

JUSTIN MERRITT

THE PATH

for soloists, choir, & orchestra

1. Tisarana *The Three Refuges*

I go to the Buddha for refuge.

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ aṃ gacchāmi.

I go to the Dhamma for refuge.

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ aṃ gacchāmi.

I go to the Sangha for refuge.

Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

A second time I go to the Buddha for
refuge.

Dutiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ aṃ gacchāmi.

A second time I go to the Dhamma for
refuge.

Dutiyampi dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ aṃ gacchāmi.

A second time I go to the Sangha for
refuge.

Dutiyampi saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

Tatīyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ aṃ gacchāmi.

Tatīyampi dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ aṃ gacchāmi.

Tatīyampi saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi.

A third time I go to the Buddha for refuge.

A third time I go to the Dhamma for
refuge.

A third time I go to the Sangha for refuge.

2. Dhammacakkappavattana *Set Rolling the Wheel of Dhamma*

This is the Truth of Suffering:

birth is suffering,

old age is suffering,

sickness is suffering,

death is suffering,

being with what you despise is suffering,

separation from what you hold dear is suffering,

failing to satisfy your desires is suffering,

the things that we wrongly take to be our true selves are suffering.

This is the Truth of the Cause of Suffering:

craving leads to rebirth,

lust, the neverending search for pleasure,

desire for the enjoyment of the senses,

desire for being, desire for destruction.

This is the Truth of the End of Suffering:

the withering of craving,

the freedom from lust.
the letting go of desire.

And this is the Truth of the Path to the End of Suffering, the Eightfold Path:

wise understanding,
wise motivation,
wise speech,
wise behavior,
wise livelihood,
wise states of mind,
wise mindfulness,
wise samadhi.

As long as I did not know these Four Noble Truths,
embodied them in every aspect,
as long as I was not completely pure,
then in this world of gods, demons, and priests,
in this world of spiritual seekers, angels, and people,
I did not claim full liberation.

But when I knew these Four Noble Truths,
embodied them in every aspect,
when I was completely pure,
then in this world of gods, demons, and priests,
in this world of spiritual seekers, angels, and people,
I did indeed claim full liberation.

At that moment I knew:
Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done.
There is nothing more for this world.

3.Sappadasa

For twenty-five years,
In all the time since going forth,
I have found no peace,
Even for an instant.
My mind was never once at ease.
I was plagued by lust.
Weeping, I ran out of my hut.

Should I pick up the razor?
After all, what's the point?
Should I give up the teaching,
And bring it all to an end?

I picked up the knife and sat down.
But at the moment when I was finally ready,
To slice the vein,
Suddenly I understood,
It all became clear,
I knew in my heart the danger,
And I was truly chastened

My mind was liberated.
I saw the perfection of the dhamma.
I gained the three knowledges,
And realized the Buddha's teaching.

4. Rain

My little hut is safe and homey,
Protected from the storm.
So rain all you want, sky.
My mind is peaceful and free.
I practice diligently. So rain!

Rain falls from the sky like sweet music,
But my little hut is safe and homey,
Protected from the storm.
My mind is peaceful in meditation,
So rain all you want, sky.

Rain falls from the sky like sweet music,
But my little hut is safe and homey,
Protected from the storm.
My mind is peaceful and quiet in this body,
So rain all you want, sky.

Rain falls from the sky like sweet music,
But my little hut is safe and homey,
Protected from the storm.
I dwell here, observant.
So rain all you want, sky.

Rain falls from the sky like sweet music,
But my little hut is safe and homey,
Protected from the storm.
I abide here, alone.
So rain all you want, sky.

The rain falls,
The wind blows,
And the lightning flashes.
But my mind is still.
I am peaceful in meditation.

5. Life is Short & Fleeting

The life of a person is short, miserable, and filled with problems. So a wise person will follow the holy life. After all, death is inevitable.

Appakam, brāhmana, jīvitam manussānam parittam
lahukam bahudukkham bahupāyāsam mantāyam
boddhabbam, kattabbam kusalam, caritabbam
brahmacariyam, natthi jātassa amaranam.

“Like a drop of dew on a blade of grass
when the sun rises...

Seyyathāpi, brāhmana, tinagge ussāvabindu sūriye
uggacchante khippamyeva paṭivigacchati, na
ciraṭṭhitikam hoti;

Like rain fat drop of rain falling from the
sky...

Seyyathāpi, brāhmana, thullaphusitake deve vassante
udakabubbuḷam khippamyeva paṭivigacchati, na
ciraṭṭhitikam hoti;

Like a line drawn in the water with a
stick...

