

A Peaceful Way of Living According to the Buddha's Teachings*

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Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive and textually grounded exposition of a peaceful way of living based on the original teachings of the Buddha as preserved in the *Pāli* Canon. Drawing on key discourses such as the *Dīghajāṇu Sutta*, *Andha Sutta*, *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, *Sakuṇagghi Sutta*, *Kummopama Sutta*, the *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta*, and some commentaries, the study integrates ethical livelihood, mindfulness practice, and moral causation into a unified framework for both mundane well-being and supramundane liberation. Central to this framework is the cultivation of two complementary “Dhamma eyes”: *vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi*, which discerns the true nature of present phenomena, and *kammassakatā-sammādiṭṭhi*, which understands the long-range operation of *kamma* across past, present, and future lives. Through doctrinal analysis, narrative exposition of canonical similes, and systematic synthesis, the article demonstrates that the Buddha's teachings offer a complete and practical guide for living peacefully in the world while progressing toward the ultimate freedom of *Nibbāna*. The paper is structured to meet journal standards, including an introduction, literature review, methodology, analytical sections, and an overall conclusion, and is written in academic yet accessible English.

Keywords: Peaceful living, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, *Kamma*, Right View, *Dhamma* eye, Buddhist ethics

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Introduction

The Buddha taught the *Dhamma* for forty-five years with the explicit purpose of alleviating suffering and promoting welfare and happiness for all beings. While the ultimate aim of his teaching is the realization of *Nibbāna*, the early discourses repeatedly affirm that the *Dhamma* also provides practical guidance for ethical conduct, social harmony, and inner peace in everyday life. Contrary to the assumption that Buddhism concerns only transcendent liberation, the *Nikāyas* present a balanced path integrating mundane welfare (*diṭṭhadhamma-sukha*) and supramundane liberation (*samparāyika-sukha*).

This article explores a peaceful way of living in accordance with the Buddha's teachings by synthesizing three interrelated dimensions: (1) material and social well-being, (2) mindful awareness rooted in the four foundations of mindfulness, and (3) moral responsibility grounded in the law of *kamma*. Special attention is given to the doctrinal notion of “two eyes”—a business eye and a *Dhamma* eye—taught in the *Andha Sutta*, and their further refinement into two types of *Dhamma* eye or modes of right view: *vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi* and *kammasakatā-sammādiṭṭhi*.

Literature Review

Modern Buddhist scholarship has increasingly emphasised the practical and ethical dimensions of early Buddhism. Studies on Buddhist economics and social ethics highlight the relevance of the *Dīghajāṇu Sutta* for householders' welfare, while mindfulness research underscores the centrality of the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* in cultivating mental health and insight. Classical commentaries, such as the *Khuddakapāṭha Aṭṭhakathā* and *Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā*, further elaborate doctrinal categories like the four kinds of treasure and the multiple classifications of right view. However, fewer studies integrate these teachings into a single, coherent model of peaceful living. This article aims to fill that gap by connecting ethical livelihood, mindfulness practice, and *kamma* theory through the unifying concept of the two *Dhamma* eyes.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative textual analysis of selected *Pāḷi* canonical discourses and their commentarial explanations. Primary sources are drawn from the *Nikāyas*, with interpretive support from classical commentaries and authoritative modern translations. The method is doctrinal-synthetic, aiming to elucidate internal coherence across texts rather than historical development. Similes are analysed as pedagogical tools integral to the Buddha's teaching strategy.

Foundations of Peaceful Living: Material and Moral Prosperity

1. The Four Kinds of Treasure

According to the commentary on the *Nidhikaṇḍa Sutta*, peaceful living requires the wise management of four kinds of treasure: immovable (*thāvara-uccā*), movable (*jaṅgama-uccā*), inseparable (*aṅgasama-uccā*), and follow-along treasure (*anugāmika-uccā*). While material assets provide security in this life, inseparable skills and meritorious deeds accompany one across lifetimes. This hierarchy subtly reorients values from mere accumulation toward ethical and spiritual investment.

2. The Two Eyes and Three Types of Persons

The *Andha Sutta* distinguishes three types of persons: the blind, the one-eyed, and the two-eyed. The business eye enables economic success, while the *Dhamma* eye discerns wholesome and unwholesome states. Only the two-eyed person integrates prosperity with moral clarity, thereby achieving a stable and peaceful life.

