

Four Noble Truths: One's Duties

cattari ariya saccani

Breaking free

"Bhikkhus, it is through not realizing, through not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that this long course of birth and death has been passed through and undergone by me as well as by you. What are these four? They are the *noble truth of dukkha*; the *noble truth of the origin of dukkha*; the *noble truth of the cessation of dukkha*; and the *noble truth of the way to the cessation of dukkha*. But now, bhikkhus, that these have been realized and penetrated, cut off is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no fresh becoming."

(*Digha Nikaya*, 16) [with *dukkha* left untranslated]

The elephant's footprint

[*Ven. Sariputta*:] "Friends, just as the footprints of all legged animals are encompassed by the footprint of the elephant, and the elephant's footprint is reckoned the foremost among them in terms of size; in the same way, all skillful qualities are gathered under the four noble truths. Under which four? Under the *noble truth of stress*, under the *noble truth of the origination of stress*, under the *noble truth of the cessation of stress*, and under the *noble truth of the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress*."

(*Majjhima Nikaya*, 28)

One's duties with regard to each of the Four Noble Truths

[The Buddha speaks of his Awakening:]

"Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: 'This is the noble truth of stress'... 'This noble truth of stress *is to be comprehended*'... 'This noble truth of stress has been comprehended'...

"Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: 'This is the noble truth of the origination of stress'... 'This noble truth of the origination of stress *is to be abandoned*'... 'This noble truth of the origination of stress has been abandoned.'

"Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: 'This is the noble truth of the cessation of stress'... 'This noble truth of the cessation of stress *is to be directly **experienced***'... 'This noble truth of the cessation of stress has been directly experienced.'

"Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination arose within me with regard to things never heard before: 'This is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress'... 'This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress *is to be **developed***'... 'This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress has been developed.'

"And, monks, as long as this knowledge and vision of mine — with its three rounds and twelve permutations concerning these four noble truths as they actually are present — was not pure, I did not claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening unexcelled in the cosmos with its devas, Maras, and Brahmas, with its contemplatives and brahmans, its royalty and commonfolk. But as soon as this knowledge and vision of mine — with its three rounds and twelve permutations concerning these four noble truths as they actually are present — was truly pure, then I did claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening unexcelled in the cosmos with its devas, Maras and Brahmas, with its contemplatives and brahmans, its royalty and commonfolk. Knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unprovoked is my release. This is the last birth. There is now no further becoming.'"

(*Samyutta Nikaya*, 56.11)

See also:

"The First Noble Truth"

(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca1/index.html>)

"The Second Noble Truth"

(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca2/index.html>)

"The Third Noble Truth"

(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca3/index.html>)

"The Fourth Noble Truth"

(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/index.html>)

"The Four Noble Truths" (Study Guide)

(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/study/truths.html>)

"The Four Noble Truths" in *The Wings to Awakening*

(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/wings/part3.html>)

"The Nobility of the Truths" (Bhikkhu Bodhi)

(http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/bps-essay_20.html)

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