Seyyathāpi, brāhmana, udake danḍarāji
khippamyeva paṭivigacchati, na ciraṭṭhitikā hoti;

Like a swift flowing mountain stream...

Seyyathāpi, brāhmana, nadī pabbateyyā dūrangamā
sīghasotā hārahārinī, natthi so khano vā layo vā
muhutto vā yam sā āvattati, atha kho sā gacchateva
vattateva sandateva;

Like a dollop of spit on a man’s tongue...

Seyyathāpi, brāhmana, balavā puriso jivhagge
kheḷapindam samyūhitvā akasireneva vameyya;

Like a morsel of meat on a hot iron pan...

Seyyathāpi, brāhmana, divasamsantatte ayokaṭāhe
mamsapesi pakkhittā khippamyeva paṭivigacchati,
na ciraṭṭhitikā hoti;

Like a cow lead to the slaughterhouse, each
step closer to their death...

Seyyathāpi, brāhmana, gāvī vajjhā āghātanam
nīyamānā yam yadeva pādā uddharati, santikeva
hoti vadhassa santikeva maranassa;

So too the life of a person is short,

Yam, bhikkhave, satthārā karanīyam sāvakānam

miserable, and filled with problems. So a wise person will follow the holy life. After all, death is inevitable.”

hitesinā anukampakena anukampam upādāya; katam vo tam mayā etāni, bhikkhave, rukkhamūlāni etāni suññāgārāni.”

Here are roots of trees and empty huts. Meditate! Don't be negligent! Don't later be full of remorse! This is our teaching.

Jhāyatha, bhikkhave, mā pamādattha; mā pacchā vippaṭisārino ahuvattha. Ayam vo amhākam anusāsani”.

6. Ambapali

Once my hair was as curly and black as a bee.
Now as I age it looks more like hemp.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

Once my hair smelled like a bundle of flowers.
Now as I age it smells like old fur.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

Once my hair was as thick as a jungle grove, decorated with a comb and pin.
Now as I age it is dishevelled and thin.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

Once decorated with gold and jewels
Now as I age I have lost my hair.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

My eyebrows were once as shapely as though crafted by a sculptor.
Now as I age they are wrinkled and sagging.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

My eyes were once dark and sparkling as jewels.
Now as I age they grow dim.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

My nose was once exquisitely curved.
Now as I age it has shriveled.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

My ears were once as lovely as delicate bracelets.
Now as I age they are wrinkled and sagging.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

My breasts were once firm, round, and full.

Now as I age they sag like empty water skins.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

Once my body was as magnificent as a sheet of gold.
Now I am covered in wrinkles.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

This is what happens to the body. It becomes old, weary, and ugly.
Like a house with decaying mortar.
But the words of the Teacher remain.

7. Dhammapada *All Experience*

All experience is directed by mind,
Formed by mind, shaped by mind.
Speak or act with a pure mind,
And happiness results,
Like a shadow that never leaves.

Hatred never brings an end to hatred.
Only by love can it end.
This is the truth of ages.

Most people do not truly understand,
That one day we will all die.
But for those who do understand,
All arguments cease.

8. Fear

All beings fear cruelty.
All beings fear death.
Knowing that all beings suffer just like you,
Never kill or be the cause of killing.

All beings fear cruelty.
All beings cherish their life.
Knowing that all beings suffer just like you,
Never kill or be the cause of killing.

9. Dhamma

While out begging for food
Overcome by weakness I leaned on my
walking stick.

“Pindapātaṃ caritvāna,
dandamolubbha dubbalā;
Vedhamānehi gattehi,

My body tottered, and I fell to the ground. tattheva nipatiṃ chamā;
At that moment, I saw the suffering of this Disvā ādiṇavaṃ kāye,
body, atha cittaṃ vimucci me.
And in that moment my mind was set free.

10. Sleep in Peace

Therike

Sleep in peace, Therike
Wearing the robes you have made
Your passions are dried up
Like a kettle of dried vegetables

Puñña

Punna, like the waxing moon on the 15th day,
Grow full with virtue and wisdom.
And when the path is fulfilled,
Dispel the darkness of ignorance.

11. Sumangala

Free, free, completely free!
Free from three twisted things:
Free from my sickle,
Free from my plough,
And free from my small hoe.
So meditate Sumangala!

12. Dasaka

One who is a lazy glutton,
Lethargic, lolling around in bed,
Like a stuffed pig,
Is a dunce who will be reborn again and again.

13. Gahvaratiriya

Tormented by the flies and mosquitoes,
Of the vast jungle,
Like a noble war elephant,
Mindfully endure.