3. Welfare and Happiness in This Life and Beyond

In the *Dīghajāṇu Sutta*, the Buddha outlines four qualities for present welfare—accomplishment of diligence (*uṭṭhāna-sampadā*), accomplishment of protection of wealth (*ārakkha-sampadā*), having a good friendship (*kalyāṇa-mittatā*), and balanced living (*samajīvitā*)—and four qualities for future welfare—accomplishment of faith (*saddhā-sampadā*), accomplishment of virtue (*sīla-sampadā*), accomplishment of generosity (*cāga-sampadā*), and accomplishment of wisdom (*paññā-sampadā*). Together, these eight qualities form a holistic ethic that harmonises material success with spiritual growth.

These four qualities are directly connected with the *Dhamma* eye. Using the *Dhamma* eye, we can also perform many things, such as donating our wealth, observing morality, and practising tranquillity and insight meditation. Firstly, we can donate the wealth we earned with our business eye to the needy and to the Buddha's dispensation for its perpetuation and propagation, and for the best provision of our long journey through *Samsāra*. It is believed that if we offer our wealth to the needy, it can endow our lives with the necessities in every existence throughout the long journey of *Samsāra*. Again, if we observe and maintain the precepts, it can give us a guarantee of being reborn in a happy abode in the future. Moreover, if we practice the tranquillity meditation, it can help us to live peacefully, making our mind calm and tranquil. If we practice insight meditation, it can help us bravely and wisely encounter the eight kinds of worldly conditions; ups and downs of our lives, and live peacefully, perceiving the nature of the world as impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and non-self.

The Five Kinds of Right View and the Two Dhamma Eyes

According to the commentary on the *Uparipaṇṇāsa* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, right view (*sammādiṭṭhi*) may be classified into five kinds: (1) right view of insight (*vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi*), (2) right view concerning *kamma* (*kammasakatā-sammādiṭṭhi*), (3) right view of the path (*magga-sammādiṭṭhi*), (4) right view of the fruit (*phala-sammādiṭṭhi*), and (5) right view of reviewing (*paccavekkhaṇa-sammādiṭṭhi*). Among these, the first two function as foundational “*Dhamma* eyes,” enabling both immediate and long-range vision.

The first *Dhamma* eye, *Vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi* penetrates the conditioned nature of present phenomena, while the second *Dhamma* eye, *kammasakatā-sammādiṭṭhi* contextualizes experience within the broader moral continuum of *samsāra*. Together, they support the arising of path knowledge (*magga-ñāṇa*), fruition knowledge (*phala-ñāṇa*), and reflective reviewing knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa-ñāṇa*). Thus, the two *Dhamma* eyes are not isolated doctrines but integral components of the full liberative trajectory.

When *vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi* and *kammasakatā-sammādiṭṭhi* function together, practitioners gain a complete vision of the path. Insight into present phenomena prevents attachment, misperception, and identification with the five aggregates, while understanding *kamma* guides ethical conduct and responsibility across time. *Vipassanā* without an appreciation of *kamma* risks becoming detached from moral concern, whereas *kamma*-understanding without insight may remain bound to merit-making alone. The Buddha, therefore, repeatedly emphasised the harmony of wisdom and conduct.

In practical terms, this integration enables a layperson or renunciant to live wisely within changing worldly conditions. When gain and loss, praise and blame, fame and disrepute, pleasure and pain arise, one sees them as conditioned and impermanent through *vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi*, while also recognising their roots in past and present *kamma* through *kammasakatā-sammādiṭṭhi*. This dual vision stabilises the mind, reduces reactive suffering, and supports ethical restraint.

Moreover, these two *Dhamma* eyes correspond to the gradual training (*anupubbāsikkhā*). Moral discipline and generosity purify *kamma* and support favourable conditions, while mindfulness and insight penetrate the nature of experience itself. Together, they form a spiral of development leading from mundane peace to supramundane liberation.

The First Dhamma Eye: Vipassanā-Sammādiṭṭhi and One's Own Resort

The Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi is cultivated through the four foundations of mindfulness: contemplation of body (*kāyānupassanā*), feelings (*vedanānupassanā*), mind (*cittānupassanā*), and mental phenomena (*dhammānupassanā*). As taught in the *Mahāsātipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, these practices reveal the true nature of phenomena as impermanent (*anicca*), unsatisfactory (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anatta*).

