

On Preserving and Transmitting the Buddha's Teachings

1. [A Brahmin asked,] "Is there, Master Ananda, any single monk who was appointed by Master Gotama thus: 'He will be your refuge when I am gone,' and whom you now have recourse to?"

[Ananda replied,] There is not single monk, Brahmin, who was appointed by Master Gotama thus: 'He will be your refuge when I am gone,' and whom we now have recourse to."

"But if you have no refuge (*patisarana*), what is the cause for your concord?"

We are not without a refuge, Brahmin. We have a refuge; we have the Dhamma as our refuge."

Majjhima Nikaya 108.7-10
(Bhikkhu Bodhi translation)

2. And the Blessed one said to Ananda: "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, Ananda, for what I have taught and explained to you as Dhamma and Discipline will, at my passing, be your teacher."

Mahaparinibbana Sutta
DN 16.6.1

3. Be a lamp/island onto yourselves, being your own refuge, with no one else as your refuge, with the Dhamma as a lamp/island, with the Dhamma as your refuge, with no other refuge. And how does one live as a lamp onto oneself, ... with no other refuge? Here, Ananda, a monk abides contemplating the body as body, earnestly, clearly aware, mindful and having put away all hankerings and fretting for the world, and likewise with regard to feelings, mind and mind-objects.

Mahaparinibbana Sutta
DN 16 2.26

4. Ananda, a disciple should not seek the Teacher's company for the sake of *discourses, stanzas, and expositions*. Why is that? For a long time, Ananda, **you have learned the teachings, remembered them, recited them verbally, examined them with the mind, and penetrated them well by view**. But such talk as deals with effacement, as favours the mind's release, and which leads to complete disenchantment, dispassion, cessation, peace, direct knowledge, enlightenment, and Nibbana, that is, talk on wanting little, on contentment, seclusion, aloofness from society, arousing energy, virtue, concentration, wisdom, deliverance, knowledge and vision of deliverance: for the sake of such talk a disciple should seek the Teacher's company even if he is told to go away.

The Greater Discourse on Emptiness
MN 122.20
(Bhikkhu Bodhi's translation)

5. In Majjhime Nikaya 133 some monks discuss the fact that they do not remember a teaching of the Buddha. The Ven. Samiddhi then goes to the Buddha to ask him “teach me the summary and exposition of ‘One Who Has One Fortunate Attachment.’” The Buddha does so. (Similarly in MN 134)

6. The Buddha said,

“Therefore, Cunda, all you to whom I have taught these dhammas, having witnessed them with my own clear knowledge, should come together and recite them, setting meaning beside meaning and expression beside expression, without dissension, in order that this holy life may continue to be established for a long time, for the benefit and happiness of many, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit and happiness of gods and humans. And what are the dhammas that you should recite together? The four foundations of mindfulness, the four fight efforts, the four roads to power, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, the Noble Eightfold Path. These are the things you should recite together.

The Delightful Discourse
Digha Nikaya 29.17
 (compare with DN 16. 3.50)

7. “If a fellow in the holy life quotes the Dhamma in the assembly, and if you think he has either misunderstood the sense or expressed it wrong, you should neither applaud nor reject it, but should say to him: “Friend, if you mean such-and-such, you should put it either like this or like that...”

The Delightful Discourse
Digha Nikaya 29.18

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

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**”, 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 light of the discipline. If they, on such comparison and review, are found not to conform to the Suttas and 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,” This is the first criterion.

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**”, then you should neither approve or disapprove... This is the second criterion.

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...** This is the third criterion.

Suppose a monk were to say, “**In such and such a place there is one elder who is learned...**[This is the fourth criterion].

Mahaparinibbana Sutta
DN 16.47-11

9. At the death of Nigantha Nataputta, the founder of the Jains, his followers were “split into two parties, quarrelling and disputing...”

[Knowing this] The Venerable Sariputta addressed the monks, “So ill-proclaimed was their (the Jain) teaching and discipline, so unedifyingly displayed, and so ineffectual in calming the passions, having been proclaimed by one who was not fully enlightened. But, friends, this Dhamma has been well proclaimed by the Lord, the fully enlightened One. And so **we should all recite it together** without disagreement, so that this holy life may be enduring and established for a long time, thus to be for the welfare and happiness of the multitude, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, welfare and happiness of devas and humans.

The Chanting Together Sutta
Sangiti Sutta (Digha Nikaya 33.1.6-7)

10. From the Vinaya

“Friend Purana,” elders said to him, “the Teaching and Discipline have been recited together by the elder monks. Please submit yourself to this recitation.”

“Friends,” Purana replied, “the Teaching and Discipline are well-recited by the elders. But in the way I have heard them in the Exalted One’s presence, in the way that I have received them in his presence, thus will I bear it in mind.”

Culavagga XI.1.11

11. The Dhamma is what was proclaimed by the Buddha, the disciples (*savakas*), the sages (*rsi*) and the gods.

Vinaya IV. 15 (Mahavagga?)

12. The god Sakka said, “I taught the Dhamma as far as I had heard it and practiced it.”

DN 21.2.7

The Limbs of the Teachings

[Three limbs]: *sutta*, *geyya*, *vyakarana* (doctrine, mixed prose and verse, explanations) e.g., MN 122.20

Nine Limbs: *sutta*, *geyya*, *vyakarana*, *gatha*, *udana*, *itivuttika*, *jataka*, *adbutadhamma*, *vedalla*, (doctrine, mixed prose and verse, explanations, poems, inspired utterances, recorded sayings, birth stories, marvels, analysis). E.g. MN 22.10

Twelve Limbs: add *nidana*, *apadana*, *upadesa* (narratives, past life stories, exegesis).