



Hello everyone, I'm Lama Aria Drolma, an ordained nun and a Buddhist teacher. I'm a graduate of a traditional Tibetan three-year retreat program in the Karma Kagyu lineage and I've completed over 13 years of Buddhist monastic study and mindfulness meditation.

I now lead mindfulness meditation retreats, workshops, and seminars worldwide on topics related to improving metacognitive awareness, emotional intelligence, mental clarity, and overall mental wellness.

The topic I will discuss in this talk is Buddha's teachings on the four noble truths and living life with purpose.

To begin, we start with taking refuge and engendering *bodhichitta*. In the Buddha, Dharma and the supreme Sangha, I take refuge, until I reach enlightenment, by the merit of practicing the *paramitas*, may I attain Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.

Buddha's teachings on the four noble truths is one of the most profound insights into the nature of life. The four noble truths are not just philosophical ideas. Rather, the Buddha taught them as scientific truths, such as laws of gravity and evolution. And to not know these truths is like sleepwalking through life and repeating the same mistakes and expecting different results.

Centering Meditation

Before we start, let's center ourselves so we can pay attention to these profound teachings and be in the present moment with a brief meditation. I'll ring the bell.

Let's start by sitting up straight but be comfortable. Focus the mind's attention on the breath. Breathe in and breathe out at your own pace, and just pay attention to your breath going in and going out.

Let's sit for a few moments.

Continue breathing.

As you breathe out, rest your mind in that present moment of awareness.

Inhale and exhale. As you exhale, just rest your mind in that present moment of awareness. Letting go of all your stress and being centered here and now.

Relax. I'll ring the bell now, and you can gently open your eyes.

The Four Noble Truths



The four noble truths are the core foundation of Buddhism, offering profound insights into the very nature of human existence. The first noble truth states that suffering is inevitable, and an inherent part of life itself.

The second noble truth is that there are causes and conditions of the suffering.

The third noble truth is that there is an end to the suffering.

The fourth noble truth is that there is a path that liberates us from suffering.

By decoding the four noble truths, we can have a roadmap to navigate life's challenges, have freedom from suffering, and live a life of contentment.

So let's explore the four noble truths of the Buddha's teachings and see how these ancient teachings can guide us towards a more meaningful existence and enrich our lives.

The First Noble Truth

The first noble truth is the truth of suffering, and suffering is referred to as *dukkha* in Pali, the language of the Buddhist scriptures. It states that human lives have inherent feelings of dissatisfaction, discomfort, unpleasantness, and restlessness.

The suffering can manifest in physical pain, or emotional distress. From the moment we're born, until the moment we die, we encounter suffering in many different forms, such as birth, old age, sickness, death, separation from loved ones, loss of wealth, unhappiness, and dissatisfaction due to all the changes in our lives. Due to the impermanence of life itself.

A good example can be someone who has a successful business. Even with all the wealth and success, they may suffer from overwhelming stress, strained relationships due to work, work demands and constant fear of failure. So despite all outward achievements, they could be very unhappy and suffering because wealth doesn't necessarily bring us happiness.

However, Buddha's teaching was not just to point out suffering as an inherent fact of life, he also gives us insight into the causes.

The Second Noble Truth

So this leads us to the second noble truth, the truth of the causes of suffering. The Buddha taught that the root cause of suffering is craving, attachment, and ignorance. The endless desire and attachment to acquiring and possessing, as well as to avoid unpleasantness, unpleasant experiences chains us to this vicious circle of endlessly seeking pleasure and avoiding pain.



An example is someone constantly seeking external validation and material possessions. Their attachments and desires lead to a cycle of dissatisfaction as they continually crave for more without finding lasting fulfillment, and they suffer because of this constant craving.

But in the midst of this reality, there is hope.

The Third Noble Truth

The third noble truth is the truth of the cessation of suffering. The Buddha taught that it is possible to overcome suffering by eliminating its causes. For example, by cultivating present moment awareness and letting go of these attachments such as craving, desire, ignorance, hatred, greed, and delusion, we can gradually find inner peace and contentment of our mental anguish and suffering.

So how do we achieve the cessation of suffering?

The Fourth Noble Truth

This brings us to the fourth noble truth, the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. Often called The Noble Eightfold Path.

This path consists of eight interrelated principles. They are right understanding, right intention, right speech, right action, right lifestyle, right effort, right mindfulness, and right meditation and concentration.

By cultivating qualities such as these, in our thoughts, words, and action, we can progress towards a meaningful and fulfilling existence.

Living a Life of Purpose

So now let's reflect on how these profound insights into the four noble truths can guide us towards living a life of purpose.

Firstly, by recognizing the truth of suffering, we can develop a greater empathy and compassion towards ourselves and others.

Secondly, understanding the origin of sufferings allows us to examine our thought patterns of craving and attachment. By cultivating mindfulness and awareness, we can observe our desires without being consumed by them, leading to greater freedom in our own choices.

Thirdly, by embracing the possibility of the cessation of suffering, we can cultivate hope and optimism in all life's challenges.



Finally, by committing to the noble eightfold path, we can embark on a journey of personal and spiritual growth.

Each step along this path brings us closer to the realization of our full potential, and living in alignment with our deepest values and aspirations.

So in conclusion, the four noble truths offer profound insight into the very nature of human existence, providing us a roadmap for living life with purpose and fulfillment.

By acknowledging the reality of suffering, understanding its causes, embracing the possibility of liberation, and following the path towards awakening, we can transcend the limitations of our conditioned existence, and experience profound peace and freedom, and embark on life's journey with courage, wisdom, and compassion.

I conclude this talk with the dedication of merit. By this virtue, may I quickly attain the state of buddhahood, and then lead every being without exception to this very state.

I thank you all. May you have peace and happiness in your life.

Thank you.