These four foundations—*kāya*, *vedanā*, *citta*, and *dhamma*—function like the tortoise's shell: a secure refuge, a protective enclosure, and a reliable dwelling place for the mind. When the meditator keeps mindfulness firmly established within these

domains, the mind does not wander outward toward the objects of the five senses. In doing so, one remains beyond the reach of Māra and the defilements, which are likened to the jackal waiting for an opening.

This teaching accords directly with the *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta*, where the Buddha emphasises dwelling “internally,” “externally,” and “internally and externally,” while maintaining continuous mindfulness and clear comprehension. To stray from these foundations is to leave one’s own domain and enter the territory of others—namely, the realm of sense pleasures—where defilements gain access and exert their power. Thus, the tortoise simile beautifully illustrates guardedness of the sense faculties, restraint, patience, and unwavering mindfulness. By following the example of the tortoise—remaining collected within the four foundations of mindfulness—meditators safeguard their practice and progress steadily on the path of insight.

The Quail Simile and Spiritual Safety

In the *Sakuṇagghi Sutta*, the Buddha stated as follows:

And what is a Bhikkhu’s resort, his own ancestral domain? It is the four establishments of mindfulness. What four? Here, Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu dwells contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. He dwells contemplating the feelings in the feelings...mind in the mind...phenomena in phenomena, ardent, clearly comprehending, mindful, having removed covetousness and displeasure in regard to the world. This is a Bhikkhu’s resort, his own ancestral domain.

In this Sutta, the Buddha compares the meditator to a quail whose safety lies in remaining within its own ancestral domain. This “own resort” (*sako pettiko visayo*) is identified as the four foundations of mindfulness. Straying into the domain of sense pleasures exposes one to Māra, while abiding in mindfulness ensures protection and progress.

The Tortoise Simile and Mindful Restraint

The *Kummopama Sutta* further reinforces this principle. Like a tortoise withdrawing its limbs into its shell to evade a jackal, a meditator protects the mind by withdrawing from unwholesome sense engagement and remaining firmly within the four

foundations of mindfulness. These similes vividly convey mindfulness as a living refuge rather than a mere technique.

The Second *Dhamma* Eye: *Kammasakatā-Sammādiṭṭhi*

The second *Dhamma* eye enables a long-range vision of moral causation. Through *kammasakatā-sammādiṭṭhi*, practitioners understand that present experiences arise from past intentional actions and that current actions shape future outcomes.

In the *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 135), the Buddha explains to the young brahmin Subha why beings differ in lifespan, health, beauty, wealth, status, and wisdom. These differences are traced not to fate or divine will but to past *kamma* rooted in wholesome or unwholesome intentions. This *sutta* systematically illustrates moral causation across time, fostering responsibility, ethical urgency (*saṃvega*), and confidence in the lawfulness of existence.

Kamma, Ethical Diversity, and Human Responsibility

The *Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta* further clarifies that *kamma* should not be understood as a rigid determinism but as a dynamic moral principle operating through intention (*cetanā*). The Buddha's explanation avoids both fatalism and moral nihilism. While past actions condition present circumstances, present intention retains decisive power. This balance is crucial for peaceful living, for it preserves moral responsibility without inducing despair. Even when one is born into adverse conditions due to past *kamma*, wholesome conduct in the present can gradually transform future outcomes. Thus, the Second *Dhamma* Eye does not merely explain suffering; it empowers transformation through ethical choice.

From a practical perspective, this teaching nurtures patience, forgiveness, and humility. When confronted with injustice or hardship, the practitioner reflects wisely rather than reacting with anger or blame. At the same time, understanding *kamma* discourages complacency, since every intentional action—bodily, verbal, or mental—contributes to the ongoing stream of becoming. In this way, *kammasakatā-sammādiṭṭhi* functions as a stabilizing moral compass within daily life.

Kamma and the Gradual Training

In the framework of the gradual training, right view concerning *kamma* provides the ethical foundation upon which higher training is built. Generosity (*dāna*) weakens attachment, virtue (*sīla*) purifies conduct, and wholesome livelihood supports mental clarity. These practices, informed by the Second *Dhamma* Eye, prepare the mind for deeper mindfulness and insight. Without such a foundation, insight practice risks becoming unbalanced or disconnected from moral responsibility. The Buddha's repeated emphasis on *kamma*, therefore, safeguards the path from spiritual bypassing and reinforces its holistic nature.

