



# 四圣谛

## The Four Noble Truths

萨迦·赤千法王（第41任萨迦·赤津）■ 著  
H.H. the Sakya Trichen (the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Trizin)

“萨迦传承”翻译小组 汉译  
Translated by “The Sakya Tradition” Translation Team



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[www.sakyatradition.org](http://www.sakyatradition.org)

Email 电邮 : [info@sakyatradition.org](mailto:info@sakyatradition.org)

Wechat ID 微信公众号 : TheSakyaTradition

Weibo 微博 : sakyatradition

IG: [the\\_sakya\\_tradition](#)

Facebook: TheSakya

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# 鸣 谢

## Acknowledgment

本书摘录自尊贵的萨迦·赤千法王（第 41 任萨迦·赤津法王）在美国给予的《三转法轮》教学开示。萨迦大悲遍空寺整理编辑英文版，并于 2015 年初版。“萨迦传承”翻译小组修定和增加了英文再版注解。“萨迦传承”汉译。感恩所有直接或间接参与初版和此版的整理编辑的每一位所作贡献，使更多人得以与此珍贵的开示结缘并能获得暂时与终极的利益。

以此功德，愿尊贵的第 41 任萨迦·赤津法王健康长寿、长久住世、法轮长转。

The content of this book was extracted from the teaching originally known as “The Three Turnings of the Wheel of Dharma”, given by H.H. the Sakya Trichen (the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Trizin) in the United States. The English transcript was prepared and first published by Tsechen Kunchab Ling in 2015. This version of the English transcript was revised and editor’s notes were included by “The Sakya Tradition” translation team. The text was translated into Chinese Language by “The Sakya Tradition” translation team. We thank everyone, who has contributed one way or another in creating the current and previous editions, bringing these precious teachings to many.

By the merit of this work, may His Holiness the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Trizin enjoy perfect health and have extremely long life, and continue to turn the wheel of Dharma.



# 四圣谛

(智慧版)

萨迦·赤千法王（第41任萨迦·赤津） 著

“萨迦传承”翻译小组汉译

# 目录

真正的幸福源自心灵的成长	1
佛教之道	2
佛陀初转法轮	5
苦谛	6
集谛	10
灭谛	12
道谛	14



## 真正的幸福源自心灵的成长

在我们获得精神升华之前，无论在外缘上如何努力，或取得多少进步，实际上仍无法真正获得所寻求的幸福。

当今世上尽管有诸多不同的地域、文化、哲学、宗教和传统，却都有一个共同点——那就是每个人都希望远离痛苦，每个人都渴望拥有幸福。出于这共同的愿望，人们都在各自领域中为之不懈努力，各个国家也都积极致力于实现这一目标。

事实彰彰明甚，在我们获得精神升华之前，无论在外缘上如何努力，或取得多少进步，实际上仍无法真正获得所寻求的幸福。尽管目标为实现幸福，但任何基于外缘的目标，除非它与内在的精神发展相关联，否则将带来更多困苦，而非幸福<sup>[1]</sup>。故而，每个人真正的福祉都必须通过内在精神提升来实现。唯有通过修行，方可实现此目标。

注释：

[1] 尽管目的是获得幸福，然而却不注重目标与内在心灵发展的关联性，当追求每一个外在目标时，取而代之收获的只会是更多的不幸与痛苦，而非幸福。

## 佛教之道

于初地时，佛陀全然而毫无分别地利益一切有情众生，他所行持的种种事业皆为利益众生。

诸多正法贤圣尊众曾降临于世，并传授了大量不同类别的教法。百花争艳，各有所长，皆具安顿身心于喜乐宁静之道，但此处我所要论述的是本师释迦牟尼佛所教授的佛教之道。

为利益众生故，佛陀历经三大阿僧祇劫<sup>[2]</sup>，积累了无量的福德与智慧。通过福德智慧的积聚而净除了一切障垢，断除能、所二取之心，圆满证得了无上正等正觉果位。

佛陀是圆满的觉悟者，获得究竟证悟，具有帮助众生脱离苦海之能力。纵然佛身一缕毫光，抑或一行教言，也能在刹那间利益无量有情众生。无论直接或间接地与佛陀相应，皆可令之离苦得乐。

于初地时，佛陀全然而毫无分别地利益一切有情众生，他所行持的种种事业皆为利益众生。佛陀演示了诸多身语意的事业，但其中最重要的就是语事业。佛陀以言语为众生传授自证之道，这被称为“转法轮”<sup>[3]</sup>。



佛陀通过教示利益众生，令未成熟者成熟，令未入道者入道，令未精进者精进，令精进者获得更高的境界。

在佛陀殊胜的事业中，最殊胜的为语事业。众生无量，不可计数，如虚空般无有穷尽。而无量众生的心态、习性、根器、意乐各不相同，故而单一教法不足以利益所有众生。如同此理，治疗不同的疾病需要用不同的药材和疗法，故一种教法并不足够，因此，佛陀为适应不同根器的众生宣讲了无量法门。故而，佛陀的教导有许多不同的次第，依追随者的各自根器和条件、因缘、环境等，有丰富的方法对其分门别类，但简而言之，它们被统称为“三转法轮”。

