

## 28

## Paṭhama Dhāraṇa Sutta

The 1<sup>st</sup> Discourse on Remembering | S 56.15

Theme: Remembering and reflecting on the 4 noble truths

Translated by Piya Tan ©2018

1 Sutta significance

**1.1 The Paṭhama Dhāraṇa Sutta** (S 56.15), “the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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,-cakka” 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 Saḷ-āyatanika Sutta** (M 140), SD 41.9; hence, it is also called the Mahā Saḷ-āyatanika 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.<sup>1</sup>

— — —

## Paṭhama Dhāraṇa Sutta

The 1<sup>st</sup> Discourse on Remembering

S 56.15

- 1 “Bhikkhus, do you remember **the 4 noble truths** taught by me?”<sup>2</sup>
- 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.”

<sup>1</sup> For details on these truth sequences, see SD 53.26 (2).

<sup>2</sup> *Dhāretha no tumhe bhikkhave mayā cattāri ariya,saccāni desitānīti.*

3 “But how, bhikshu, do you remember *the 4 noble truths* taught by me?”

4 THE 4 NOBLE TRUTHS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (1) “Bhante, I recall <b>suffering</b>                                     | as the 1 <sup>st</sup> noble truth taught by the Blessed One. |
| (2) Bhante, I recall <b>the arising</b> of suffering                       | as the 2 <sup>nd</sup> noble truth taught by the Blessed One. |
| (3) Bhante, I recall <b>the ending</b> of suffering                        | as the 3 <sup>rd</sup> noble truth taught by the Blessed One. |
| (4) Bhante, I recall <b>the path</b> leading to<br>the ending of suffering | as the 4 <sup>th</sup> 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) <u>Suffering</u> ,                                  | bhikshu, is indeed the 1 <sup>st</sup> noble truth taught by me: remember it thus! |
| (2) <u>The arising</u> of suffering,                    | bhikshu, is indeed the 2 <sup>nd</sup> noble truth taught by me: remember it thus! |
| (1) <u>The ending</u> of suffering,                     | bhikshu, is indeed the 3 <sup>rd</sup> noble truth taught by me: remember it thus! |
| (2) <u>The path</u> that is the ending<br>of suffering, | bhikshu, is indeed the 4 <sup>th</sup> 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): <sup>3</sup> | “This is suffering.”                                   |
| <i>You should devote yourself (to the reflection):</i>       | “This is the arising of suffering.”                    |
| <i>You should devote yourself (to the reflection):</i>       | “This is the ending of suffering.”                     |
| <i>You should devote yourself (to the reflection):</i>       | “This is the path leading to the ending of suffering.” |

— evaṃ —

180801 180809 181206 181210

---

<sup>3</sup> *Idaṃ dukkhan’ti yogo karaṇīyo.*