Peaceful Living as a Gradual Integration

Peaceful living, as envisioned by the Buddha, emerges gradually through the integration of these right views. At the secular level, understanding *kamma* fosters ethical restraint and social harmony. At the spiritual level, insight dismantles ignorance and attachment. The similes of the quail and the tortoise illustrate this integration vividly: ethical restraint keeps one within safe boundaries, while mindfulness and insight protect the mind at a deeper level. Together, they depict a life that is inwardly calm and outwardly responsible.

Contemporary Relevance

Although rooted in an ancient cultural context, these teachings retain striking relevance today. In a world marked by anxiety, ethical ambiguity, and reactive behaviour, the Buddha's model of peaceful living offers a disciplined yet compassionate alternative. Mindfulness without ethical grounding risks becoming superficial, while ethics without insight may harden into dogmatism. The two *Dhamma* eyes ensure balance, depth, and resilience, making the Buddha's path both timeless and adaptable.

Removal of Vipallāsas and the Deepening of Right View

The *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta*, when read together with its commentarial explanations, presents the four foundations of mindfulness not merely as meditation techniques but as direct antidotes to deep-rooted cognitive distortions (*vipallāsa*). According to the commentary, beings habitually misperceive what is impermanent as permanent (*anicce niccasaññā*), what is unsatisfactory as pleasurable (*dukkhe*

sukhasaññā), what is non-self as self (*anattani attasaññā*), and what is unattractive as attractive (*asubhe subhasaññā*). These distortions operate at the levels of perception (*saññā*), thought (*citta*), and view (*diṭṭhi*), binding beings to *saṃsāra*.

Each foundation of mindfulness is specifically oriented toward correcting one dominant distortion. *Kāyānupassanā* reveals the unattractive nature of the body, counteracting the perception of beauty. *Vedanānupassanā* exposes the unsatisfactory nature of feeling, undermining attachment to pleasure. *Cittānupassanā* reveals the instability of mental states, dispelling the illusion of permanence. *Dhammānupassanā* penetrates the impersonal nature of phenomena, dismantling the notion of a controlling self. In this way, *vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi* directly functions as a therapeutic wisdom, gradually eroding ignorance at its roots.

The Four Oghas, Yogas, Ganthas, and Upādānas

The commentaries further explain that the four foundations of mindfulness serve to overcome multiple fourfold doctrinal schemes that entangle beings in *saṃsāra*. These include the four floods (*ogha*), four yokes or bonds (*yoga*), four taints, four knots (*gantha*), four kinds of clinging (*upādāna*), and four types of corruption (*agati*). Sensual desire, views, existence, and ignorance appear repeatedly across these classifications, highlighting the pervasive and interlocking nature of defilements.

By establishing mindfulness within one's own resort, the practitioner prevents these floods from overwhelming the mind, loosens the yokes or bonds that bind consciousness, unties the knots of wrong grasping, weakens clinging at its core, and eliminates the corruptions. The quail and tortoise similes thus acquire a broader doctrinal significance: they illustrate not only sense restraint but also liberation from the entire network of defilements analysed in early Buddhist psychology.

Temperaments, Vehicles, and Skillful Application

The commentarial tradition also recognizes diversity among practitioners. Some are dominated by craving (*taṇhācarita*), others by views (*diṭṭhacarita*). Some progress through tranquillity as a vehicle (*samathayānika*), others through insight

(*vipassanāyānika*). Among these, some are sharp (*tikkha*), others dull (*manda*). The Buddha's teaching of the four foundations of mindfulness is deliberately flexible, capable of accommodating all these temperaments.

For those inclined toward craving, contemplation of the body and feelings is emphasized to counter attachment. For those inclined toward views, contemplation of mind and dhammas dismantles conceptual fixation. Thus, the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta functions as a universal framework, adaptable yet precise, guiding all types of practitioners toward right view and liberation.

Ethical Peace and Social Harmony

Peaceful living in the Buddha's teaching is not confined to meditation halls. The ethical implications of *kammassakatā-sammādiṭṭhi* extend naturally into social life. When individuals understand that harm rebounds upon the doer and kindness yields beneficial results, social relations become grounded in responsibility rather than fear or coercion. Generosity counters economic anxiety, patience reduces conflict, and truthful speech builds trust. In this way, inner peace and social peace reinforce one another.