注释:

[2] 阿僧祇（梵语: *asāṃkhyā*），或译为无数、无央数，意为「不可计数的」、「多到没有数目可以计算」，是一个佛教数字词。阿僧祇劫即指「无数劫」。劫（梵: *kalpa*; 英: *aeon*）是印度教及佛教宇宙观术语，意思是一段对人类来说极长的时间。劫共分为大、中、小三劫。三阿僧祇劫（梵: *Asaṃkhyeyakalpa*），意指从菩萨到成佛所需的时间。一共有五十菩萨阶位。首四十阶位属于第一阿僧祇劫，从初地到第七地是第二阿僧祇劫，从第八地到第十地（即佛果位）为第三阿僧祇劫。世尊释迦牟尼佛经历了三大阿僧祇劫转贪瞋痴等三毒心为三解脱而圆满佛果位。

[3] 佛法分为教法和证法。经、律、论三藏及密续等戒学、定学、慧学属于教法；实证得来的戒、定、慧等功德、证量、能力等属于证法。教法，是把见证到的真理、得到的经验和方法，通过语言文字等方式做出的总结。证法，需要行者依觉者引导把教法正确理解并付诸实践，或以觉者的加持、弟子的净信实现“以心传心”才能得到。因此，证法是个人的证境界、能力、功德、现量经验，是教法里没有的，只在证悟者身上有（完整的“法”——教法和证法——只在觉者身上同时具备）。

轮（梵: *cakra*）是印度古代战争是一种战争武器，形状像个轮子，代表了佛陀正法能摧伏邪障、轮转不息、遍及一切处，同时，在一切法器里只有轮的相是最圆满的。因此，我们把佛讲经说法比喻作转法轮。转法轮包括了教、证两方面，也就是有形和无形（即语言和超越语言）这两部分。

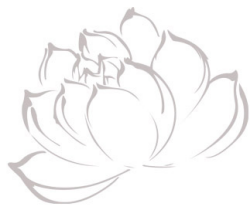
## 佛陀初转法轮

四谛因缘包含了轮回的因和果，以及涅槃的因和果。

鹿野苑初转法轮，发生于佛陀获得圆满证悟之后，所阐释的是四圣谛。四谛因缘包含了轮回的因和果，以及涅槃的因和果。

“四圣谛”说四种真理：一者、**苦圣谛**；二者、**集圣谛**；三者、**灭圣谛**；四者、**道圣谛**。

佛陀阐释四圣谛的目的，是要告诉我们世间的因果以及出世间的因果。“苦”是指世间的苦果；“集”是苦生起的原因——世间因；“灭”是苦熄灭的果——出世间的果；“道”是灭苦的方法，通往涅槃的道路——出世间的因。



## 苦谛

娑婆界众生上至天界，下至地狱，三界之苦遍布其间。

首先需要了知苦形成的原因。比如说，倘若我们患上某种特殊的疾病后，首先必须要做的就是了解病因。若不知道病因，我们就无法确定任何治疗方法。

以此类推，若想找到拔苦的有效方法，就必须了解苦的本质。为生起真实无伪的出离心，即虔心希求究竟解脱之道，就必须了知一切苦谛、苦集以及苦的本质。

通常而言，苦有三种：（一）苦苦；（二）变苦（坏苦）；（三）行苦。

苦苦是显而易见的痛苦，那些被公认的苦上加苦，比如身体的疼痛、心理的焦虑等。这类苦主要存在于三恶趣中。

整个宇宙可被分为三界：（一）欲界；（二）色界；（三）无色界。而欲界包括六道<sup>[4]</sup>，即地狱、饿鬼、旁生三恶道，以及人道、非天（阿修罗道）、天道三善道。

地狱中充斥着太多痛苦，有八热地狱、八寒地狱、近边地狱等。人类所能感受到的最强烈的痛苦都远不及地狱中微毫之苦。众生因业力而感生于地狱之中，尤以因愤怒与嗔恚相关之业力。

第二层恶道是饿鬼道，由悭贪故，生于此道。常受饥饿，其苦无量，恶鬼道众生依业报差别分有三类：一谓外障饿鬼；其次者谓内障饿鬼；又其次者谓特障饿鬼。积劫不闻浆水之名。

旁生所受之苦，是切实可见的。人类无法忍受它们所遭受的哪怕最轻微的痛苦。山居、海居、饲养以及野生的旁生，都无法逃脱被折磨或被杀戮的命运。旁生不得不恒时处于恐惧中。

感生于三恶道的主要原因是无明愚痴。苦苦，是公认的苦上加苦，常见于恶道中。

此外还有三善道：（一）人道；（二）非天；（三）天道。

首先，人道中无人能摆脱生、老、病、死这四种痛苦，同时还有其它诸苦——譬如怨憎会苦、爱别离苦、求不得苦、不欲临苦。穷人感受乏衣少食、无有庇护、缺医短药等痛苦，而富人则有诸多心理负担等诸苦。

