1 Sutta significance

1.1 The Paṭhama Dhāraṇa Sutta (S 56.15), “the 1st discourse on remembering,” is a brief text on correctly recalling the 4 noble truths, and reflecting on them. Further, we can say that we should not only remember these 4 truths, but we should also constantly reflect on them as the basis for wisdom leading to the path of awakening.

1.2 A closely related text is the Dutiya Dhāraṇa Sutta (S 56.16), “the 2nd discourse on remembering,” that is, remembering the 4 noble truths correctly, without confusing them with later or outside teachings. We should then reflect on them as the basis for wisdom leading to the path of awakening.

1.3 TRUTH SEQUENCE. The commonly known sequence of the 4 noble truths—as (1) suffering, (2) arising (craving), (3) ending (nirvana) and (4) the path (the noble eightfold path)—is the teaching model, used in explaining to beginners and the unawakened on the nature of the truths. It is also called the “Dhamma,cakkā” sequence (SD1.1), which is familiarly listed as “1-2-3-4” in the Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta (S 56.11), thus,

   suffering → arising → ending → path. (S 56.11,5-8) + SD 1.1 (6.2.2.2)

   It is not, however, the only truth model. An older model, the practice model, arranges the truths as 1-2-4-3. This model is found, for example, in the Mahā Saḷāyatanika Sutta (M 140), SD 41.9; hence, it is also called the Mahā Saḷāyatanika sequence.

   The oldest truth model, however, is clearly the one that the Buddha states that he himself had realized awakening with, that is, the sequence 1-4-2-3, also called the Sela sequence, since it is found in the Sela Sutta (M 92 = Sn 558), SD 45a.7.¹

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Paṭhama Dhāraṇa Sutta
The 1st Discourse on Remembering
S 56.15

1 “Bhikshus, do you remember the 4 noble truths taught by me?”²
2 When this was said, a certain monk said to the Blessed One: [427] “I remember, bhante, the 4 noble truths taught by the Blessed One.”

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¹ For details on these truth sequences, see SD 53.26 (2).
² Dhāretaḥo tumhe bhikkhave mayā cattāri āriya,saccāni desitānīti.

http://dharmafarer.org
3 “But how, bhikshu, do you remember the 4 noble truths taught by me?”

4 THE 4 NOBLE TRUTHS
(1) “Bhante, I recall suffering as the 1st noble truth taught by the Blessed One.
(2) Bhante, I recall the arising of suffering as the 2nd noble truth taught by the Blessed One.
(3) Bhante, I recall the ending of suffering as the 3rd noble truth taught by the Blessed One.
(4) Bhante, I recall the path leading to the ending of suffering as the 4th noble truth taught by the Blessed One.

Thus, bhante, do I remember the 4 noble truths taught by the Blessed One.”

5 “Sadhu! Sadhu! Bhikshu, you do remember the 4 noble truths taught by me.

(1) Suffering, bhikshu, is indeed the 1st noble truth taught by me: remember it thus!
(2) The arising of suffering, bhikshu, is indeed the 2nd noble truth taught by me: remember it thus!
(1) The ending of suffering, bhikshu, is indeed the 3rd noble truth taught by me: remember it thus!
(2) The path that is the ending of suffering, bhikshu, is indeed the 4th noble truth taught by me: remember it thus!

This is indeed the way, bhikshu, remember the 4 noble truths as taught by me.

6 Therefore, bhikshus,
You should devote yourself (to the reflection):³ “This is suffering.”
You should devote yourself (to the reflection): “This is the arising of suffering.”
You should devote yourself (to the reflection): “This is the ending of suffering.”
You should devote yourself (to the reflection): “This is the path leading to the ending of suffering.”

— evam —

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³ Idaṁ dukkhan’ti yoga karaṇīyo.