

KHANDHĀVIMUTTISĀMAṄĠĪDHAMMA

VERSES OF LIBERATION FROM THE KHANDHAS

Composed  
by  
*Venerable Ācariya Mun Bhūridatto*

Translated from the Thai by Bhikkhu Khemasanto



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1870-1949

## Introduction

(From the Thai)

*Khandhāvimuttisāmaṅgīdhamma* is a composition by the Venerable Ācariya Mun Bhūridatto Thera. Those involved in the editing and printing have done so according to their personal degree of understanding. Let those who review, read or listen compare it to the original document set down in his own handwriting, the readers must use their own *sati-paññā* (mindfulness and wisdom) to examine and reflect so as to understand for themselves.

The *Dhammasāmaṅgī* of the Venerable Ācariya Mun, which is presented here, is a composition full of meaningful Dhamma. It is mysterious, brilliant and penetrating beyond words. It shows the way of practice by pure *citta-bhāvanā* (the heart's way of practice). Done with beautiful phrasing and deep meaning, it is the highest teaching of a profoundly wise man. In an era it is difficult to find such a work and difficult for those of us with *sati-paññā* who are yet full of *kilesā* (defilements) to fully comprehend. We therefore wished to print this work for preservation, for those inclined to study with a resolute heart in order to practice and follow the Dhamma that he demonstrated. This is *visuddhidhamma* (pure Dhamma) which leads those who practice to surely achieve what they aspire to, that state which is peace and tranquility.

We the organizers, wish to pay homage and reverence to the excellence of the Venerable Ācariya Mun with highest regards and also to that which he composed with such *mettā*, giving clarity and light to those who follow after. It is difficult to relate all the virtues of such a person.

Note: The Venerable Ācariya Mun wrote this composition approximately eighty years ago. At this time the original is cared for at the museum of artifacts of the Venerable Ācariya Mun at Wat Pa Suthavath, Sakhorn-nakhorn Province, Thailand.

## Translator's Introduction

When given this work to translate my Teacher at the time, Venerable Ācariya (Preeda) Chandakaro, told me, “translate, don't interpret”. I followed this advice and it was for this reason that the original flavor of the work was not totally lost which can sometimes happen with a clinically correct or paraphrased translation.

Many of the Pāli words are translated the first time they are met with but not always afterwards. There is a small glossary in the back included to help with the meanings of Pāli words. Wherever I was unsure of the meaning in a few spots I consulted Ajahn Preeda (Tui), his wise council being essential. Every effort has been made to keep my poor understanding of the deep meaning from affecting or influencing the translation.

The translator asks forgiveness for any mistranslation that may have occurred and takes full responsibility. May the merit that was made here go to all beings along the Path so that they may reach their own heart's *vimutti* (liberation).

The difficulty in translating this work was due to a number of peculiarities. Firstly, as hinted at in the Thai introduction, it was the handwriting itself and its spelling which was sometimes doubtful. Having been written over eighty years ago at a time when spelling was not exactly standard. The writing is sometimes unclear and there are those who say it may have been tampered with after the death of the author. The real difficulty however was the style that it was written in. It was written in a poetic style of old Thai. This does not lend itself to English poetry well at all. Still the less said the better, just do not judge it by our poetic standards yet keep in mind that it is poetry. As I mentioned in the beginning, I have stayed as close to the original Thai as possible and this has actually helped. Don't feel bad if you have some trouble always understanding the meaning, most Thai have just as much trouble in the original language. It is deep Dhamma, not popular poetry. It takes many readings and much contemplation to see behind the words.

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# KHANDHĀVIMUTTISĀMAṄĠDHAMMA

## VERSES OF LIBERATION FROM THE KHANDHAS

### *Nam’atthu Sugatassa pañca-dhamma-khandhāni*

I pay homage to the One Well-gone, Supreme Teacher, Sage of the Sakyas, the Rightly Self-Awakened One, to the nine supramundane Dhammas and the Noble Saṅgha. I will now expound in brief that which concerns *dhammakhandhā* using my *sati-paññā* (mindfulness and wisdom).

