

The Four Noble Truths, Part 7 of 7

CONCLUDING FACTS ABOUT THE FOUR ARIYA-SACCA

by Buddhadāsa Bhikkhu

Interpreted into English by Santikaro Bhikkhu

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In the late 80s and early 90s, until his health deteriorated too much, Ajahn Buddhadāsa gave regular lectures during the monthly international retreats held at Suan Mokkh and then Suan Mokkh International Dharma Hermitage. Usually, Ajahn spoke in Thai and Santikaro Bhikkhu interpreted into English live. All Ajahn's teachings are now available on:

www.suanmokkh.org,

<https://soundcloud.com/buddhadasa> and

<https://www.youtube.com/@buddhadasabhikkhu7829>.

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On the first day we spoke of an introduction to the Noble Truths – the *ariya-sacca* – then on the following days we discussed the *ariya-sacca* themselves. And today being the last day, we will summarize or conclude the *ariya-sacca*.

The *ariya-sacca* or the *ariyamagga* – whether the Noble Truths or the Noble Path – must exist and lead to the destruction of enemies. If they don't lead to, if they don't exist for the purpose of getting rid of enemies, then we can't call them 'ariya.' We can't really call them the 'Noble Truths' or the 'Noble Path.' If it doesn't save us from our enemies, from all the various problems of life, then it's useless, it's worthless. Even if something is a truth, if it doesn't help us to overcome all the problems of life, then it really has no meaning. It's just like a watch which doesn't keep the right time. To keep wearing a watch that never shows the right time would be a silly and worthless thing to do. It would just be hanging there for no purpose, and so the same with any truth that doesn't help us to solve our problems. If it doesn't overcome enemies, then we can't call it 'ariya.' For it to be really *ariya* or noble, it must lead to the overcoming of all enemies.

Last month we spoke of *paṭiccasamuppāda* – Dependent Origination – and then this month we have discussed the Four Noble Truths, the *ariya-sacca*. It's essentially the same matter. This month we spoke of the Four Noble Truths in the condensed version. The *paṭiccasamuppāda* is the big Noble Truths, the complete and detailed version of the Four Noble Truths. It's the same thing, but in the standard outline of the Four Noble Truths we have four meanings, four basic meanings, whereas in *paṭiccasamuppāda* there're twelve – twelve as to the arising of *dukkha* and twelve as to the quenching of *dukkha*, so it's twenty-four. It's much more detailed, however it's the same thing, just one is the big one and the other is the small one, the small version. The Buddha also gave the Four Noble Truths in the

form where there were only two matters, two meanings, two issues – *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha* – so we can even talk of the Four Noble Truths in terms of just these two things.

The Buddha said that in the past as well as at the present – and this probably includes in the future as well – “I speak only of *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha*.” These were the Buddha’s words himself. In the form of *paṭiccasamuppāda*, this is the most detailed, the most exquisite, the most complete version of the *ariya-sacca*. Then there is the standard of the Four Noble Truths which is medium-sized. And in this one we have the most condensed and concise version of the *ariya-sacca*, “In the past as well as now, I set forth, I teach only *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha*.” So in studying the *ariya-sacca*, in practicing these truths, the important thing is to find the meaning, to discover for yourselves the meaning of *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha*. This is the essence. Just these two things are the essence of the Noble Truths.

Nowadays we tend to study the *ariya-sacca* with a lot of supplementary materials mixed in. There are a lot of extras, a lot of environmental and cultural materials that we mix in with the Four Noble truths, and this makes our study of them very slow, awkward, and sometimes confused and unsuccessful. For example, often we spend many years studying the Pāli language, getting lost in all the intricacies and details of this language. Many foreign scholars spend a lot of time studying Indian history or Indian philosophy, the various schools or whatever of that. So you see in a lot of the books on Buddhism that quite a bit of space is given to discussions of Indian history, Indian culture, even Indian geography, as well as Indian philosophy. All of these are supplementary materials which are really not essential for the study of the *ariya-sacca*. We even go and spend a lot of time studying the story of the Buddha’s life, the personal details of this one particular human being. This itself is merely a supplementary thing – it’s not really the essence of the matter. The details of the Buddha’s life aren’t the essential for our study. It’s important that we get to the real meanings of the *ariya-sacca* – *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha* – that we get to this essential matter within our own experience. We should be careful about spending a lot of time on these supplementary matters which really don’t help us in dealing with what is essential and important.