无论我们怎么努力，都不可能知足；不论我们为除苦趋乐而做出多少努力，都无法找到真正幸福的目标。

人道的众生都在经历苦苦，一切众苦迫迫，苦上加苦，故谓之苦苦。以感无常变幻之苦，无一不在变化：偌大家族亲人相继一一故去消逝；富者变穷，穷者变富；强权者沦为弱者等等，万事万物皆在变化。



阿修罗道，人道之上，天道之下，故称为“非天”。阿修罗生就争斗心盛，见诸天天人居其头顶天上，嫉妒诸天人优于自己，便常常与诸天人争斗。但是力所不及，最终总是诸天胜，阿修罗败。故此身心倍受痛苦。

欲界天中，欲天享有奢华的生活，诸事繁盛。那里天人享受诸善德，譬如寿数甚、健康无病、衣食丰足。却因如此，他们一生耽著于享乐，殊不知天福享尽终有一死，且寿命尽时，方知荒于享乐悔之不及，知当死堕，生大恐怖，此苦则更甚于恶趣众生之凄惶懊恼，痛苦不堪。

然后是最高之天界，谓之无色界与色界。无色界诸天超越我等这般物质（色身）之苦，是四禅八定（世间定）具足者，其修禅仍依缘而有迎、拒我执之心，未能发掘出世间的究竟涅槃从而彻底解脱一切诸苦烦恼的智慧。因此，经过长时间后，定功退失之时，会再次地堕三途。如鸿鹄高飞长空万里，终栖于陆。如



同此理，色界与无色界诸天，空获世间最高成就，亦复堕回三途恶趣。

这就是轮回，一种“存在”的境界。娑婆界众生上至天界，下至地狱，三界之苦遍布其间。

世间诸法因众缘和合而生灭变化无常。无常即苦，其性本空。例如，今日尚且身强康泰，但一切（变故）随时都会发生。因此我们经历变苦，包括乐受变不乐受。

随后为行苦：为生活我们汲汲营营，鞠躬尽瘁，永无止境。自出生时起，便卷入无穷尽的行为事物之中，事实往往不尽人意也不能永久把握。事事有始未必有令人满意的终。如人觅食，美食愈多，食欲愈甚，固此谓之行苦。

六道之中从善道至恶趣无论身处何处，轮回皆苦。譬如无论熊熊烈焰抑或星星微火，都不离火为热源的自性，故知无论善道抑或恶趣，皆不离轮回为苦谛之自性。

我们必须先观修六道轮回之苦，心生厌离，从而生起希求解脱之心，了解苦的本质最为关键，不仅如此，还需自我观察，以自己所受的众多痛苦作为比量，则知其他众生也受同等之苦，因而发起悲心。直至深切地渴望永脱轮回为止。

注释：

[4] 欲界的天道仅为欲界天。

## 集谛

何为苦因？苦因实为垢染法。烦恼由何而来？源于无明与我执。

初谛中，佛陀教导要了知苦谛。于二谛中，则揭示痛苦之因。举例而言，当我们生病时，首先必须要了解确切病情，方可避免病因。倘若一边治疗，一边仍继续陷于病源的话，疾病不能痊愈。因此第二转法轮是劝勉世人厌离苦谛。

何为苦因？苦因实为垢染法。烦恼由何而来？源于无明与我执。心之真容本纯净无染，无奈众生不自知，反而将虚幻不实、五蕴和合的身心，妄生执着，安立有“我”的概念，错认我们的存在为“我”。

一旦有“自我”，自然就有“他人”，二者相互依存。当有了“自我”与“他人”，就会衍生出对自己亲友等的依恋。有我就有他的分别。自然就会和别人比较，不甘认输，无论是怕输还是怕赢不了对方，都会令人嗔恚，这由于无明，引发了嗔心和贪心，由此被称为三毒的贪、嗔、痴烦恼就形成了。而由此三毒衍生更多垢染。比如自身贪恋财富资具将自然生起悭吝与傲慢；

而他人拥有财富名望时又将滋生诸如嫉妒和竞争心等。一切垢染纷至沓来。

基于此类不净心态，导致影响身、语、意的行为，而此类不净习性如同播下苦种。不净行即行苦。譬如具毒树根，所生的枝叶花果皆具其毒。故同此理，由无明垢染所产生的贪嗔痴诸不善行，皆为致苦之因。

每一行为如同播种。播下一粒种子，它的果实则取决于因缘和条件。当恰当的因缘聚合时，就必然产生结果。有什么样的因就有什么样的果，一切的苦乐境界，都是自己的行为所造作的，种如是因，当得如是果，一切唯心与行所造。

