, is the company "**trained in inquiry, not trained in bluster**"?

Herein, monks, in whatsoever company the monks listen not to those discourses made by poets, tricked out with fair sounding phrases, discourses external to Dhamma uttered by their followers, when they are recited: where they lend not a ready ear to them, apply not to them a mind bent on understanding, consider not that those teachings are something to be learned by heart and mastered: but to those uttered by the Tathagata, discourses deep and deep in meaning, transcendental, dealing with the Void – when such are recited, they listen thereto, lend a ready ear to them, apply to them a mind bent on understanding and consider that those teachings are something to be learned by heart and mastered, - and having mastered that teaching question each other about it, open up discussion thus: " What is this? What is the meaning of this?"- when such open up the unrevealed, explain the unexplained and dispel doubts on divers doubtful points of doctrine,- such a company is called "**trained in inquiry, not in bluster.**"

These are the two companies, and of these two **the latter has the pre-eminence.**

Woodward, F.L., MA, The Book of Gradual Sayings (Anguttara-Nikaya) Vol. I, The Pali Text Society, Lancaster, 2006, p.68-69

## 6. The Buddha prohibited adding or abolishing what has been authorized.

“Monks...as long as (the monks) **do not authorize what has not been authorised already, and do not abolish what has been authorized,** but proceed according to what has been authorized by the rules of training..., they may be expected to prosper and not decline.”

## 7. His disciple, despite being an Arahant, is just a follower of Buddha's path.

“The Tathagata, bhikkhus, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One, is the originator of the path unarisen before, the producer of the path unproduced before, the declarer of the path undeclared before. He is the knower of the path, the discoverer of the path, the one skilled in the path. **And his disciples now dwell following that path and become possessed of it afterwards.**

This, bhikkhus, is the distinction, the disparity, the difference between the Tathagata, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One, and a bhikkhu liberated by wisdom.”

Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya, Vol I, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2000, p. 901

## 8. Words of Buddha on knowing the Dhamma rightly and handing on.

Herein the monks get by heart a text that is rightly taken, with words and sense that are rightly arranged. Now if words and sense are rightly arranged the meaning also is easy to follow. This is the first thing. . . .

...Yet again those monks who are of wide knowledge, versed in the doctrines, who know Dhamma by heart, who know Vinaya by heart, who know the summaries by heart,-these dutifully hand on a text to another; thus when they pass away, the text is not cut down at the root, it has something to stand on. This, monks, is the third thing. . . .

(The two of four things conduce to the support, to the non-confusion, to the not vanishing away of Saddhamma.)

F.L. Woodward, M.A., The Book of the Gradual Sayings (Anguttara Nikaya) Vol II, (The Book of Four), Pali Text Society, 1993, p. 152-153

## 9. The Buddha taught criteria to ensure conformity of his teaching.

Monks, I will teach you four criteria. Listen, pay close attention, and I will speak...

(1) “Suppose a monk were to say: “Friends, I heard and received this from the Lord's own lips: this is the Dhamma, this is the discipline, this is the Master's teaching” ...,

(2) “Suppose a monk were to say: “In such and such a place there is a community with elders and distinguished teachers. I have heard and received this from that community” ...

(3) “Suppose a monk were to say: “In such and such a place there are many elders who are learned, bearers of the tradition, who know the Dhamma, the discipline, the code of rules. I have heard and received this from those elders” ...

(4) “Suppose a monk were to say: “In such and such a place there is one elder who is learned, bearer of the tradition, who know the Dhamma, the discipline, the code of rules. I have heard and received this from that elder” ...

Then, monks, **you should neither approve nor disapprove his words.** Then, without approving or disapproving, his words and expressions **should be carefully noted and compared with the Suttas and reviewed in the light of the discipline.** If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas or the discipline, the conclusion must be: “Assuredly this is not the word of the Buddha, it has been wrongly understood by this monk”, and the matter is to be rejected. But where on such comparison and review they are found to conform to the Suttas or the discipline, the conclusion must be: “Assuredly this is the word of the Buddha, it has been rightly understood by this monk”



## 10. The Buddha addressed Venerable Ananda to regard Dhamma and discipline as teacher after his passing.

“Ananda, it may be that you will think: The Teacher's instruction has ceased, now we have no teacher! It should not be seen like this, for what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma and discipline will, at my passing, be your teacher. (1)

“Those bhikkhus, Ananda, either now or after I am gone, **who dwell with themselves as their own island, with themselves as their own refuge, with no other refuge; who dwell with the Dhamma as their island, with the Dhamma as their refuge, with no other refuge** it is these bhikkhus, Ananda, who will be for me topmost of those keen on the training. (2)

“Ananda, when there are two men living, he under whom there occurs a breach of this good practice - he is the last man among them. Therefore, Ananda, I say to you: continue this good practice instituted by me and **do not be the last man.**” (3)

(1) Walshe, Maurice, The Long Discourses of the Buddha : A Translation of the Digha Nikaya, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1987, 1995, p.269-270

(2) Bodhi Bhikkhu, The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya, Vol II, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2000, p.1644

(3) Bhikkhu Nanamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 1995, p.697

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