



The Fourfold Noble Truth

Cattari Ariya Saccani

This is the principle of Buddhism. Once you accept it in your mind, you have implanted Buddhism without being a Buddhist. The following explanation of the principle is quoted from The Teaching of Buddha (Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai, Tokyo):

1. **Dukkha**, The Truth of Suffering : the world is full of suffering. Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness and death are sufferings, To meet a man whom one hates is suffering, to be separated from a beloved one is suffering, to be vainly struggling to satisfy one's needs is suffering. In fact, life that is not free from desire and passion is always involved with distress.
2. **Dukkha Samudaya**, The Truth of the Cause of Suffering : the cause of human suffering is undoubtedly found in the thirsts of the physical body and in the illusions of worldly passion. If these thirsts and illusions are traced to their source, they are found to be rooted in the intense desires of physical instincts. Thus, desire, having a strong will-to-live as its basis, seeks that which it feels desirable, even if it is sometimes death.
3. **Dukkha Nirodha**, The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering: if desire, which lies at the root of all human passion, can be removed, then passion will die out and all human suffering will be ended.
4. **Dukkha Nirodha Gaminipatipada**, The Truth of the Noble Path to the Cessation of the Cause of Suffering : in order to enter into a state where there is no desire and no suffering, one must follow certain path,

Noble Eightfold Path

Ariya Atthangika Magga

The stages of this Noble Eightfold Path are:

- **samma ditthi** - right view
- **samma sankappa** - right thought
- **samma vaca** - right speech
- **samma kammanta** - right behaviour
- **samma ajiva** - right livelihood
- **samma vayama** - right effort
- **samma sati** - right mindfulness
- **samma samadhi** - right concentration

This noble path is sometimes known as the Middle Way, because it transcends between the extreme paths which lead to the enlightenment. There are two extremes that should be avoided. First, the extreme of indulgence in the desires of the body, second, the opposite extreme of ascetic discipline in which one tortures his body and mind unreasonably.



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The world is full suffering. Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness and death are suffering. To meet man whom one hates is suffering, to be separated from beloved one is suffering, In fact, life that is not free from desire and passion is always involved with distress. This is called the truth of suffering.

The cause of human suffering undoubtedly found in the thirsts of the physical body and the illusions of worldly passion. If these thirsts and illusions are traced to their source, they are found to be rooted in the intense desires of physical instincts. Thus, desire having strong will-to-live as its basis, seeks that which it feels desirable, even if it is sometimes death. This is called the Truth of Cause of Suffering.

If desire, which lies at the root of all human passion, can be removed, then passion will die out and all human suffering will be ended. This is called the truth of the cessation of suffering.

In order to enter into a state where there is no desire and no suffering, one must follow a certain path. The stages of this Noble Eightfold path are: Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Behavior, Right livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. This is called the truth of the Noble Path to cessation of cause of suffering.

People should keep these truths clearly in mind, for the world is filled with suffering and if any one wishes to escape from suffering, he must sever the ties of worldly passion which is the sole cause of suffering. The way of life which is free from all worldly passion and suffering can only be known through Enlightenment, and Enlightenment can only be attained through the discipline of the Noble Eightfold path.

All those who are seeking Enlightenment must understand the Fourfold Noble Truth. Without understanding this, they will wander about interminably in the bewildering maze of life's illusions. Those who understand this Fourfold Noble Truth are called the people who have acquired the eyes of Enlightenment.

Therefore those who wish to follow Buddha's teachings should concentrate their minds on this Fourfold Noble Truth and seek to make their understanding of its meaning clear. In all ages, a saint. Of him is a true saint, is one who understands it and teaches it to others.

When a man clearly understands the Fourfold Noble Truth, then the Noble Eightfold path will lead him away from greed; and if he is free from greed, he will not quarrel with the world, he will not kill, nor steal, nor commit adultery, nor cheat, nor abuse, nor flatter, nor envy, nor lose his temper, not forget the transiency of life nor will he be unjust.

Following the Noble Path is like entering a dark room with a light in the hand: the darkness will all be cleared away and the room will be filled with light.

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People who understand the meaning of the Noble Truths and have learned to follow the noble Path are in possession of the light of wisdom that will clear away the darkness of ignorance.

Buddha leads, people, merely by indicating to them the fourfold noble Truth. Those who understand it properly will attain the Enlightenment; they will be able to guide and support others in this bewildering world, and they will be worthy of trust. When the Fourfold Noble Truth is clearly understood, all the sources of worldly passion are dried up.

Advancing from this Fourfold Noble Truth, the disciples of Buddha will attain all other precious truths; they will gain the wisdom and insight to understand all meanings, and will become capable of preaching the Dharma to all the people of the world.