Probably there are quite a few of you who are interested in studying about Buddhism in Burma, Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Buddhism in India, China, Japan, and so forth. There are quite a few who would like to know all about Theravāda Buddhism, Mahāyāna Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Vajrayana Buddhism, and so on. Quite a few people are willing to spend a lot of time studying these various superficial aspects, which are not a clear or direct study of the Noble Truths. Instead we need to just aim right for the Noble Truths and dive in, plunge right into the *ariya-sacca*. These other things can be left aside. They can wait. The thing is to get right to the heart of the Dhamma, to the heart of Buddhism – *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha*. In this way, if we go right into the *ariya-sacca*, then we come much more quickly and easily to an understanding of Dhamma. Through that we have Dhamma, we see the Dhamma. In this way we see everything that is important in Buddhism. The Buddha himself said, “Those who see the Dhamma see me. Those who see me see the Dhamma.” If anyone wants to know about the Buddha, the way to meet the Buddha is to see the Dhamma, and this means to dive right into, to immerse oneself in the *ariya-sacca*.

Please remember the words of the Buddha, which we like to repeat frequently. He said, “Whether *dukkha* or the cause of *dukkha* or the quenching of *dukkha* or the path leading to the quenching of *dukkha*, I say that all of these can be found only in this fathom-long body which is still living.” The Buddha saying that the only place to discover the Four Noble Truths is in this living body which is roughly a fathom long – five, six feet, or so long.

Let’s us mention specifically the system of mindfulness with breathing as an excellent way to discover the Four Noble Truths within this living body, because in *ānāpānasati* we are only concerned with what’s happening within this living body, and all of the Noble Truths can be understood thoroughly through *ānāpānasati*. So we encourage you to pay close attention and be interested in the practice of mindfulness with breathing. On a future occasion we are going to discuss *ānāpānasati* in the same detail that we have discussed Dependent Origination and the Noble Truths.

The Noble Truths are the collection of all the necessary teachings. We have to emphasize the word ‘necessary’ because there are quite a few teachings which are unnecessary. But in the *ariya-sacca* we find all the necessary teachings gathered together – they all fit into the Four Noble Truths. This is very important. The Buddha himself once said, “I have awakened to many, many things. My knowledge is very vast and broad.” He compared it to all the leaves in a forest with what the knowledge of the Buddha was like, but then he picked up a handful of leaves and said, “But what I teach is only one fistful of leaves.” That fistful of leaves is the Four Noble Truths. Of all the knowledge of a Buddha that which is necessary to teach for the benefit of other beings is just the Noble Truths.

When we say that we should skip over the story of the Buddha’s life and go straight to the study of the Noble Truths – that we should uncover and realize the Four Noble Truths within ourselves – this may sound like we don’t give much importance to the Buddha. But one should remember what the Buddha himself said, “One who sees the Dhamma sees me. Whoever sees me sees the Dhamma.” This shows that the essence, the real way to see the Buddha, is in awakening to the Dhamma. One doesn’t really know the Buddha from reading about the story of his life. The real Buddha is found within the penetration of Dhamma. If one would like to read a bit about the Buddha’s life, at least do so with an emphasis on *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha*. If we study the Buddha’s life, we should be looking for knowledge about *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha*. Books about the Buddha’s life are extensive, though many of them aren’t so useful in terms of Dhamma. Some of them just treat the Buddha as a historical figure in ancient India, so reading those versions of the Buddha’s life is pretty much just like reading Indian history. Other versions are full of legends and mythological things. We should be very careful to to emphasize to stick to what is important and essential – *dukkha* and the quenching of *dukkha*. Further we ought to understand that the Noble Truths are for anyone, any human being that is suffering *dukkha*. Any human being that is going through *dukkha* needs the Noble Truths, must study the *ariya-sacca*. There are some scholars and some philosophers both in Thailand and around the world who have the mistaken idea that the *ariya-sacca* are for the ones who are already are awakened, the so called ‘enlightened beings.’ That it’s not for ordinary people, it’s just for those who want to leave home and live like a monk or a nun and for those who are already awakened. This is a sad misunderstanding. What these people think is that if ordinary people, if businessmen and such, are concerned with the Four Noble Truths, they won’t develop, they won’t progress in their business or whatever. This is foolishness. If one is aware of *dukkha* in one’s life – for