因而佛陀于第二圣谛劝导断舍一切诸行苦，即无明垢染的显现。发愿离苦则必须断除苦因。如若积习长久，继续造业，循环不息，痛苦随之无有止境。

前二种圣谛构成了轮回之因与果，揭示了轮回中的一切皆源于妄行、因无明垢染，以我执用事，因而转生于轮回。所以说，初圣谛为果，次圣谛为因。



## 灭谛

佛陀说：“自为己洲屿，自为己依怙，无求他庇护。”

第三圣谛与第四圣谛是涅槃的因和果。

第三圣谛是灭谛。譬如病者希求痊愈康复。同理，我们希求脱离苦海，然而不可能依附他人而求解脱，必须依靠自己而从苦海得度。佛陀说：“自为己洲屿，自为己依怙，无求他庇护。”<sup>[5]</sup>除了自己，没有他人可以救度自己。

例如生病时，良医妙药，医者仁心固然重要，但关键还需病者遵医嘱服药，并远离病源。病者接受诊疗祛病从而康复。反之，倘若病者不遵医嘱，任其名医妙药也无济于事，故须知，佛为良医想，法如妙药想，二者皆具备，方可度脱苦海。

虽有佛陀无别慈悲恩德之加持，然吾等辈因往昔业染与烦恼故，至今仍于轮回苦海中沉浮。

纵观六道众生，人皆以才智而取优。故能自度了生脱苦，甚至旁生亦有类同者。但有别于旁生，我们具有智慧、有思想、

有解决问题的能力，故切勿虚耗珍贵时日（生为人身的时机）。

虔信者希求从生命之苦中得以解脱，因此佛陀传讲了“无一众生而不具有如来智慧，但以妄想颠倒执著而不证得；若离妄想，一切智、自然智、无碍智则得现前。”此即为我们寻求的究竟解脱之道：永离痛苦、无碍自由之境，且永不退转。于此境界中不仅永离诸苦，且苦因将无从而生。



注释：

[5] 佛陀说：“自为己洲屿，自为己依怙，无求他庇护。”这句出自《长部》。第二品，第三经，《大涅槃经》，第 100 页。

## 道谛

我们的妄念不断生起，故而无法直接观照本来智慧。

如何能获得导致苦之彻底止息之道？第四圣谛为导向体证涅槃之路。因此说，第四圣谛是我们必须去锲而不舍亲身实践它。

对认真实修再作病想：为彻底康复及远离疾病，须接受治疗。此喻等同一切圣言现为践行道。如前所述，应以极大的精进入于此实修实证之道。佛陀曾说：“吾为汝说解脱道，当知解脱依自己。”故闻义后应精进行持。

如何去实修呢？须以不同的方法和实修，来消除嗔恚、仇怨、欲望、我慢及悭吝诸多烦恼，比如观修慈悲、数息、专注瑜伽、自他交换等等。诸如此类不同的观修和方便法门。通过如是观修，得以减少或抑制妄念，并将不净行转化为道用。然而这仅仅是短暂的境界。

我们必须通过明心见性，方为彻底断除轮回之因的究竟智慧。

轮回之因在于对我执的无明，一切苦因源于我执。由我执故生妄念，因妄念故造作诸不善行，继而感召苦因。因此我执是为苦因。

断除我执，须培养无我的智慧，它与“我执”的概念完全背道而驰。假设要去寻觅那个谬认为实有的“我”，将会一无所获，并有许多依据可以验证。

我们的妄念不断生起，故而无法直接观照本来智慧<sup>[6]</sup>。为保持觉知，首先要提升专注力。

念头专注于某特别的所缘物，同时专注于呼吸。目光则持续专注于观修的所缘物并且安住于此，不去分别它的颜色、形状等，仅仅如是安住。此外还有许多其他的方法让心安住于所缘境上，比如：专注瑜伽、离戏瑜伽、自解瑜伽等等，诸如此类来尝试将心安住于觉知状态。

开始阶段，貌似有更多妄念生起，感觉比平时有更多念头。这是由于我们从未约束或关注过自己的念头。当尝试去保持觉知，才开始察觉自己的念头。此为取得进步的先兆。随后，念头的频次与时长会逐渐变少变短，直至心能彻底地安住一处，远离念头，犹如波澜不起的海洋。

此境界的根本即为明觉，通过保持觉知而获得。只有开启明觉后，方可明心见性。经由缜密的分析，了知一切有为法生灭无常，诸法无我，并了知实相是摒弃所有造作，究竟圆满的智慧即远离一切造作与戏论。



最后的二圣谛——灭谛和道谛，是涅槃的因和果。

佛陀最初宣讲此四圣谛，即为初转法轮的内容，也是所有佛教大、小乘派系的共同教法。由此我们转不善业为道用，趋入正道，而后依教奉行直至解脱。

注释：

[6] Insight Wisdom（梵文：Vipassana 毗钵舍那）指内观，是用来洞查本来智慧的禅修。

— 全文完 —



# **The Four Noble Truths**

H.H. the Sakya Trichen (the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Trizin)

