

Messages from the
Buddha



The Teaching of Buddha

For those who seek Enlightenment there are three ways of practice that must be understood and followed: first, disciplines for practical behavior; second, right concentration of mind; and third, wisdom.

What are disciplines? Everyone, whether a person is a common person or a way-seeker, should follow the precepts for good behavior. One should control both the mind and body, and guard the gates of one's five senses. One should be afraid of even a trifling evil and, from moment to moment, should endeavor to practice only good deeds.

What is meant by the concentration of mind? It means to quickly get away from greedy and evil desires as they arise and to hold the mind pure and tranquil.

What is wisdom? It is the ability to perfectly understand and to patiently accept the Fourfold Noble Truth, to know the fact of suffering and its nature; to know the source of suffering, to know what constitutes the end of suffering, and to know the Noble Path that leads to the end of suffering.

Those who earnestly follow these three ways of practice may rightly be called the disciples of Buddha.

Aṅguttara Nikāya



苦 Suffering



集 The Cause of Suffering



滅 The Extinction of Suffering



道 The Path to Nirvana

Four Truths

The world is full of suffering. Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness and death are sufferings. To meet a person 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. This is called *the Truth 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 feels desirable, even if it is sometimes death. This is called *the Truth of the 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. This is called *the Truth of the Noble Path to the Cessation of the Cause of Suffering*.

People should keep these Four Truths clearly in mind.

*Vinaya, Mahāvagga,
Sūyutta Nikāya, Dhammacakka-pavattana-sutta*



Eight Right Paths

If one destroys the root of desire completely and becomes separated from attachments, human suffering will be erased. In order to enter into a state where there is no desire and no suffering, one must follow a certain Path called *Noble Eightfold Path*.

The stages of this *Noble Eightfold Path* are:

Right View
Right Thought
Right Speech
Right Behavior
Right Livelihood
Right Effort
Right Mindfulness
Right Concentration



覺 Enlightenment

For the world is filled with suffering and if anyone 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*.

*Vinaya, Mahāvagga,
Sūyutta Nikāya,
Dhammacakka-pavattana-sutta*

Causes and Conditions

There are causes for all human suffering, and there is a way by which they may be ended, because everything in the world is the result of a vast concurrence of causes and conditions, and everything disappears as these causes and conditions change and pass away.

Rain falls, winds blow, plants bloom, leaves mature and are blown away. These phenomena are all inter-related with causes and conditions, and are brought about by them, and disappear as the causes and conditions change.

One is born through the conditions of parentage. His body is nourished by food, his spirit is nurtured by teaching and experience.

Therefore, both flesh and spirit are related to conditions and are changed as conditions change.

As a net is made up by a series of knots, so everything in this world is connected by a series of knots. If anyone thinks that the mesh of a net is an independent, isolated thing, he is mistaken.

It is called a net because it is made up of a series of connected meshes, and each mesh has its place and responsibilities in relation to other meshes.

Śrīmālādevīsīṃhanāda-sūtra

*Prejudiced View*

Since everything in this world is brought about by causes and conditions, there can be no fundamental distinctions among things. The apparent distinctions exist because of people's absurd and discriminating thoughts.

In the sky there is no distinction of east and west; people create the distinctions out of their own minds and then believe them to be true.

Mathematical numbers from one to infinity are each complete numbers, and each in itself carries no distinction of quantity; but people make the discrimination for their own convenience, so as to be able to indicate varying amounts.

Inherently there are no distinctions between the process of life and the process of destruction; people make a discrimination and call one birth and the other death. In action there is no discrimination between right and wrong, but people make a distinction for their own convenience.

Buddha keeps away from these discriminations and looks upon the world as upon a passing cloud. To Buddha every definitive thing is illusion; He knows that whatever the mind grasps and throws away is insubstantial; thus He transcends the pitfalls of images and discriminative thought.

Avataṃsaka-sūtra

Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra

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