any human being where there is *dukkha* – it is necessary to study and practice the Noble Truths. Otherwise that life will be stuck in *dukkha* and it won't go anywhere. If the farmers – even the poorest farmers – know and understand the Noble Truths, then they'll have much less *dukkha* than they have now. If the laborers understand the Noble Truths, they'll have quite a bit less *dukkha* than they have now. Even the businessmen – who have all kinds of projects and activities going on, are quite busy, and have quite a bit of *dukkha* – if they understand the Noble Truths, then there will be much less *dukkha* in their lives, and there won't be any need for them to commit suicide as so often happens. They can lessen craving and increase right aspiration, and then in doing so their lives are much more successful and there is much less *dukkha*. This is very beneficial for any human being. Any life that has any problem needs the Noble Truths. The problems of life are something we needn't explain to you. We all know what it is to have burdens in life, to have to go through many difficulties and hassles, to have all the struggle and trouble that makes up life. We understand that it's not difficult to see the lack of rest in a life that has problems. If one has these problems and sees the need to rest, then it's through the Four Noble Truths that one can find that rest – the rest from all the struggle, all the problems and hassles. So any life that has any problems, any trouble, is in need of the Noble Truths.

We'd like to ask you all – could you run away from a dangerous tiger without any fear? You're confronted in the woods by a tiger, a lion, a bear, or some other large animal, could you run away without any fear? Most of us, if we run from fear, we don't run very carefully, and so we can make mistakes and errors and we may not be able to escape properly. But if there's no craving, no *dukkha*, the mind is clear and free, then one can run away in the most artful and skillful way – one will have the best chance of escape. Are you able to run away from a tiger without any fear? The world is full of dangers, and so then we ask, can one deal with these dangers, can one face these dangers of the world without any fear? There're not only the dangers like wild animals – tigers, lions, and bears – but there are many dangers of travel and in the big cities. Then there are all the diseases and illnesses that people are so afraid of these days. These we can all called 'worldly dangers.' Is one able to face these things, to deal with them, cope with them without any fear? Fear comes from craving. If one understands the Noble Truths then there's no craving and no fear, and then one can deal with even the worst disease or the biggest calamity – the most powerful danger – without any fear.

The more the world develops materially and the less it develops in Dhamma, then the more the world is full of dangers. The more there's material development without Dhamma development, the more vast and numerous are the dangers in the world. To live in a world that is increasingly full of dangers in very many different ways, one must have the *ariya-sacca* as a way to cope with it all, to not get lost and chewed up by all the dangers. It's very important that one has these truths which are *ariya* – which are enemy-less – the truths that free us, that allow us to escape from all enemies. So we must try to bring into this world, this increasingly more dangerous world, we must try to bring in these Noble Truths for the benefit of humanity. For all of us who must live in this world that keeps developing materially, we need the Noble Truths to live without any problems. As the world continues to develop in material ways, it becomes more and more difficult to cope with. It's a more difficult world to live in, but with the Noble Truths we can live in such a world without any problems. Please study and practice the Noble Truths so that you can cope with this more difficult world, so that you can live in it without any troubles.

We'd like you to recall that earlier we pointed out that the principle of the Noble Truths is a scientific principle. It's not philosophical and it's not merely logic. Many people continue to overlook this point. They try to treat the Noble Truths as philosophy, as some product of human thought. They don't understand that it's scientific, so they miss out on its benefits. As material science continues to develop, improve, and invent more and more fantastic material things, all these material products of technology and material science serve to support and increase our craving. They lure us and trick us more and more into craving. So it's necessary to have a spiritual science as well, to use spiritual science to understand what's happening, and use that spiritual science to solve the problem and not get caught up in all that craving. The only remedy for all the material science – or the antidote for the material science – is spiritual science.

You may have heard already or read the words of Albert Einstein that in the future the religion that will remain in this world will be the religion that can cope with the needs and the means of modern science. The only religion that will be appropriate in the modern world will be the one that can cope with the means, the needs, the systems, the methods of modern science. So please study, please investigate the Noble Truths in a scientific way. Study them sufficiently and then you will be able to survive and even thrive in a world of manifold complexity and confusion brought on by our out-of-control material development.

The beggar with no money and very difficult living conditions must rely upon the Noble Truths to deal with that situation of theirs, to live without problems and suffering. Or the person who is ill – one who has caught a dangerous disease – must rely upon the Noble Truths so that their condition, their situation, won't be full of *dukkha*. Even the person who is going to die, who has contracted some illness or disease and the doctor says there's no cure, for someone to cope with such situation, they must depend upon the Noble Truths in order to live out their life – what little remains of it – without a lot of torment and pain. One must depend upon the truth about lessening attachment to the body and mind, that if one lessens craving, if one eliminates craving, that then there is no suffering. Even beggars and sick people must study and depend upon the Noble Truths.