There was one who loved himself and thought in fear of suffering (*dukkha*),  
Wanting happiness (*sukha*) and to go beyond dangers, he forever wandered.

Wherever it was said “there is happiness”, he wanted to go but he fared endlessly.  
His character was of one who cared about himself and he was much in fear of death,  
He Truly wanted to go beyond the affairs of old age and death.

The day came when he realized the Truth, abandoning the causes (*samudayā*)  
And associated compounded things (*saṅkhārā*).

He found the cave of delight and eternal happiness, analogous to this self-same body.

Peering at this cave of delight with suffering transformed,  
He was wonderfully at peace, knowing for himself that those former fears were now powerless.

Gazing here and there around the mountain, he feared that to return and proclaim this thing to  
friends they would think him mad.

It could not compare with living in solitude within the affairs of peace.  
So then! No more thinking about the matter; it is better than going about aimlessly  
With vain speech, getting compliments and criticism, matters that are wearisome.

There was yet another who was afraid of death, his heart intimidated.  
He came to visit and spoke straightforwardly, instilling compassion.

10

20

He asked,

*“You have been striving for a long time, have you seen True Dhamma yet, as your heart aspired?”*

(Huh! How does he know my heart?)

He wishes to stay and I say good, good, I agree.

I will take you to see the great mountain and the cave of “delight without suffering”,

That is, *kāyānupassanā* (mindfulness of the body), you may admire it and cool your heart in the way of the Noble Ones.

If you go or not, it’s up to you, I will not force you. I do not tease but simply tell the truth.

And then I give him a riddle, the riddle was,

***What is “Raveung”?***

30

The answer is “running fast”.

That is, *viññāṇa* (consciousness), characteristically quick,

Following along together in a succession of movements.

*Saññā* (memory, perceptions), perceived, without doubt, as straight forward.

The heart rushes to and fro

With *saññā* gathering things from outside tricking the heart and making it think in turmoil,

Making it search hither and thither, deceiving it with things of illusion.

(From now on the visitor questions, the teacher answers)

*“Who can completely go beyond the five khandhā?”*

The heart alone can be free,

40

No more entangled, without binds, without the poisons of attachments.

Lost no more the heart is then one.

*Saññā* will then no longer deceive it with labels and concepts to follow.

*“As to death, who is it that dies?”*

*Saṅkhārā* die destroying their conditions.

*“What is it that creates this spinning round?”*

The tricks of *saññā* leads to the spinning.

When one believes *saññā* it causes foolish clinging to pleasures,

Going from one world to the next, whirling along so that one forgets the *citta* (heart),

*Saññā* totally enclosing the heart inside.

50

Then even diligently searching for Dhamma, it will not be seen.

*“Who decreed, who gives meaning to Dhamma?”*

The heart decrees,

The heart sets meanings following *saññā*,

That is, grasping at good and avoiding evil, clinging to love and hate.

*“What is eating once and not looking for more?”*

Being without desires to see, knowing without expectations,

Matters seen this way are then without confusion.

The heart sits still upon its base, discarding its longings.

*“What is the four cornered pool, full to the brim with water?”*

60

Dhamma free of desire and doubts, perfectly pure and clean, beyond dangers.

Those states of inner *saññā* disentangled, the *saṅkhārā khandhā* do not disturb;

The heart therefore is full to the very brim, lacking nothing.

Serene and at peace the heart ceases to speculate.

It is something to be admired day and night.

Even if one had divine treasures in the millions

It cannot compare with knowledge of the Truth free of the *khandhā*.

Being without craving is of the highest essence.

*Saññā* remains just *saññā* and not more than that.

The heart, no more enthralled, is content.

70

Like a mirror’s reflection of the face, don’t think fixed on *saññā*

Because *saññā* is that mere reflection.

Don’t get entangled following the affairs of the *saṅkhārā*.

