

The Truth of the Path

The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of *dukkha*

(*dukkha nirodha gamini patipada ariya sacca*)

The Noble Eightfold Path

"And this, monks, is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of *dukkha*: precisely this Noble Eightfold Path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration." (*Samyutta Nikaya*, 56.11)

The threefold division of the path

[Visakha, a layman, ex-husband of Ven. Sister Dhammadinna:] "And are the three aggregates [of virtue, concentration, discernment] included under the noble eightfold path, lady, or is the noble eightfold path included under the three aggregates?"

[Ven. Sister Dhammadinna:] "The three aggregates are not included under the noble eightfold path, friend Visakha, but the noble eightfold path is included under the three aggregates. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood come under the aggregate of **virtue**. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration come under the aggregate of **concentration**. Right view and right resolve come under the aggregate of **discernment**." (*Majjhima Nikaya*, 44)

An ancient path rediscovered

"It is just as if a man, traveling along a wilderness track, were to see an ancient path, an ancient road, traveled by people of former times. He would follow it. Following it, he would see an ancient city, an ancient capital inhabited by people of former times, complete with parks, groves, and ponds, walled, delightful. He would go to address the king or the king's minister, saying, 'Sire, you should know that while traveling along a wilderness track I saw an ancient path . . . I followed it . . . I saw an ancient city, an ancient capital . . . complete with parks, groves, and ponds, walled, delightful. Sire, rebuild that city!' The king or king's minister would rebuild the city, so that at a later date the city would become powerful, rich, and well-populated, fully grown and prosperous.

"In the same way I saw an ancient path, an ancient road, traveled by the Rightly Self-awakened Ones of former times. And what is that ancient path, that ancient road, traveled by the Rightly Self-awakened Ones of former times? Just this noble eightfold path: right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration . . . I followed that path. Following it, I came to direct knowledge of birth . . . becoming . . . clinging . . . craving . . . feeling . . . contact . . . the six sense media . . . name-and-form . . . consciousness, direct knowledge of the origination of consciousness, direct knowledge of the cessation of consciousness, direct knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of consciousness. I followed that path.

"Following it, I came to direct knowledge of fabrications, direct knowledge of the origination of fabrications, direct knowledge of the cessation of fabrications, direct knowledge of the path leading to the cessation of fabrications. Knowing that directly, I have revealed it to monks, nuns, male lay followers and female lay followers, so that this holy life has become powerful, rich, detailed, well-populated, wide-spread, proclaimed among celestial and human beings." (*Samyutta Nikaya*, 12.65)

A path to overcome danger

"There are these three things that are (genuine) mother-and-child-separating dangers. Which three? The danger of aging, the danger of illness, the danger of death.

"A mother can't get (her wish) with regard to her child who is aging, 'I am aging, but may my child not age.' A child can't get (its wish) with regard to its mother who is aging, 'I am aging, but may my mother not age.'

"A mother can't get (her wish) with regard to her child who is growing ill, 'I am growing ill, but may my child not grow ill.' A child can't get (its wish) with regard to its mother who is growing ill, 'I am growing ill, but may my mother not grow ill.'

"A mother can't get (her wish) with regard to her child who is dying, 'I am dying, but may my child not die.' A child can't get (its wish) with regard to its mother who is dying, 'I am dying, but may my mother not die.'

"These are the three things that are (genuine) mother-and-child-separating dangers.

"There is a path, there is a practice, that leads to the abandoning and overcoming of these three mother-and-child-uniting dangers and these three mother-and-child-separating dangers.

"And which is that path, which is that practice . . .? Just this very noble eightfold path, i.e., right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

"This is the path, this the practice, that leads to the abandoning and overcoming of these three mother-and-child-uniting dangers and these three mother-and-child-separating dangers." (*Anguttara Nikaya*, 3.62)

Enlightenment is accessible only to those who follow this path

"In any doctrine and discipline where the noble eightfold path is not found, no contemplative of the first . . . second . . . third . . . fourth order [stream-winner, once-returner, non-returner, or arahant] is found. But in any doctrine and discipline, where the noble eightfold path *is* found, contemplatives of the first . . . second . . . third . . . fourth order *are* found. The noble eightfold path is found in this doctrine and discipline, and right here there are contemplatives of the first . . . second . . . third . . . fourth order. Other teachings are empty of knowledgeable contemplatives. And if the monks dwell rightly, this world will not be empty of arahants." (*Digha Nikaya*, 16)

See also:

"Four Noble Truths" by editors of Access To Insight
(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/index.html>)

"The Third Noble Truth" by editors of Access To Insight
(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca3/index.html>)

"Maha-cattarisaka Sutta (MN 117) – The Great Forty" – translated from the Pali by Thanissaro Bhikkhu
(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.117.than.html>)

The Noble Eightfold Path: The Way to the End of Suffering by Bhikkhu Bodhi (<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/bodhi/waytoend.html>)

The Wings to Awakening (Part III): The Basic Factors by Thanissaro Bhikkhu
(<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/thanissaro/wings/part3.html>)

Source: "The Fourth Noble Truth: The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of [dukkha](#)", edited by Access to Insight. *Access to Insight (Legacy Edition)*, 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/ptf/dhamma/sacca/sacca4/index.html> . [Title of article modified by Alexander Peck.]

©2005 Access to Insight.

The text of this page ("The Fourth Noble Truth: The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of [dukkha](#)", by Access to Insight) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#). To view a copy of the license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>. Documents linked from this page may be subject to other restrictions. Last revised for Access to Insight on 30 November 2013.