On the other extreme, to take a millionaire with loads of money and wealth, or a powerful successful politician who has accumulated much power, either of these cases must rely upon the Four Noble Truths if they are to avoid turning their wealth and money or their power into a burden. If they're to live without being burdened by their wealth and power, they must understand the Noble Truths and use them. Even if there are devas – celestial beings – up in heaven, which is something you all know plenty about, even if one is a deva up in heaven, if that situation of living in paradise is not going to be a burden and a hassle, then one must know the Noble Truths. These truths are so fundamental that they're necessary even for celestial beings in paradise.

We can even say that with laborers and wealthy capitalists, the Four Noble Truths are equally necessary for the one to deal with their property and the harsh conditions of their life or for the capitalists to deal with their wealth. If they are to avoid turning their poverty and wealth into problems and *dukkha*, the Noble Truths are necessary. We say that both for human beings and for celestial beings – the heavenly beings – the Noble Truths are equally necessary. It says in the scriptures how the Dhamma is for both the heavenly beings and the

human beings. This is why we say that the Dhamma – the Noble Truths – are of great importance for both the workers and the owners, the labor and the capitalists.

In India they explain some of these words in the following way: That a human being is a being that knows all about sweat and perspiration. That means a human being is one who must work and work hard in order to survive, and in that work there is always sweat. One who lives by sweat is a human being whereas a celestial being is one who has no contact, no knowledge, no experience of sweat. Celestial beings live in a comfortable easy way, so there's no perspiration. This is how these words can be understood – the human being lives by sweat and the celestial being lives without sweat. Something rather amusing to go along with that is that as soon as an angel or a heavenly being comes into contact with sweat, then they have to die. As soon as a heavenly being sweats, they die immediately.

The Noble Eightfold Path is the *ariyamagga*, the knowledge, the understanding that is most important and necessary for all these different beings, whether the beggars and the very poor or those who are ill as well as the laborers and ordinary people, all the way to the devas – those who never sweat. For all of them, the Noble Truths are necessary. The Eightfold Path is the way to deal with and solve all their problems and be free of *dukkha*. So the *ariya-sacca* are necessary for any being that experiences *dukkha*. From the lowest level to highest, any being that knows, experiences *dukkha* needs the Noble Truths. This is why we keep emphasizing their importance. Any being, no matter what their condition, if there is *dukkha*, the only answer is the Noble Truths.

Next we'd like to talk about refuge. Refuge is the place where we can go for security and safety. In Buddhism it's traditional to speak about going to the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha for refuge, but the Buddha himself said that one can find no refuge in the Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha without the Noble Truths. It's through the *ariya-sacca* that one is able to actually take the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha as refuge. It's the same for those who would seek refuge in God. Without the Noble Truths, we can never find any true refuge with God. One needs the Noble Truths if God is to be our refuge, just as with the Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha.

Another funny thing is the Buddha said to rely on oneself, to take oneself as refuge. This means to take the Dhamma within oneself as refuge to know the Noble Truths. This is what the Buddha said, but most of the followers – most of the so-called 'Buddhists' – don't even listen to the Buddha. They're rather pig-headed and don't even pay attention. So instead of taking themselves as refuge, most people want to take the Buddha as refuge, but the Buddha himself said be your own refuge, find refuge in the Dhamma, in the understanding and practice of the Noble Truths. The phrases 'rely on oneself' and 'rely on Dhamma' are interchangeable – they're synonyms having the same meaning. To rely on oneself is to rely on one's own understanding of the Noble Truths. We've said many times also that Dhamma has the same meaning as 'God,' so to rely on God, to depend on God, means once again to depend upon one's own understanding of the *ariya-sacca*. Whatever it is we'd like to depend on, ultimately the only way to do it is by relying on oneself, by relying on the Dhamma of the Noble Truths.

This point about Dhamma and God having the same value and meaning is something that we should use to clear up a lot of the misunderstanding amongst religions, especially between those religions that have a God and those that don't. If we can see this connection between

Dhamma and God, then there won't be any more need for the argument, competition, and all the hassles and confusion going on between religions. If we can see this connection, then it's no difficulty for everyone to rely upon the Noble Truths and then everyone can be free of *dukkha*, live life without suffering.