*When the mind moves you may catch a glimpse of the pure heart.*

*As to that which moves, this becomes known by the fact that it has changed its state.*

(Of a heart not sure of itself there is no need to speak)

*Be aware of the five khandhā when the citta (heart) moves.*

*Before this awareness comes, saññā deceives one into thinking*

*That they are the heart.*

It is important to know that both the internal and external things of *saññā* are illusions, 80  
When this is understood the heart will be boundless and no longer hoping for a refuge.  
It is then without attachment for any specific *saññā*.  
Then, whether in the arising or passing away of conditions one need not be troubled nor safeguard oneself against *saññā*.

It is as if one was on a high mountain top gazing down at the earth and was able to see all beings.  
That's very high!  
If one is able to see oneself from one's beginnings,  
It is all pure Way as if seeing a flight of stairs.

*“Do the tides come and go according to Truth (sacca)?”*

*One cannot correct the changes of the saṅkhārā (all conditioned phenomena). 90*  
*That which is created by kamma does not act from spite.*  
Pushing and forcing issues makes the heart tainted and foul.

*There is no need to think of opposing nature that is a state of Truth.*  
Good and evil follow causes, the self alone is freed, not mixing with the *saṅkhārā* and remaining cool.  
To know the Truth means abandoning the *saṅkhārā* that change with every viewing.

When one is weary of this,

Let go,

It will then come easily, with no need to force.

Dhamma will be cool, the heart will cease being affected by conditions. 100

*Are the five duties complete?*

The *khandhā*, separate and apart in their five bases, are the affairs of the *saṅkhārā*.  
Each aggregate having its work of diverse kinds, not being able to receive other work, being fully engaged.  
Even gains, rank, praise and happiness have gossip, *dukkha*, loss of gains and loss of rank, together all naturally falling the way according to true conditions.  
With all eight conditions the heart does not turn to involve itself and become entangled  
*Because rūpa-khandha (body) always alters with age and illness,*

*Without exceptions.*

*As a spinning wheel of a machine, nāma (mental factors) do not rest from receiving the results of kamma which it itself has made. 110*

Pleasant things absorb the heart,  
Evil vexing the heart into forever thinking, like fire burning the heart,  
It then appears joyless.

*Think for yourself of love and hate,*

*Who is to blame?*

Is it possible not to grow old and die as one wishes?  
There are things beyond whose realm we cannot escape,  
As when not wanting the heart  
To think and wander in search of knowing but just wanting the heart  
To be one in equanimity.

120

*The heart is of the nature to change and is uncertain,  
Though saññā (memory and perceptions) sometimes remain a short time.*

If you only know equal to the nature of the five *khandhā*,  
The heart will then be pure and clean, without stain and free of affairs.  
If one knows in this way it is supreme because one then truly knows,

Freed in all ways.

*There is no need to resist nature when it follows the Truth.*

“Poor” or “rich” are things of the external,

“Good” and “evil” must cease completely, without attaching oneself to any desires.

130

*The heart’s impermanence is a heart ever moving and flickering.*

*One must notice and catch the meaning to realize peace.*

The small hides the large and one is unable to grasp the meaning.

The *khandhā* hide the Dhamma completely.

Occupied with the *khandhā*, Dhamma is not glimpsed even as dust,  
So the Dhamma inside which is greater than the *khandhā*, remains hidden.

*“What is the meaning of, “having, one has not – not having, one has”?*

*Here I am stuck without answer, please reveal to me the meaning.”*

What is said concerns the various becomings, their causes, effects and endings,  
Whether creature or human.

140

The first part, “having, one has not” is straightforward.

The other half of the question, “not having, one has” – this is Dhamma profound.  
Whoever attains this is through with wanting.

Not having *sāṅkhārā* but having true Dhamma, that’s it!  
The true single Dhamma of peace, not manifold and divided.  
The supreme state of highest tranquility.  
It is motionless and tranquil, clear inside the heart.  
The heart free of intoxicants and anxieties, wanting completely withdrawn and one is free of doubts.

The affairs of entanglements with the five *khandhā* completely gone. 150  
The mover of the three wheels of existence broken.  
The great longing is abandoned and expelled,  
Infatuations disappear completely without clinging.  
All turmoil disappears, gone according to the heart’s wish.