The Buddha's emphasis on intention ensures that ethics remains dynamic and compassionate rather than legalistic. Even imperfect actions, when guided by wholesome intention and reflection, become steps toward purification. This vision offers a powerful alternative to both moral relativism and rigid absolutism.

From Mundane Peace to Supramundane Freedom

The integration of the two *Dhamma* eyes supports both mundane and supramundane peace. At the secular level, one lives with balance, resilience, and moral clarity. At the spiritual level, insight matures into path knowledge, fruition, and final liberation. The peaceful life described by the Buddha is therefore not static comfort but a dynamic movement toward freedom.

Synthesis of the Similes

The canonical similes examined throughout this study form a coherent pedagogical system. The blind and one-eyed persons illustrate incomplete vision; the

quail demonstrates the necessity of remaining within one's rightful domain; the tortoise exemplifies vigilant restraint; and the explanations of *kamma* reveal moral continuity across lives. Together, they convey a single message: peace arises from seeing clearly and dwelling wisely.

Implications for Contemporary Practice

For modern practitioners, the Buddha's model of peaceful living offers both depth and practicality. Mindfulness divorced from ethics becomes shallow, while ethics without insight becomes rigid. The two *Dhamma* eyes restore balance. They invite practitioners to see clearly, act responsibly, and remain inwardly free amid external change.

Limitations and Scope of the Study

This article has focused primarily on early canonical sources and their classical commentaries. While later developments in Buddhist thought offer valuable perspectives, they fall beyond the present scope. Future research may fruitfully compare these early teachings with contemporary mindfulness movements and ethical discourse.

Conclusion

The Buddha's teachings present a unified and pragmatic vision of peaceful living that encompasses ethical livelihood, mindful awareness, and moral responsibility. Rather than separating mundane well-being from spiritual liberation, the *Nikāyas* consistently integrate both within a single path. Through the cultivation of two *Dhamma* eyes—*vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi*, which sees present phenomena as impermanent, unsatisfactory, and non-self, and *kammassakatā-sammādiṭṭhi*, which understands the lawful continuity of moral causation—individuals learn to live with clarity, balance, and purpose.

The canonical similes examined in this study—the blind, one-eyed, and two-eyed persons; the quail that remains within its ancestral domain; and the tortoise that withdraws safely into its shell—are not mere illustrations but profound pedagogical devices. They communicate that safety, peace, and progress arise from knowing one's

proper domain and remaining established within it. That domain, repeatedly identified by the Buddha, is the four foundations of mindfulness.

By remaining mindful within one's own resort, practitioners protect themselves from the defilements represented by *Māra*, cultivate insight into the nature of experience, and act responsibly within the moral order of *kamma*. Such a life is peaceful not because it is free from change, but because it is guided by wisdom that understands change. Ultimately, this integrated approach leads beyond temporary well-being toward the supreme peace of *Nibbāna*, the complete cessation of suffering.

Abbreviations

Ap. II.	<i>Apādāna Pāḷi</i> Vol. II
D. II.	<i>Mahāvagga Pāḷi</i> (<i>Dīghanikāya</i>)
D. III.	<i>Pāthikavagga Pāḷi</i>
Khṇ-a.	<i>Khuddakapāṭha Aṭṭhakathā</i>
M. I.	<i>Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi</i>
M. III.	<i>Uparipaṇṇāsa Pāḷi</i>
M-a. IV.	<i>Uparipaṇṇāsa Aṭṭhakathā</i>
S. II.	<i>Khandhavagga, Salāyatanavagga Saṃyutta Pāḷi</i>
S. III.	<i>Mahāvagga Saṃyutta Pāḷi</i>

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- Dānaṃ datvā mahābhogo, Sīlena sugatūpago. Bhāvanāya ca nibbāti.* Ap. II. 166.

Imasmiñca pana sutte pañca sammādiṭṭhiyo kathitā: vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi, kamma-ssakatā-sammādiṭṭhi, magga-sammādiṭṭhi, phala-sammādiṭṭhi, paccavekkhaṇa-sammādiṭṭhīti. M-a. IV. 95.

Ko ca, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno gocaro sako pettiko visayo? Yadidaṃ—cattāro satipaṭṭhānā. S. III. 127-128; PTS. V. 148; Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Connected Discourses of the Buddha, (A Translation of the Saṃyutta Nikāya)*, (USA Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2000), 1632-1633.