Second Edition

“The Sakya Tradition” Translation Team

# CONTENT

True Happiness Comes From Spiritual Development	1
The Buddhist Path	2
The First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma	5
The Truth of Suffering	6
The Truth of the Cause of Suffering	12
The Truth of Cessation	15
The Truth of the Path	17

# TRUE HAPPINESS COMES FROM SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

*Until we have made spiritual progress, we cannot actually gain the happiness we are seeking, no matter how much external effort we put forth, or how much progress we make.*

**I**n this world, there are many different places, cultures, philosophies, religions, and traditions. But one thing common to all of them is that everybody wants to be free from suffering, and everybody wishes to have happiness. For the same reason, every individual is making efforts in their community and every country is making efforts towards this goal.

But it is very clear that until we have made spiritual progress, we cannot actually gain the happiness we are seeking, no matter how much external effort we put forth, or how much progress we make. Although the goal is to achieve happiness, every external goal, unless it is linked to inner mental development, will bring more misery and suffering instead of bringing more happiness. Therefore, everyone's goal of true happiness has to come through inner spiritual development. It is only through spiritual practices that we can achieve this.

## THE BUDDHIST PATH

*From the beginning, the Buddha's whole purpose was to help all sentient beings without any exception. Every activity that he performed was for the benefit of sentient beings.*

**T**here are many great masters who came into this world and gave many different types of teachings. Each has their own beauty, their own ways to solve problems, and their own paths to find inner peace and happiness. But what I will discuss is the path according to the Lord Buddha Shakyamuni.

For three countless<sup>(1)</sup> aeons, the Buddha worked to accumulate tremendous amounts of merit and wisdom for the benefit of sentient beings. Through that accumulation of merit and wisdom, he eventually overcame all obscurations and defilements. Everything that needed to be parted from, was parted from; and every possible good quality that needed to be gained, was gained.

The Buddha is fully awakened, fully enlightened, and has the power to help sentient beings free themselves from suffering. Even one ray of light from his body, or one line of teaching, can help countless sentient beings in a single moment.

Directly or indirectly, any contact with the Buddha will help to release one from suffering and gain happiness.

From the beginning, the Buddha's whole purpose was to help all sentient beings without any exception. Every activity that he performed was for the benefit of sentient beings. He performed many great physical activities, vocal activities, and mental activities. But among these, the most important was his vocal activities. The Buddha gave teachings in words about what he had realized, which is called "turning the wheel of Dharma".

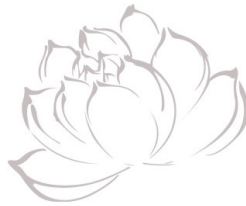
The Buddha helps sentient beings through his teachings. Those who are not ripe are ripened; those who are not on the path are placed on the path; those who are not making progress become able to make progress; and those who are already making progress are helped to gain higher realization.

Of the Buddha's great activities, the greatest was his vocal activity. Sentient beings have no limit; they are countless, just as space is limitless. These limitless sentient beings are all different—their mentalities, their defilements, their mental conditions, and their propensities. Therefore one type of teaching cannot help all sentient beings. Similarly, there are different types of medicines and treatments in order to cure different types of diseases. One type of teaching is not enough. The Buddha gave an enormous number of teachings in order to suit every type of sentient being. So the teachings of the Buddha have many different levels, according to the followers' mental states and conditions, situations, environments, and so forth. There are many ways to categorize them, but in brief they are defined by "the three turnings of the wheel of Dharma".

Notes:

(1) Countless (Sanskrit: asāṃkhyā) means immeasurable, is a number measurement in Buddhism. Aeon (Sanskrit: kalpa) means a relatively long period of time (by human calculation) in Buddhist cosmology. In general, there are three types of kalpas—great kalpa, medium kalpa, and small kalpa.

Three Countless Aeons (Sanskrit: Asaṃkhyeyakalpa) means the time needed for a Bodhisattva to become a Buddha. There are 50 Bodhisattva stages. The first forty Bodhisattva stages belong to the first countless kalpa. From the first Bhūmi to the seventh Bhūmi belongs to the second countless kalpa, whilst from the eighth to the tenth Bhūmi (Buddhahood) belongs to the third countless kalpa. Buddha Shakyamuni spent three countless aeons to transform the three poisons—attachment, aversion, and ignorance to the three liberations and attained full Buddhahood.



# THE FIRST TURNING OF THE WHEEL OF DHARMA

*The Four Noble Truths include both the cause and result of saṃsāra, and the cause and result of nirvāṇa.*

**T**he first turning of the wheel of Dharma occurred after the Buddha attained enlightenment at Sarnath (Deer Park). There he first turned the wheel of Dharma, and the title of that teaching is the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths include both the cause and result of saṃsāra, and the cause and result of nirvāṇa. There are four noble truths: 1) the truth of suffering, 2) the truth of the cause of suffering, 3) the truth of cessation, and 4) the truth of the path.

