

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Buddhism in a Nutshell



The Four Noble Truths

1. Life is full of *dukkha* (discontent and suffering).
2. Discontent originates from *tanha* (“burning thirst”, i.e., cravings or desires).
3. Discontent can be stopped by removing craving.
4. To remove craving, follow the Noble Eightfold Path.



Is *Dukkha* Part of Human Life?

- ✿ Birth is *dukkha*.
- ✿ Aging is *dukkha*.
- ✿ Death is *dukkha*.
- ✿ Sorrow, lamentation, pain, sadness and distress are *dukkha*.
- ✿ Being attached to the unloved is *dukkha*.
- ✿ Being separated from the loved is *dukkha*.
- ✿ Not getting what one wants is *dukkha*.
- ✿ Losing what one has is *dukkha*.



Burning Thirst and Discontent

- ✿ We are hungry ghosts.
- ✿ Our insatiable appetites can never be satisfied.
- ✿ The pursuit of pleasure and comfort is intrinsically a reflection of discontent.
- ✿ The loathing of pain and loss leads to worry and fear.
- ✿ The anxiety over uncertainty drives people to seek power and control.



The Five Aggregates of Grasping

1. form (physical body)
2. feelings
3. perceptions
4. mental formation (dispositions)
5. consciousness

The five aggregates give rise to the illusion of self. The self becomes the hub of desires.



Extinguishing the Flame

- ✿ no longer consumed by desires (no longer a consumer)
- ✿ no discontent
- ✿ no resentment
- ✿ no anxiety
- ✿ the cessation of mental torments



The Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path is the main vehicle to Nirvana.

1. right* view (understanding)
2. right thought (resolve, intention)
3. right speech
4. right conduct (action)
5. right livelihood
6. right effort
7. right mindfulness
8. right meditation (concentration)

*Sammā—apt, appropriate



The Middle Way

- ✿ The Noble Eightfold Path is also called the Middle Path. It is the Buddhist way of life.
- ✿ avoid extremes in life: no self-indulgence and no self-mortification
- ✿ The Middle Way helps the mind to be balanced to achieve enlightenment.



Right View

- ✿ the understanding of the Four Noble Truths
- ✿ seeing reality as it truly is (interbeing, the Void and no self)
- ✿ not got fenced in by words and concepts; not being trapped in a particular point of view or mindset



Right Thought

- ✿ the thought of being present, being mindful
- ✿ the thought of *ahimsa*
 - ✿ the thought of no-ill-will
 - ✿ the thought of harmlessness
- ✿ the thought of renunciation



Right Speech

- ✿ be mindful of your motive to speak
- ✿ speak at the right time, truthfully
- ✿ speak what is useful
- ✿ refraining from
 - lying
 - slander
 - gossip
 - harsh speech
 - frivolous speech



Right Conduct

- ✿ actions without intention, unwilled actions
- ✿ actions unhindered by rules
- ✿ to act like a falling leaf (Steve Hagen, p. 91)
- ✿ selfless actions (Steve Hagen, p. 91)
- ✿ refraining from
 - taking life
 - stealing—taking more than what
one needs when others are in need
 - sexual misconduct



Right Livelihood

- ✿ In making a living through a profession, one should choose one's career carefully so that one
 - does not harm oneself and others;
 - can avoid unwholesome places and situations;
 - can become more and more virtuous.



Right Effort

- ✿ develop and maintain loving kindness in one's heart
- ✿ arise and maintain wholesome mental states
- ✿ prevent unwholesome mental states



Right Mindfulness

- ✿ be aware of what is going on at the moment
- ✿ abide contemplating things as they are
- ✿ no misunderstanding, no distortion
- ✿ subsiding of craving
- ✿ leads to moderation and eventually freedom from desires
- ✿ open up for new experiences
- ✿ realize impermanence
- ✿ appreciate fully both joy and sorrow
- ✿ nourishes good will and compassion



Right Meditation

- ✿ detached from sense-desires and unwholesome mental states
- ✿ subsiding of thinking and pondering
- ✿ fading away of delight, achieving calmness and evenness
- ✿ disappearance of gladness and sadness, beyond pleasure and pain

