

The Four Ariya-saccas as ‘True Realities for the Spiritually Ennobled’ — the Painful, its Origin, its Cessation, and the Way Going to This — Rather than ‘Noble Truths’ Concerning These

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Abstract

This paper critiques the standard translation of ariya-sacca as ‘Noble Truth’ and argues that the term refers to four saccas as ‘true realities’, rather than as verbalized ‘truths’ about these realities; the teachings about them are not, as such what the term ariya-sacca refers to. Moreover, only one of the ariya-saccas (the fourth) is itself ever described in the suttas as ‘noble’. The four are ‘true realities for the spiritually ennobled’: the fundamental, basic, most significant genuine realities that the Buddha and other noble ones see in the flow of experience of themselves and/or others. The first of them is not best translated as ‘suffering’ but as ‘pain’ — in all its many senses — or indeed ‘the painful’: the upādāna-kkhandhas as ‘bundles of grasping-fuel’ which are described, adjectivally, as ‘painful’. The paper includes a new translation of the Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta in line with this analysis.

Keywords: ariya-saccas; noble truths; dukkha; Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana.

In three successive suttas of the *sacca-samyutta* (SN 56.7–10), it is said that things one that one should ‘think (*vitakkeyyātha*)’ about, ‘reflect (*cinteyyātha*)’ about, and talk about, when one does think, reflect and talk are: “This is *dukkha*” ... “This is the origin of *dukkha*” ... “This is the cessation of *dukkha*” ... “This is the way going to the cessation of *dukkha*”. In the past few years, I have accordingly been reflecting on these four items, usually simply equated with the *ariya-saccas* and called the four ‘noble truths’. But is this what the *ariya-saccas* are? Are they ‘truths’ which are themselves ‘noble’? And what, precisely, does the term *ariya-sacca* refer to?

THE MEANING OF SACCA IN THE COMPOUND ARIYA-SACCA

On this, Rupert Gethin (1998, 60) says,

The word *satya* (Pāli *sacca*) can certainly mean truth, but it might equally well be rendered as 'real' or 'actual thing'. That is, we are not dealing with propositional truths with which we must either agree or disagree, but with four 'true things' or 'realities' whose nature, we are told, the Buddha finally understood on the night of his awakening.

While *sacca* means 'truth' in many contexts, as an adjective it means both 'true' and 'real' (PED), and taking *sacca* as meaning 'truth' in the term *ariya-sacca* is problematic. In the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta*, it is said that the Buddha understood, "This is the *dukkha ariya-sacca*" (*idaṃ dukkhaṃ ariyasaccan ti*), not 'The *ariya-sacca* "This is *dukkha*" (*idaṃ dukkhan ti ariyasaccaṃ*)', which would be the case if *sacca* here meant a *truth* whose content was expressed in words in quote marks. Moreover, in this *sutta*, it is said that the second *ariya-sacca* is to be abandoned (SN V 422). Surely, the 'truth' on the origination of *dukkha* should not be abandoned; rather, the 'reality' which is the origination of *dukkha* should be abandoned. Here L.S. Cousins (2001, 38) comments,

The word *sacca*, however, means equally 'reality' or 'what is really there'. For later Buddhist thinkers, craving is something that is a reality; that really existing thing (*sacca*) must be abandoned. Even if one supposes that this is unlikely to have been the original meaning of *sacca* in the earliest Buddhism, it most certainly is how it was understood by the early *abhidhamma* period. Such an interpretation of *sacca* in this *sutta* [the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana*] could, in that case, be ruled out only if one was certain that it was composed at a relatively early date. But why should we assume it couldn't have been the original meaning? Perhaps it is precisely part of the Buddha's deconstruction of Brahmanism? Where the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upaniṣad* has a *satya* that is brahman — twofold, as dying and undying [BU 2.3] — the Buddha substitutes a fourfold *sacca*. If so, *sacca* may have been related from the beginning to brahminical speculations about *sat*.

SATYA IN THE UPANIṢADS

Richard Gombrich comments on the *Upaniṣads*:

The only escape from this cycle of rebirth is by gnosis of a hidden truth, *brahman*, which is the esoteric meaning of the sacred texts (the Vedas). That truth is to be realised = understood during life, and this will lead to its being realised = made real at death. He who understands *brahman* will become *brahman*. ...

Ontology is merged (we might say confused) with epistemology, as can be seen from the double meaning of 'realised' above. A truth (*satya*) is at the same time an existent (*sat*); indeed, it is existence (*sat* again), since existence is only one.

(1996, 32)

Satya can mean both truth, i.e. true words, and an existent reality; this twofold meaning is a reflection of the fact that, as Gavin Flood puts it, 'speech [*vāc*] is identified with the absolute *brahman* from which all appearances, names and their forms, are manifested' (1996, 226). Hence Patrick Olivelle says (1996, lvi), 'Brahman may mean a "formulation of truth", the Veda, or the ultimate and most basic essence of the cosmos. ... it is important to remember that the con-

cept always retains its verbal character as “the sound expression” of truth or reality’.

Certainly, in the *Upaniṣads*, *satya* is used to mean ‘truth’ in an ordinary sense: ‘Now a man must first perceive [*vijānāti*] before he speaks the truth [*satyam vadati*]...’¹ but it is also used for a source of truth: the eye is truth as when one says ‘I have seen it’, this is taken as truth (BU 4.1.4), sight being more trusted than hearing (BU 5.14.4). *Satya* is also equated with *dharma*, in the sense of justice (BU 1.4.14), and when a man utters the truth of his innocence of theft when tested by having to grasp a heated axe, he will not be burnt, as he ‘turns himself into the truth (*satyam ātmānaṃ kurute*)’ (CU 6.16.2).