One must know the truth of suffering, abstain from the cause of suffering, realize the truth of cessation, and practice the truth of the path.

## THE TRUTH OF SUFFERING

*Beings in the form and formless realms go to the highest worldly stage and then fall back into the lower realms.*

**F**irst, one should know the truth of suffering. For example, if we are sick with a specific disease, the first thing we must do is to learn the exact nature of the sickness. Without knowing the exact nature of the sickness, we cannot determine any treatments.

Similarly, to have an effective treatment for suffering, one must know the exact nature of suffering. In order to give rise to genuine renunciation thought, which is the sincere wish to practice and enter the path in order to gain liberation, we must know the truth of suffering, what suffering is, and the exact nature of suffering.

Generally speaking, there are three different types of suffering: 1) the suffering of suffering, 2) the suffering of change, and 3) the suffering of the conditional nature of all things.



The suffering of suffering is visible suffering, the suffering we consider to be suffering, such as physical pain, mental anxiety, and so on. This suffering exists mainly in the lower realms.

The whole universe is divided into three realms: 1) the desire realm, 2) the form realm, and 3) the formless realm. The desire realm has six other realms within it. Three are lower realms: the hell realm, the hungry ghost realm, and the animal realm. Three are higher realms: the human realm, the demigod realm, and the god realm.

The hell realm has so much suffering. There are hot hells, cold hells, neighboring hells, and so on. The greatest suffering experienced by human beings cannot represent even the slightest part of hell realm suffering. Beings are born in hell due to their karma, particularly the karma related to anger and hatred.

The second lower realm is that of hungry ghosts. This realm exists mainly due to desire and attachment, resulting in stinginess. Thus, beings who fall into the hungry ghost realm experience extreme hunger and thirst. There are three types of hungry ghost realms: those where beings have outer obscurations, inner obscurations, and obscuration of obscurations, which means that for ages those hungry ghosts cannot find even a single drop of water.



In the animal realm, we can actually see how much beings suffer. No human being could bear even the slightest part of the sufferings that animals go through. Animals in the jungle, animals in the ocean, animals belonging to humans, animals not belonging to humans, are either tortured or killed. Animals have to remain in constant fear.

The main cause of rebirth in the three lower realms is ignorance. The suffering of suffering that we normally consider to be suffering, is mainly seen in the lower realms.

Then there are three higher realms: 1) the human realm, 2) the demigod realm, and 3) the god realm.

First of all, no one in the human realm is free from the four sufferings—the sufferings of birth, old age, sickness, and death. And there are also many other types of suffering in the human realm—the suffering of meeting enemies, the suffering of losing friends, the suffering of not fulfilling one’s wishes, and the suffering of undesirable things happening. Those who are poor suffer from being unable to find food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and so on. On the other hand, those who are rich have many mental burdens and sufferings of their own.

No matter what one does, there is no satisfaction. Whatever we do, in spite of all the efforts we make to eliminate suffering and to gain happiness, we cannot find our actual goal of happiness.

In the human realm, beings experience some suffering of suffering, but their primary suffering is the suffering of change. Everything is changing: large families lose members, gradually dwindle down to one single member, and then disappear; the rich become poor and the poor become rich; people with power become weak, and so on. Everything is changing.

The demigod realm is higher than the human realm but lower than the god realm; therefore, its inhabitants are called “demigods”. The demigods are naturally envious because they are constantly engaged in wars with the gods and other demigods. Since their power is not equivalent to the gods’, they are constantly defeated. Due to this, they have much physical and mental suffering.

In the deva or god realm, the gods have a very luxurious life, everything prospers; there they have all the worldly good qualities such as long life, good health, and an abundance of food. But because of this, their whole lives are spent in leisure and enjoyment. They do not realize how quickly their lives are passing, and only when the signs of death appear do they start to think of how they have spent their whole lives in wasteful luxury and now have to fall into the lower realms. Therefore they have tremendous mental suffering at the time of death. This type of suffering is even greater than the lower realms' physical suffering.

Then there are the highest deva realms, which are known as the rūpadhātu, the form realm and the arūpadhātu, or formless realm. There, beings do not have physical suffering as we have here. They possess very high meditational states, but these are worldly meditational states which have not yet cut the root of suffering, which is self-clinging; they do not have the wisdom to dig out the root of samsaric suffering. Therefore, after remaining for a long time in a meditative state, they again fall down into the lower realms, like birds. No matter how high they fly in the sky, eventually they have to land on the ground. Likewise, beings in the form and formless realms go to the highest worldly stage and then fall back into the lower realms.

This is saṃsāra, the realm of existence. It is suffering from the highest deva stage to the lowest hell realm. It is completely permeated by the three types of sufferings.