*“Please give me another example in the way of the heart, where samudaya (the cause of dukkha) in the heart hides Dhamma.”*

*Samudayā (causes) are great and far-reaching.  
Though when reduced in essence it is but infatuation oppressing the heart with attachment to the khandhā.*

If Dhamma is unswerving within, 160  
The heart is supreme and *samudaya* will no longer exist.  
Carefully remember this practice of the heart,

No need to think in confusion until totally defeated.

Without Dhamma there is continuous attachment to pleasures and the heart remains with *samudaya*, in bondage.

*To state it briefly, dukkha and Dhamma are always in the heart.  
Investigate until you see the truth and then you will attain to complete coolness.*

Whatever amount of *sukha* (happiness) or *dukkha* (suffering), these will not be feared.  
One will gradually leave the intoxicants which are *samudayā* (causes) for the state of security.  
Knowing just this will transform and dispel the hotness enough to rest and be able to investigate a way of escape. 170

*When the heart sees Dhamma, one will forget the mind that was once concerned with dust.  
The heart knowing Dhamma is true happiness.*

*The khandhā are always dukkha.*

*Dhamma remains Dhamma, the khandhā just remain the khandhā, that's all.*

To say, “cool at peace, without hotness” truly means the heart that has removed the false that once held it fast.

As for the *saṅkhārā khandhā* which are without happiness, they are true suffering because one must grow old, ill and die without let up.

The heart that realizes the excellent Dhamma is a heart that has removed the tainted, false things. 180

These false things are the heaviest burden to the heart.

Clearly seeing the Dhamma is removing all falsities and poisons from the mind.

The heart seeing Dhamma is most excellent, being free from all delusion.

Seeing the Dhamma, stripped of desires and with *sati* (mindfulness) inside,

Not entwined in confusion,

All infatuation with the *khandhā* just disappears

With no likes remaining,

All dust completely gone without remainder.

Even thinking without hindrance following one's nature, even then, the result is not confusion but freedom from turmoil. 190

*One will then come to realize that evil arises because one opposes Truth.*

*The reason evil arises is due to ignorance.*

If one closes the door on ignorance one will be supremely happy.

All evil disappears without a tremble left.

All the *khandhā* are suffering, devoid of happiness.

Before I was in the dark and ignorant as if in a cave.

I wanted to see Dhamma take over my heart to make it calm.

I believed *saññā* was the heart due to habit so I tarried admiring *saññā* for a long time. *Saññā's* fabrications hid things so that I was blind,

Pitifully so I believed, 200

Wasting time in the five *khandhā*, making me brag about myself being free without limit. I wandered along troubled and constantly criticizing others, without benefit.

*Looking at the hearts of others is bitter to the heart.*

*As if consumed by fire it surely becomes blackened.*

*Whoever is wrong, right, good or evil, it is their doing.  
Our hearts must be held carefully dear,*

*Do not let unskillful thoughts (akusala) come whirling around to cause distress.  
One should increase in the fruits of skillful merits (kusala puñña).  
Seeing others as evil and oneself as good is a gross fault  
Due to the attachment to the khandhā.*

210

*Attachment to the khandhā being true suffering because of old age, sickness and death.  
So this compounds the dangers, the defilements (kilesā) amass to trouble,  
Full of love and hate with their effects clear, both fearful and heavy hearted,  
Thinking in woe,*

*Repeatedly the objects of the five senses entice.  
Enticing in various ways because of the belief that the five khandhā are self,  
Thus one is unable to escape dukkha.  
If you know their effects, don't remain indifferent!*

*Look at the conditions of the impermanent saṅkhārā until you are without doubts  
And then perhaps you will be able to admire the Dhamma of the one,*

220

*Single heart (citta).*

*That impermanence is the heart moving through perceptions (saññā),  
Seeing this,*

*Look again and again at where it moves.  
When the outside objects have been suppressed and all vanish,  
Dhamma will appear.*

*When Dhamma is seen the heart will cease its turmoil.  
That heart (citta) will not be attached to duality.*

*This is Truth complete.  
Knowing is just knowing,*

230

*This is the practice of the heart,  
Knowing equal to that which is impermanent.  
The original heart, beyond imaginings,  
Is the enduring,  
The intrinsic heart of the unchanging Truth.*

*Knowing the original mind you will be free of all delusions,  
Beyond worries.*

*If you go out following the mind's destinations,*

*You will go wrong immediately.*

The word “hidden” means the heart attached to goodness.