14. Sumangala's Mother

Free, free, completely free! “Sumuttikā sumuttikā,
Free from my mortar and pestle, sādhumuttikāṃhi musalassa;

Free from my water jar,
And free from my rotten husband.
Free from lust and hate,
At the root of a tree,
I comfortably, blissfully meditate.

Ahiriko me chattakaṃ vāpi,
ukkhalikā me deḍḍubhaṃ vāti.
“Rāgañca ahaṃ dosañca,
cicciti ciccitīti vihanāmi;
Sā rukkhamaṃlamupagamma,
aho sukhanti sukhato jhāyāmi”ti.

15. Anicca vata sankhara

Soon this body will be buried, discarded,
tossed aside like a useless log.
Everything is impermanent.
It is born and decays.
To fully understand this truth
Brings true happiness.

16-17. Anattalakkhana Pt. 1 & 2

Your body is not your true self.
If your body was your true self,
it wouldn't lead to pain and suffering.
If your body was your true self,
it would be under your full control.
But it is not so!

“Rūpam, bhikkhave, anattā. Rūpañca hidam,
bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidam rūpam ābādhāya
samvatteyya, labbhettha ca rūpe: ‘evam me rūpam
hotu, evam me rūpam mā ahoṣī’ti. Yasmā ca kho,
bhikkhave, rūpam anattā, tasmā rūpam ābādhāya
samvattati, na ca labbhati rūpe: ‘evam me rūpam
hotu, evam me rūpam mā ahoṣī’ti.

Your feelings are not your true self.
If your feelings were your true self,
they wouldn't lead to pain and suffering.
If your feelings were your true self,
they would be under your full control.
But it is not so!

Vedanā anattā. Vedanā ca hidam, bhikkhave, attā
abhavissa, nayidam vedanā ābādhāya samvatteyya,
labbhettha ca vedanāya: ‘evam me vedanā hotu,
evam me vedanā mā ahoṣī’ti. Yasmā ca kho,
bhikkhave, vedanā anattā, tasmā vedanā ābādhāya
samvattati, na ca labbhati vedanāya: ‘evam me
vedanā hotu, evam me vedanā mā ahoṣī’ti.

Your perceptions, consciousness, and
experience are not your true self.
If they were your true self,
they wouldn't lead to pain and suffering.
If they were your true self,
they would be under your full control.
But it is not so!

Saññā anattā ... pe ... inñānam anattā. Sankhārā ca
hidam, bhikkhave, attā abhavissamsu, nayidam
sankhārā ābādhāya samvatteyyum, labbhettha ca
sankhāresu: ‘evam me sankhārā hontu, evam me
sankhārā mā ahesun’ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave,
sankhārā anattā, tasmā sankhārā ābādhāya
samvattanti, na ca labbhati sankhāresu: ‘evam me
sankhārā hontu, evam me sankhārā mā ahesun’ti.

“Is your body everlasting or fleeting?”
“Fleeting!”
“Is what is fleeting a comfort or a misery?”
“A misery!”
“So should I say this body is mine? I am my body? It is my true self?”
“No!”

“Are your feelings everlasting or fleeting?”
“Fleeting!”
“Is what is fleeting a comfort or a misery?”
“A misery!”
“So should I say these feelings are mine? I am my feelings? Are they my true self?”
“No!”

“Are your perceptions, consciousness, and experiences everlasting or fleeting?”
“Fleeting!”
“Is what is fleeting a comfort or a misery?”
“A misery!”
“So should I say these perceptions are mine? I am my perceptions? Are they my true self?”
“No!”

And so a wise one turns away from the body,
turns away from feelings,
turns away from perceptions,
consciousness, and experiences.
He becomes serene.
Through serenity he is liberated.

“Rūpam niccam vā aniccam vā”?
“Aniccam, bhante”.
“Yam panāniccam dukkham vā tam sukham vā”?
“Dukkham, bhante”.
“Yam panāniccam dukkham viparināmadhammam, kalam nu tam samanupassitum: ‘etam mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’?”
“No hetam, bhante”.

“Vedanā niccam vā aniccam vā”?
“Aniccam, bhante”.
“Yam panāniccam dukkham vā tam sukham vā”?
“Dukkham, bhante”.
“Yam panāniccam dukkham viparināmadhammam, kalam nu tam samanupassitum: ‘etam mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’?”
“No hetam, bhante”.