Everything is changing; anything that is gained through causes and conditions is impermanent. If it is impermanent,

it is suffering because it does not remain. For example, today we do not have so much physical suffering. We are healthy and able-bodied, but anything can happen at any moment. So therefore we experience the suffering of change, including the change from feeling happy to feeling unhappy.

And then there is the suffering of the conditional nature of all things: no matter how much we work, how many actions we perform, or how much effort we make, there is no end. From birth until now, we have engaged in many different actions and types of work, but we have never finished them and never feel satisfied. For anything we start, there is no satisfactory end. Like the food we eat, the more we eat, the more we desire; this is suffering.

No matter where one is, from the lowest realm to the highest realm, saṃsāra is completely full of suffering; like the nature of fire is hot, whether it is a small fire or big; the nature of saṃsāra is suffering, whether in the lower realms or the higher realms.

We must first know this in order to overcome these limitations. To know the nature of suffering is very important. It is important not only to try to understand suffering intellectually, but actually to feel it until you are deeply moved to be permanently free from the realms of existence.



## THE TRUTH OF THE CAUSE OF SUFFERING

*What is the cause of suffering? The cause of suffering is actually actions and defilements. Where do defilements come from? They come from ignorance, from self-clinging.*

**I**n the first truth, Buddha taught that one must know the truth of suffering. Then the second truth is the cause of suffering. For example, when we are sick, we must first know the exact nature of the disease, and then we can avoid the cause of the disease. Otherwise, if you take the treatment, but continue to expose yourself to the cause of the disease, you will not be able to cure it. Therefore, the second stage is to abstain from the cause of suffering.

What is the cause of suffering? The cause of suffering is actually actions and defilements. Where do defilements come from? They come from ignorance, from self-clinging. Our true nature of mind is pure but we do not recognize this; instead we cling to a “self” without authentic reasons and logic. We cling to our overall existence; we mistakenly believe that our being exists as a “self”.

When you have a “self”, then automatically you have an “other”. “Self” and “other” depend on each other. When you

have “self” and “other”, then there is attachment to one’s own friends and relatives and so forth. When you have one’s own side, then there is also the other side—the people you do not like, beings that you do not appreciate, beings that you do not agree with and *et cetera*, and so anger arises. From ignorance comes hatred and desire. In this way, the defilements are formed, which are known as the three main poisons: ignorance, desire, and hatred. These three give rise to the other defilements. For instance, when you have attachment to your wealth and possessions, then you generate stinginess and pride. And when other people have wealth and prosperity, you then have jealousy and competitiveness and so forth. All of these impure mental states arise.

Based on these impure mental states, you then take actions—physical actions, mental actions, and verbal actions. These actions are like planting a seed of suffering. Actions that arise from the defilements are all forms of suffering. If the root of a tree is poisonous, then anything that grows on the tree, such as fruits, flowers, and leaves are all poisonous. Similarly, the actions arising from defilements—ignorance, hatred and desire—are all non-virtuous deeds and are the cause of suffering.



Performing an action is like planting a seed. When you plant a seed, its fruit depends on causes and conditions. When the right causes and conditions are brought together, then you are bound to produce a result. Through our own actions, we have created all of our own situations. Through all of our own actions, we have created our own suffering. It is through all our own actions that we have created all of our happiness. Everything comes from our own actions.

Therefore, the Buddha said that the second truth is to abstain from the cause of suffering, which is the defilements. When you wish to be free from suffering, then you must abstain from its cause. But if you continuously create the cause, then the result of suffering is bound to follow.

These first two truths form the cause and result of saṃsāra. They show that everything in saṃsāra arises out of our own actions, from our own defilements, and through our own self-clinging. As a result, we are born in saṃsāra, which is full of suffering. So the first truth is the result and the second truth is the cause.





## THE TRUTH OF CESSATION

*The Buddha said, “You yourself are your own savior.”*

**T**he third and fourth truths are the cause and result of nirvāṇa.

The third truth is the truth of cessation. For example, when you are sick, you seek to recover from the disease and become healthy. Similarly, what we are seeking is to be free from suffering. But nobody else can remove your suffering. Each person has to work their own way out of suffering. The Buddha said, “You yourself are your own savior.”<sup>(2)</sup> Nobody else can save you; only you can save yourself.

For example, when you are sick, although it is very important to have a good doctor, good medicine, and good helpers, the main factor is that the patient has to take the medicine and abstain from the cause of the disease. The patient has to take treatments to eliminate the disease and to gain health and strength. Otherwise, if the patient does not take the doctor’s advice, no matter how good the doctor

or how good the medicine, the patient will never get well. Similarly, the Buddha is like a doctor and the Dharma is like medicine—together, they help us to be free from suffering.

Even though we receive help in the form of the Buddha's blessing, compassion, and grace, due to our own faults and defilements, we have not yet been able to relieve ourselves from the suffering of saṃsāra.