240

This attached *citta* is the mind's ideation thinking outwardly.

In the original mind, when Dhamma appears, uncertainty vanishes,

Dhamma supreme is seen beyond the mundane world.

The affairs of ideation, troublesome in the past, are withdrawn,

Removed and completely undone.

The remaining *dukkha* is merely sleeping and eating naturally,

The heart remains attendant.

*The primal heart thinks without sorrow.*

It is natural for the mind to ideate but when the original mind is known,

Free of lament, there is tranquility and peace from things disturbing.

250

Normally the *saṅkhārā* arise together;

All then degenerate without a firm base.

Be cautious of the mind when thought is subtle,

It often causes the heart to attach to that stillness.

*The heart's impermanence is of the heart,*

*Keep reminding oneself of this.*

When the final verse is reached and you know for yourself

The song of the heart,

It will appear as if a trick or an illusion.

It has been said that the corruptions of insight assume a form that appear to be real,

260

But in truth they are not.

*Self-knowledge arises to one in the form of insight,*

*Not as if hearing and then understanding on the level of questioning.*

*Both the reflection on and the investigation of rūpa-nāma (body-mind)*

*Is not your own knowing,*

*You must look intently.*

*Self-knowledge does not arise out of the song of thoughts.*

Knowing the original mind you will be free of sorrow.  
The original *citta* knows itself, without doubts,  
*The saṅkhārā are changeable and not to be used for understanding, nor to gain wisdom.*

270

*Knowing through duality is not the way.  
The heart knows itself due to the movement of its song of thoughts.  
The heart knowing each successive movement is but a succession of hearts,  
Inseparable, in truth, they are but one.*

A heart with dual character is called a “*citta* led entangled” by *saññā*.  
That change is but oneself,  
Not another.

The heart that sees its own degeneration will be free of unknowing.  
The heart will then be neutral and free of “tastes”,  
Doubts vanished.

280

If there is “no one” to reach out to external or internal affairs,  
All craving will wither.  
Both hate and love, burdensome to the heart, will disappear.  
The heart’s cravings will cease, sorrow will vanish,  
One will then be beyond all the heart’s burdens and laments.  
Like rain falling gently on the heart, coolness will be apparent –  
Coolness because there is no need to go out and look at others.

Knowing the heart in the present you will be free of chaos.  
All good and evil no longer are impediments,  
All matters that obstruct must cease.

290

Remaining quite,  
The original heart ceases speculation  
According to the state of a *citta* without thoughts of desire.  
No need to be in turmoil, no need for care,  
Laying down or sitting,  
Thoughts of liberation are the basis of the *citta*.

*“The perfect way has been pointed out brilliantly.  
Is there any other way one remains attached to samudaya?  
Please show me precisely what it is.”*

*Samudaya* is attachment to lust.

300

This kind of love will create another becoming, not escape.  
On a lower level the five strands of sensuality (*kāmaguṇā*) are taints,  
At the highest level, *samudaya* is the desire for the *jhānā* (meditative absorptions).

If you wish to know how these things react within the heart,  
It is but infatuation with the thoughts of the *saṅkhārā*.

All infatuating as they have been eternally,  
Turning the benefits within the heart to increasingly false things,  
Proliferating and leading to great turmoil.  
Wandering infatuated following the affairs of delusion,  
Without thought of shame,

310

Enthralled in the things so acquired.  
Infatuated until it forgets itself with no fear of dangers.