Is relying upon the Noble Truths scientific or not? Look at this and see. Is it scientific to depend upon the Noble Truths? And then to depend on someone else, something external to us, is this scientific or not? We live in a scientific era in an age that's dominated by science, the scientific attitude. If we're to live in this, is it necessary to have a refuge which fits with science, that is appropriate to the scientific understanding of our times? Please look carefully and see. If something is going to be a genuine refuge for us, must it be scientific or not? The Buddha said that for one who has realized the Noble Truths, one who has merely realized them, thoroughly understood them although hasn't yet practiced them, just to know them is enough for that person. *Dukkha* will remain, but there will be only a little bit of *dukkha* left. He compared it to a piece of dust on the tip of one's fingernail. That's how much *dukkha* is left compared to the Himalaya Mountains, which is how much *dukkha* there was before. So by knowing – even if we haven't practiced it yet – just by thoroughly knowing, realizing the Noble Truths, there's only a little itty bit of *dukkha* left, then with both understanding and practice, there's no *dukkha* left at all. So this is the tremendous value of the Noble Truths. If one understands them, knows them, then *dukkha* is almost gone, and then by knowing and practicing, then *dukkha* disappears completely.

It's important for us to study these Noble Truths until we realize them thoroughly, not just to listen to talks, read books, and think about it, but to work on this very deeply in the mind until it is a direct experience so we know directly for ourselves what *dukkha* is like, and we see that craving is the cause of *dukkha* and that by ending craving, *dukkha* quenches, and that the Noble Eightfold Path is the way to remove that craving and quench *dukkha*.

In another place, the Buddha compared the value of the Noble Truths in the following way: He said that someone who sincerely wanted to realize the Noble Truths would put up with, would endure being beaten and stabbed with sharp instruments all day long for a hundred years if that would lead to a penetration of the Noble Truths. It's so valuable that one would withstand all that physical punishment if that would be the cause of realizing the Noble Truths. Or one would be willing to travel great distances, would go on the most distant and dangerous journey if it would be the cause of realizing the Noble Truths. The value of these truths is so great that one would be willing to put that much into it, would withstand any hardship or danger or difficulty if they were the cause of realizing these truths.

Nowadays it isn't necessary for us to go through all that much difficulty or being beaten or going on tremendous journeys. It's enough for us to put up with the small difficulties and hassles of practicing mindfulness with breathing. Doing so isn't near as difficult as expressed in these comparisons of the Buddha. We just need to be willing to put forth the patience and the effort to practice *ānāpānasati* successfully, and that will lead to an understanding of the Four Noble Truths. Those of you who come from America, Europe, Australia, or wherever, coming here hasn't been such a difficult journey – we haven't had to go through all that many hardships. So all one needs to do is carry on now with practicing *ānāpānasati* as we've begun, and that will lead to the understanding of the Four Noble Truths.

Next we'd like to talk about a debt, the debt of gratitude. The person we are most indebted to in our life – those who we are most indebted to – are those who help us to understand the Noble Truths. When we see that which is valuable in our lives, that which is of the highest value, then we naturally feel indebted to that person who has helped us to achieve this very valuable thing. The most valuable thing we can find in life is the Four Noble Truths. Anyone who helps us to understand them is someone who we are indebted to. Whatever we might call them, the person who has done the most good for us, the one who has done us the most benefit, whoever has helped us the most, done what is most valuable for our lives, that would be the person who helps us to know the Noble Truths, who leads us to know the Noble Truths. This is given much more value than even our parents, our friends, our lovers, our spouses. The one who helps us to see the Noble Truths is the most valuable friend or acquaintance we can find. So we should be very interested in this person.

In one place the Buddha says that, “Whoever takes me as their friend, whoever has me as their friend, as their good and noble friend, the one who is ordinarily troubled and has problems with birth, aging, illness, and death, that one will escape from, will be free from birth, aging, illness, and death.” Anyone who's having troubles with birth, aging, illness, and death, by taking the Buddha as one's good friend – as one's *kalayāṇamitta* – will be free, will escape from those troubles and problems of birth, aging, illness, and death. Having the Buddha as one's friend means having the Four Noble Truths. For as long as we fail to understand the Noble Truths, we will see sawtooth discs as lotuses. This is a Thai proverb – *hěn gong jàk bpen dòk buua* (To see a disk-shaped weapon as a lotus). ‘*Gong jàk*’ is a disc with very sharp toothed edges like on a sawblade. This was an ancient weapon that could be thrown and it would spin and it could cut things off very quickly. As long as we don't understand – we don't realize the Four Noble Truths – we'll see this very dangerous spinning sawtooth disc as being a lotus, as being beautiful. If one doesn't see the Noble Truths, one takes dangerous and harmful things to be beautiful, and then one grabs onto them and suffers greatly by doing so.

