

The Four Noble Truths

Thus has it been said by the Buddha, the Enlightened One:

'It is through not understanding, not realizing four things, that I, Disciples, as well as you, had to wander so long through this round of rebirths. And what are these four things? They are:

The Noble Truth of Suffering (*dukkha*);

The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*dukkha-samudaya*);

The Noble Truth of the Extinction of Suffering (*dukkha-nirodha*);

The Noble Truth of the Path that leads to the Extinction of Suffering (*dukkha-nirodha-gamini-patipada*). (From *Digha Nikāya*, 16)

As long as the absolutely true knowledge and insight as regards these Four Noble Truths was not quite clear in me, so long was I not sure that I had won that supreme Enlightenment which is unsurpassed in all the world with its heavenly beings, evil spirits and gods, amongst all the hosts of ascetics and priests, heavenly beings and men. But as soon as the absolute true knowledge and insight as regards these Four Noble Truths had become perfectly clear in me, there arose in me the assurance that I had won that supreme Enlightenment unsurpassed. (From *Samyutta Nikāya*, LVI.11)

And I discovered that profound truth, so difficult to perceive, difficult to understand, tranquilizing and sublime, which is not to be gained by mere reasoning, and is visible only to the wise.

The world, however, is given to pleasure, delighted with pleasure, enchanted with pleasure. Truly, such beings will hardly understand the law of conditionality, the Dependent Origination (*paticca-samuppada*) of everything; incomprehensible to them will also be the end of all formations, the forsaking of every substratum of rebirth, the fading away of craving, detachment, extinction, Nibbana.

Yet there are beings whose eyes are only a little covered with dust: they will understand the truth.' (From *Majjhima Nikāya*, 26)

Source: Nyanatiloka (compiler, translator). *The Word of the Buddha: An Outline of the Teaching of the Buddha in the Words of the Pali Canon*. 14th edition. Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1967. (Pages 5-6)