*Concerned with the many faults of others,  
It does not see the bad effects within itself.*

The faults of others, however much, do not make one fall to the hell states.  
Our own faults, however small, result in one's fall to the hells with no little torment.

Diligently watch your own faults until the heart knows them well,  
Then abandon them  
And one's heart may come to admire happiness and freedom from *dukkha*.  
*When one sees clearly one's own faults,  
Get rid of them immediately!*

320

*Being indecisive and thinking about them a lot will not get rid of them.*

The matter of wanting to gain what's good is without end,  
That is the cause of *dukkha* itself and a great fault.

Fearing one will not acquire gains, this is heavy.  
Good and evil, these are heavy faults of the heart.

Like a terrible fever receiving things non-beneficial to its cure,  
The illness intensifies with opposing poisons.  
Dhamma does not manifest because desire for gain is underlying.  
Wanting good things drags the heart,  
Causing it to wander imagining and in turmoil until it is callused,

330

All things evil and confusing must then arise;  
Falseness must ever increase the distance from Dhamma.

*“Truly showing samudaya in this way,  
My heart felt dread.  
Listening to the meaning at first all tangled and the way confused,  
But when pointing out the path my heart was still,  
In stillness of heart and in peace let it thus end.”*

This is called *Khandhāvimmuttisāmaṅgīdhamma*,  
Immovable.

340

There is no coming and going.

Natural laws that are Truth only and without the affairs that one need search out.

This is the end of the discourse.

False or true,

Use your own wisdom to investigate.

Venerable Bhūridatto (Mun)  
Of Wat Sra-prathumvan is the Author.

## Glossary

**Ācariya:** Teacher; one who has practiced to the point of being able to teach others

**Ajahn:** Thai for *Ācariya*

**Akusala:** Unskillful, unwholesome, demeritorious

**Citta:** Mind, heart, the one who knows

**Citta-Bhāvanā:** The heart's way of practice, the cultivation of the heart, meditation

**Dhamma:** The Buddha's teachings, the law as to the way things truly are

**Dukkha:** Suffering, pain, anxiety, stress, un-satisfactoriness

**Jhāna:** Concentration, absorption

**Kāmaguṇā:** Strands of sensuality, pleasures available through the (five) senses

**Kamma:** Intentional acts that bear results upon the being who performed them

**Kāyānupassanā:** Mindfulness of the body; the first foundation of mindfulness

**Kilesā:** Defilements, the stains and afflictions of the heart

**Kusala:** Skillful, clever, wholesome

**Khandhā:** The aggregates of the personality or being:

*Rūpa:* physical phenomena, body

*Vedanā:* feelings

*Saññā:* concepts, labels, memory, perceptions

*Saṅkhārā:* mental formations, thinking process (of the *khandhā*)

*Viññāṇa:* consciousness

**Nāma:** Mental factors (of the *khandhā*)

**Nam'atthu:** Veneration, homage – lit. “May there be veneration”

**Pāli:** The original language of the Buddhist teachings

**Pañca-dhamma-khandhāni:** The teaching concerning the five aggregates of personality or 'being'

**Paññā:** Wisdom, discernment, intelligence

**Puñña:** Merits, goodness

**Raveung:** This word has no meaning in Pāli or Thai. Its meaning is evident only from the context. The “why” and origin of this word are much debated.

**Rūpa:** *see Khandhā*

**Sacca:** Truth

**Sakya:** The name of the people, or clan, into which the Buddha-to-be was born

**Saṅgha:** Community, assembly – the Buddha’s (enlightened) disciples

**Saṅkhārā:** In the sense of all compounded created phenomena, *see also Khandhā*

**Saññā:** *see Khandhā*

**Sāmaṅgī:** Verses, parts of a sacred song

**Samudaya:** The Cause of *dukkha*, craving, ignorance

**Sati:** Mindfulness, recollection, awareness

**Sugatassa:** Lit. – “to the One Well-gone”, *i.e.* to the Buddha

**Sukha:** Happiness

**Viññāṇa:** *see Khandhā*

**Vimutti:** Liberation, freedom, release

**Visuddhi:** Pure