Let us throw in a little bit of interesting information here. An archaeologist working in Trang Province – which isn't that far from here, just a few hours by train – found a large disc with very sharp edges and a handle that could be grasped. It seems that this sawtooth disc was an actual weapon used in ancient times or maybe even prehistoric times. We don't know how old it is, but this proverb that we've mentioned actually comes from a very ancient weapon used a long time ago.

As long as we don't know the Noble Truths, when we look at an enemy we won't see them as an enemy. But through the Noble Truths, we'll know our enemies for being enemies, and then we can end the enemies, we can be finished with all enemies. What this proverb means is that we tend to like *dukkha*, we fall in love with *dukkha*, we go crazy about *dukkha*, we firmly establish and stick ourselves in the midst of *dukkha*. How silly and lunatic is that to do so? This is the meaning of this proverb, which is to say seeing the sawtooth disk as a lotus means that what we do in life is we take bait, we search for bait in order to satiate craving. We find bait in order to entice and feed craving. This is what we do rather than merely finding food in order to nourish and maintain life. We don't just do the duty of nourishing life with food, instead we look for bait in order to entice and then feed craving.

Please don't confuse bait with food. Don't mix up this bait with actual nourishing nutritious food. If we don't know the Noble Truths, we'll spend our whole life searching for bait, constantly looking for bait. But by knowing the *ariya-sacca*, then we understand what is truly food and we can use that food to nourish and sustain life. Please don't confuse these two, otherwise our life will be a mess. This is yet another example of how the *ariya-sacca* can help us to live in the world, can help the entire world because by knowing the difference between food and bait, we could actually bring about peace in this troubled and violent world. There's no peace because nobody can see the difference between food and bait, so there's various kinds of struggling and fighting.

In this modern civilization of ours, what we've got most of all is constantly searching for bait in order to entice craving and feed craving. Look at all the advertisements that they've got. Look at the things they advertise in the newspapers and the magazines. It's just a bunch of stuff that we really don't need. Most of the things they're selling in the stores are stuff that we don't even need. If you open any magazine, it's full of advertisements for whisky, cigarettes, fancy hotels, movies – almost all of it is stuff we don't even need. There's no danger of dying just because we didn't have these things. This is the kind of situation we've got – constantly stirring up our craving, feeding the craving, not merely wisely finding the food we need in order to live, but always going off on this other stuff which is not at all necessary.

As we go about continually stirring up craving and satisfying craving, feeding craving, then there arises *upādāna* – attachment to things as 'I' and 'mine' – and then the ego is born, and there's selfishness. This way of living with craving means living in a very selfish way, constantly stirring up selfishness. And with all this selfishness, we're constantly plunging the world into all kinds of crises, so we must live with these terribly frightening crises that are created by our own selfishness. This is the result of not understanding the Noble Truths.

Finally we can say that all Dhamma – all of Dhamma in Buddhism – is contained within the *ariya-sacca*. That means to know the *ariya-sacca* – the Noble Truths – is to know all of Buddhism. As the Buddha said, the Dhamma that we need to know that is important is like one single fistful of leaves, and that fistful is the *ariya-sacca*. All the Dhamma of Buddhism is found within this one fistful of leaves. So we ought to study the Noble Truths and practice carefully according to them until understanding them thoroughly and having them firmly within our hearts. We encourage you to listen carefully, to think about this carefully, and then to build yourself the tool of mindfulness with breathing. Make for yourself this very exquisite tool of *ānāpānasati* that will give you a very special way to know the Noble Truths.

This is the end of our topic because it all ends by knowing the Noble Truths. If one realizes the Noble Truths, that is the end of the work. Then all the problems – all *dukkha* – are quenched. So please do whatever you must do to realize the Noble Truths, the *ariya-sacca*, and have a life that is free of all *dukkha*. This is the end of our discussion of the Noble Truths. These are the truths that are more beneficial and of more value than anything else in the world. This is all that Buddhism has to offer – this Dhamma of the *ariya-sacca*, the truths that make us free of all enemies. To try to translate this with the fewest words – the truths that free us from enemies or we could say 'enemy-less truths' or 'the truths of enemy-lessness.' That's the end of today's meeting.

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