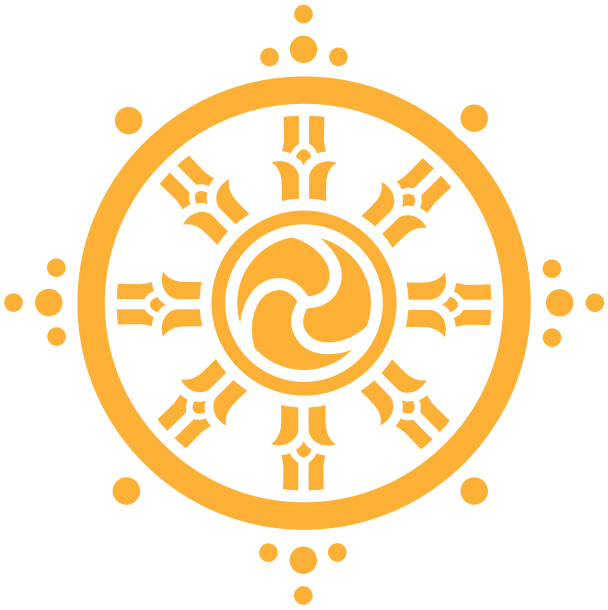
WORKSHEET 1

THE FIRST NOBLE TRUTH "THERE IS SUFFERING"

Seven weeks after his enlightenment, Buddha began teaching the "Four Noble Truths" in the deer park at Sarnath. These were his first teachings ever, which is why this first teaching cycle is called the "first turning of the wheel." The Four Noble Truths are:

1. There is suffering.
2. There is a cause of suffering.
3. There is an end to suffering.
4. There is a path to the end of suffering.

In them, Buddha explained the limitedness of general experience on one hand, and liberation and enlightenment on the other. He starts from the statement that there are painful things in life, then points out the conditionality of all experiences and finally shows the goal of a non-conditional and permanently joyful state. This is called enlightenment. In it, every moment is experienced as fresh and new, as the radiance of open unlimited conscious space is experienced undivided from oneself. Buddhism is about exactly this attainment of lasting happiness.



The First Noble Truth: "THERE IS Suffering".

Buddha spoke of three kinds of suffering to which one is exposed as long as one is not liberated and enlightened.

THE FIRST KIND OF SUFFERING: THE SUFFERING OF SUFFERING

Suffering from that which immediately hurts, e.g. toothache, enduring hunger, cold or heat, etc.

THE SECOND KIND OF SUFFERING: THE SUFFERING OF CHANGE

The suffering we experience when we cannot hold on to pleasant states. Even the most beautiful party comes to an end, even the newest shoes get old. Heartbreak, separation and loss are other examples.

THE THIRD KIND OF SUFFERING: THE SUFFERING OF IGNORANCE

We often rely on changeable, external things. We are unaware of the big picture and have no control over the future. Ignorance means being a pawn in the constant ebb and flow of sorrowful and happy experiences. The lasting inherent joy that is our very essence is not experienced.

EXERCISES

Discuss in the group.

1. Review the three types of suffering for comprehensibility and share your own experiences with the three types of suffering.
2. In what areas of your life do you rely on changeable things?
3. Can you point out situations in your life when you became aware of the suffering of ignorance? How did that feel?