

The four noble truths realized by Buddha:

1. Human life is characterized by *dukkha* (literally, “a wheel out of kilter,” often translated as dissatisfaction, disease, stress, or suffering)
2. Together with Dukkha arises thirst, craving, desire, wanting (including aversion), *Samudhaya*
3. That thirst which is arising can be contained. The containment of that energy leads to transformation, *Nirodha*.
4. That transformation manifests as a life unfolding according to the eightfold path, *Marga*.

The eightfold path:

1. Right view
2. Right intention
3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood
6. Right effort
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right meditation

Here, “right” does not mean right as opposed to wrong. The term Buddha used, *samma*, actually more closely means: “this is appropriate,” “this works,” “this is in sync with Reality”. It refers to being in touch with Reality rather than being deluded by our own thoughts, prejudices, and beliefs. (Steve Hagen)

The three pure precepts:

To refrain from all evil

To make every effort to live in enlightenment

To live and be lived for the benefit of all beings

The ten grave precepts:

A disciple of Buddha does not kill.

A disciple of Buddha does not take what is not given.

A disciple of Buddha does not misuse sexuality.

A disciple of Buddha does not lie.

A disciple of Buddha does not intoxicate mind or body of self or others.

A disciple of Buddha does not speak of the faults of others.

A disciple of Buddha does not praise self at the expense of others.

A disciple of Buddha is not possessive of anything, especially the dharma.

A disciple of Buddha does not harbor ill will.

A disciple of Buddha does not disparage the Triple Treasure.

Four Vows:

Beings are numberless, I vow to free them;

Delusions are inexhaustible, I vow to end them;

Dharma gates are boundless, I vow to enter them;

Buddha’s way is unsurpassable, I vow to become it.

Dogen’s central teaching:

To study the Buddha way is to study the self; to study the self is to forget the self; to forget the self is to be awakened by the myriad things.

Buddha’s last words to his followers:

Be an island unto yourselves; betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast to the Truth. Look not for refuge to anyone besides yourselves. Fare onward with *Appamada*—energetic, watchful care.

Recommended books:

Joko Beck, *Everyday Zen and Nothing Special*

Steve Hagen, *Buddhism Plain and Simple*

Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner’s Mind*