“Saññā, sankhārā, viññānam niccam vā aniccam vā”?
“Aniccam, bhante”.
“Yam panāniccam dukkham vā tam sukham vā”?
“Dukkham, bhante”.
“Yam panāniccam dukkham viparināmadhammam, kalam nu tam samanupassitum: ‘etam mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā’?”
“No hetam, bhante”.

Evam passam, bhikkhave, sutavā ariyasāvako
rūpasmimpi nibbindati, vedanāyapi nibbindati,
saññāyapi nibbindati, sankhāresupī nibbindati,
viññānasmimpi nibbindati.
Nibbindam virajjati; virāgā vimuccati.

18. Little Hut

With a heart full of faith I ordained.
I built a little hut in the jungle.
I’m alert and ardent,
Mindful and attentive.

Who lives in this little hut?
A monk lives in this little hut.
Free from passion,
With mind restrained.
Know this my friend,
Your little hut was not made in vain.

In Karamvi,
The call of the blue-necked peacock,
And the play of the cool breeze,
Arouses you to meditation.

My body is light!
Filled with intense bliss and happiness,
Like cotton floating in the breeze.

19. Kumarapanha

What is one?
All things subsist on nourishment.

“Ekaṃ nāma kiṃ”?
“Sabbe sattā āhāratthitika”.

What is two?
Name and form.

“Dve nāma kiṃ”?
“Nāmañca rūpañca”.

What is three?
The three kinds of sensations.

“Tīṇi nāma kiṃ”?
“Tisso vedanā”.

What is four?
The four noble truths.

“Cattāri nāma kiṃ”?
“Cattāri ariyasaccāni”.

What is five?
The five aspects of mind and body that
feed grasping.

“Pañca nāma kiṃ”?
“Pañcupādānakkhandhā”.

What is six?
The six internal senses.

“Cha nāma kiṃ”?
“Cha ajjhattikāni āyatanāni”.

What is seven?
The seven factors of Liberation.

“Satta nāma kiṃ”?
“Satta bojjhangā”.

What is eight?
The eightfold path.

“Attha nāma kiṃ”?
“Ariyo atthangiko maggo”.

What is nine?
The nine abodes.

“Nava nāma kiṃ”?
“Nava sattāvāsā”.

What is ten?
A arahant has ten factors.

“Dasa nāma kiṃ”?
“Dasahangehi samannāgato ‘arahā’ti vuccatī.”

20. Dvattimsakaro *The Parts of the Body*

In the body there are
head hair, body hair, nails, teeth, skin,
meat, sinew, bones, marrow, kidneys,
heart, liver, membranes, spleen, lungs,
intestines, mesentery, undigested food,
excrement,
bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat,
tears, grease, spit, mucus, synovial fluid, and
urine;

Atthi imasmiṃ kāye –
Kesā lomā nakhā dantā taso
Maṃsaṃ nhāru atthi atthimiñjaṃ vakkam
Hadayaṃ yakanam kilomakam pihakam papphāsam
Antam antagunam udariyam karīsam matthalungam
Pittam semham pubbo lohitaṃ sedo medo
Assu vasā khelo singhāṇikā lasikā muttanti.

21. Bhaddā

Before, I wandered with my hair plucked out at the roots,
covered in dirt, half naked,
Believing right was wrong and wrong was right.
One day, I climbed to the Vulture’s Peak.

I met the Buddha and the sangha.
I bowed with great reverence.
“Bhaddā, come,” was all he said.
And with that I was ordained.

22. Karanīya Metta Sutta *The Sutta on Loving Kindness*

To train in goodness, to find peace
This is what has to be done:
Be capable and honest,
Modestly accept criticism,
Be content with little,
Take on few responsibilities,
Be frugal, calm, and humble,
Put aside all greed for worldly things,
Avoid even the smallest action,
that could be criticized by the wise.

May every living creature be happy and safe,

Their hearts full of joy,
Every being that breaths, whatever size or shape.
Seen and unseen, near and far,
Born and about to be born,
May they all be filled with happiness.

Do not deceive or despise anyone whatsoever,
Nor allow anger or hatred to cause you to wish them harm,
Just as a mother would defend her child, even with her own life,
In just this way, you should cultivate boundless love for all beings.
Radiating kindness throughout the whole world,
Above and below and throughout,
Free from hate, free from the slightest cruelty.

Be energetically mindful of this practice at all times:
While standing, walking, or lying down.
For this is the highest, most sublime state.

If you avoid unwise views, greed,
and desire for the pleasures of the senses,
And hold fast to your virtue and insight,
You will nevermore be born again into this world.

23. King of Death *Tissa* & *Bhalliya*

Tissa

Like one hit by a sword,
Like one with hair ablaze,
Letting go of all sense desires,
Mindfully, a monk goes forth.