Among the sentient beings of the six realms, we human beings are endowed with superior knowledge and intelligence so we can work effectively to free ourselves from suffering. Even animals can do this to a degree. But we are different from animals; we have intelligence, we have a mind to think, and we have the capability to overcome all of our problems. Therefore, we must not lose precious time.

What we are seeking is the state beyond suffering. Therefore, the Buddha spoke of “the truth of cessation which one must obtain.” That is the goal we are seeking: the state that is permanently free, the state where we have permanently parted from all types of suffering and there can be no more relapse. In such a state, we are not only free from suffering, but suffering never reoccurs.

Notes:

(2) “You yourself are your own savior” was taken from “Monks, be islands unto yourselves, be your own refuge, having no other; let the Dhamma be an island and a refuge to you, having no other.” *Digha Nikāya* (Collection of Long Discourses): DN16, 165, *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*: Page 100.

## THE TRUTH OF THE PATH

*Our mind is constantly engaged in many different thoughts, so we cannot meditate on insight wisdom straight away.*

**H**ow do we get to the state of complete cessation of suffering? The truth of the path is the cause of attaining the state permanently free of suffering. Therefore, it is said that the fourth noble truth is the truth of the path which we must practice.

Again, if one is sick, in order to be cured and completely recover from sickness, we must receive treatment. Similarly, the truth of the path is what we must practice. As I said before, one must accomplish this oneself, so you must turn to yourself for help. The Buddha said, “I have shown the path of liberation, and whether you attain enlightenment or not depends on yourself.” Thus we have to practice.

How then should we practice? We must eliminate our defilements such as anger, hatred, desire, pride, and stinginess through different methods and practices such as meditations and contemplations on loving-kindness and compassion, breathing practices, concentration practices, interdependent

origination practices, and so on. There are so many different types of meditations and methods. Through these meditations, we reduce or suppress the impure mental states which are causing non-virtuous actions, and we develop the positive qualities of our minds that eliminate these impure mental states. Yet this method alone yields only temporary results.

The main thing that we must do is to attain wisdom, the wisdom of cutting the root of saṃsāra.

The root of saṃsāra is the ignorance that does not realize selflessness. The root of all suffering is self-clinging. From this self-clinging arises all impurities in the mind and due to it, all non-virtuous actions are undertaken. Then we suffer. Therefore, the root of suffering is self-clinging.



To overcome this self-clinging, we must develop the wisdom of selflessness. It is the complete opposite of self-clinging. If we search for this self to which we mistakenly cling, we cannot find it. There are many reasons that this is true.

Our mind is constantly engaged in many different thoughts, so we cannot meditate on insight wisdom straight away.

In order to be able to meditate, the first thing we have to do is to improve our concentration. Concentrate on a specific object with your mind and then focus on the breath. The eyes focus on the meditative object and remain there, instead of thinking about its color and shape and so on. Remain in this state as it is. There are many other methods, such as remembering the types of concentrations, applying the antidotes, practicing various methods of concentration *et cetera* that try to bring the mind to concentrate on the object.

In the beginning, when doing this, more thoughts seem to come. This is not only our normal stream of thoughts, but it feels like even more than usual. This is because normally we do not discipline our mind and pay attention to our thoughts. When you try to meditate, then you start to notice your thoughts. This is the first sign of improvement. Then the number and duration of your thoughts will slowly be reduced, and then eventually your mind will become able to remain completely single-pointed, free of thoughts, like an ocean without waves.

The base of this ability is clarity of mind. This is attained through proper concentration. Only after we attained clarity of mind can we meditate on insight wisdom. Through very sharp reasoning,

we logically analyze teachings that explain how everything is devoid of self, and we see that the truth is away from all extremes. The perfection of wisdom is to thus awaken from all forms of extremes and elaborations.

The last two truths—the truth of cessation and the truth of the path—are the cause and result of nirvāṇa.

The Buddha taught these four noble truths at the very beginning; they were his first teaching. This teaching is shared by all the Buddhist traditions, including the Mahāyāna and Hinayāna schools. Through them, we turn away from non-virtuous actions and establish ourselves on the right path. After putting ourselves on the right path, we pursue the path further to gain liberation.

-The End-





■ His Holiness the Sakya Trichen is the 41<sup>st</sup> Sakya Patriarch of Sakya Order throne holder of the Khön Lineage. His Holiness is widely recognized as the emanation of Mañjuśrī, is a very well respected and accomplished great master. His Holiness is the teacher of many eminent and accomplished Buddhist masters, and is acknowledged as the “King of Vajrayana Masters”. His Holiness manifests profound wisdom and compassion, and his teachings benefit countless students all around the world.

尊贵的萨迦·赤千法王是萨迦传承的第41任萨迦传承的王位持有者（第41任萨迦·赤津法王）。法王被公认为是文殊菩萨的化身，是一位非常受尊敬的伟大上师和觉者，也是许多高僧大德的上师，享有“金刚乘上师之王”的美誉。法王展露的智慧和慈悲以及法教，使世界各地的无数学生受益。



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