Bhalliya

He defeated the King of Death,
Like a huge flood destroying a rotting bridge.
Victorious. Fearless.
Strong. Masterful.
He has won Liberation.

24. Udana

I have heard that the Buddha was once
living near Savatthi in Jeta's Forest at
Anathapindika's monastery. The Buddha
offered them this poem:

Evam me sutam. Atha kho bhagavā etamattham
viditvā tāyam velāyam imam udānam udānesi:

Monks, there is a place
with no earth,
no water,
no fire,
and no air,
no experience of infinite space,
infinite consciousness,
nothingness,
or perception nor non-perception,
not this world,
not another world,
no Moon,
no Sun.

In this place there is no coming,
no going,
no remaining,
no death,
no rebirth.

It is without foundation.
Still.
Empty.
This, just this, is the end of all

suffering.

Then, the Buddha offered them this poem:

Monks, there is a place
that is uncreated,
unborn,
and unsupported.

Monks, if there were not this place
uncreated,
unborn,
and unsupported,
then there would be no escape

from the

created,
born,
and supported.

“Atthi, bhikkhave, tadāyatanam, yattha neva
pathavī, na āpo, na tejo, na vāyo, na
ākāsānañcāyatanam, na viññānañcāyatanam, na
ākiñcaññāyatanam, na nevasaññānāsaññāyatanam,
nāyam loko, na paraloko, na ubho candimasūriyā.
Tatrāpāham, bhikkhave, neva āgatim vadāmi, na
gatim, na t̥hitim, na cutim, na upapattim;
appatiṭṭham, appavattam, anārammanamevetam.
Esevanto dukkhassā”ti.

Atha kho bhagavā etamattam viditvā tāyam
velāyam imam udānam udānesi:

“Atthi, bhikkhave, ajātam abhūtam akatam
asankhatam. No cetam, bhikkhave, abhavissa ajātam
abhūtam akatam asankhatam, nayidha jātassa
bhūtassa katassa sankhatassa nissaranam
paññāyetha. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, atthi ajātam
abhūtam akatam asankhatam, tasmā jātassa bhūtassa
katassa sankhatassa nissaranam paññāyatī”ti.

But because there is such a place
uncreated,
unborn,
and unsupported,
then there is hope of escape from
the
created,
born,
and supported.

25. Hatthaka

A wise person who is truly free
Will always sleep well.
They are not corrupted by lust.
Their desires are calmed.

Sabbadā ve sukham seti,
brāhmano parinibbuto;
Yo na limpati kāmesu,
sītibhūto nirūpadhi.

All attachments are severed,
The heart is freed from sorrow.
The peaceful person sleeps with ease,
Having attained perfect tranquility.

Sabbā āsattiyo chetvā,
vineyya hadaye daram;
Upasanto sukham seti,
santim pappuyya cetaso.

26. The Fire Sermon

The world is aflame.
The eye is aflame.
Forms are aflame.
Eye consciousness is aflame.

Aflame with what?
Aflame with the fire of passion,
the fire of hate,
the fire of delusion.
Aflame with birth, aging and death,
with sorrow,
with lamentation,
with pain, with grief, with despair.

The ear is aflame. Sounds are aflame...
The nose is aflame. Aromas are aflame...
The tongue is aflame. Flavors are aflame...
The body is aflame. Touch is aflame...

The mind is aflame. Ideas are aflame...
Consciousness itself is aflame.

Aflame with what?
Aflame with the fire of passion,
the fire of hate,
the fire of delusion.
Aflame with birth, aging and death,
with sorrow,
with lamentation,
with pain, with grief, with despair.

Through disenchantment, one is fully released.
With release, there is liberation.
Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done.
There is nothing more for this world.

27. Nirodha

28. No Bliss Higher Than Peace

Victory leads to hatred.
The conquered sleep in pain.
Setting aside victory and defeat,
The wise live content and sleep well

Jighacchāparamā rogā,
sankhāraparamā dukhā;
Etam ñatvā yathābhūtam,
nibbānam paramam sukham.

There is no fire like passion,
No burden like hate,
No torment like the aggregates,
And no bliss higher than peace.

Ārogyaparamā lābhā,
Santutthiparamam dhanam;
Vissāsaparamā ñāti,
Nibbānam paramam sukham.

Drinking in the flavor
of seclusion and calm
one is freed from evil and grief
and tastes sweetness and joy

Pavivekarasam pitvā,
rasam upasamassa ca;
Niddaro hoti nippāpo,
dhammapīrasam pivam.