Satya as a reality that is not just true words is already seen at *Rg Veda* X.190.1–2: ‘Cosmic Order (*ṛta*) and *satya* were born out of kindled Heat (*tapas*). From that, night was born, from that the ocean with its waves’ (adapted from Hopkins 1971, 25). A clearly ontological sense of *satya* is also seen in the famous passage at *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.15.3:

The finest essence here — that constitutes the Self of this whole world; that is *satya* (*tat satyam*); that is the Self (*ātman*). That you are (*tat tvam asi*) Śvetaketu.²

Here, while Olivelle (1996, 156) translates *satya* as ‘the truth’ and Radhakrishnan as ‘the true’ (1953, 465–466), the latter’s notes (465) talk of ‘ultimate reality’ and ‘the Real’ here. Thomas Hopkins (1971, 44) translates *satya* here as ‘the real’, and talks of an unknown ‘underlying Real... the one Reality present in them as their selves’. Gavin Flood comments on such passages:

The truth (*satya*) is the absolute (*brahman*) which is also the self (*ātman*). This is the single reality underlying the diversity of appearances, knowledge of which is the purpose of the ritual’s internalization. This knowledge is not simply information to be understood, but a direct and immediate intuition experienced as joy or bliss. (Flood 1996, 85).

There is much word-play on the word *satyam*. BU 2.3 talks of two forms of *Brahman*: *sat*, which is mortal, and *tyam*, which is immortal, with 2.3.6 implying that the latter is “the real behind the real [*sayasya satyam iti*]” (Olivelle 1996, 28).³ Olivelle comments, ‘*Sat, Tyam*: these are the component phonemes of *satyam* (“the real”), which is viewed as signifying the totality of the real (1996, 304). BU 5.4.1 says, “*Brahman* is the real (*satyam*)”, with BU 5.5.1 saying, ‘*Sa* is one syllable, *ti* is another, and *yam* is the third. The first and last syllable constitute the real [*satyam*], while the middle syllable is the unreal [*anṛtam*]’ (Olivelle 1996, 74). CU 8.3.4–5 says, ‘Now the name of this *brahman* is “Real” (*satyam*). This word has three syllables: *sa*, *ti* and *yam*. Of these, *sat* is the immortal, and *ti* is the mortal, while the syllable *yam* is what joins these two together’ (Olivelle 1996, 169). The *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 1.6 says that *Brahman* is *satyam*, then explains *satyam* thus: ‘*Sat* is what is other than the gods and the lifebreaths (*prāṇa*), while *Tyam* consists of

1. CU 7.17.1; Olivelle 1996, 164; cf. BU.9.23, CU 3.17.4.

2. Cf. BU 2.5.12, ‘The radiant and immortal person in Truth [*satye*] and, in the case of the body, the radiant and immortal person devoted to Truth [*sātyas*] – they are both one’s self’ (Olivelle 1996, 32).

3. Cf. BU 1.6.3 talks of breath, as the immortal, being ‘veiled by the real [*satyena chamam*]’, i.e. *nāma* and *rūpa* (Olivelle 1996, 23).

the gods and lifebreaths. All of that is comprehended by this word “real” (*satyam*) (Olivelle 1996, 205). In these passages, then, *satyam* is the fundamental reality or one of its basic divisions.

The link between *satya* and *sat*, being or existence, is also seen at *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.1– 2. As summarized by Hopkins (1971, 43):

Uddālaka explains to his son that the truth (*satya*) of anything made of clay is clay ... So it is also, he says, with the universe. The universe in the beginning was Being or the Existent (*sat*) alone, One without a second; from that the plurality of existent entities was born by successive modifications of the One. ... In this way, though it was in truth the one sole origin and highest self, the Existent became also the self of all individual created beings.

The dual meaning of *satya* as ‘truth’ and an existent ‘reality’, forged in Upaniṣadic usage, seems also to be present in Buddhist uses of the word, though in English, the concepts are in the main separated. A set of words seen to correctly describe reality is seen as ‘true’ or ‘a truth’, but it seems to me odd to describe an item in the world, whether physical or mental, as itself a ‘truth’. ‘Truth’ (and falsity) only potentially come into it when we try to correctly describe what there is.⁴

SACCA IN THE PĀLI CANON

Sacca is used as an adjective meaning ‘true’ (Vin. I 44–5, Sn.879, 883) or ‘real’ (DN I 182), an adverb meaning ‘truly’ (Thag 533), and as a noun meaning ‘truth’ (AN I 188–89, AN II 176–77) or a purported ‘truth’ (AN II 41, Sn.882). It can mean ‘truthfulness’, which is seen as a brahmin virtue (MN I 199), and also one of the ten perfections of a *bodhisatta*. The Buddha is ‘named in accordance with truth (*saccavhayo*)’ (Sn.1133) and one ‘having truth as his strength (*sacca-nikkamo*)’ (Sn.542).

In a passage in which the Buddha comments on quarrels about *sacca* among different teachers, he says (Sn.884 and 886):

There is only one *sacca*; there is no second (*ekaṃ hi saccaṃ na dutṭiyam atthi*), about which an intelligent man (*pajāno*) might dispute with an(other) intelligent man. Renunciants themselves proclaim various *saccas* (*nānā ... saccāni*), therefore they do not say one (and the same) thing. ...

There are not indeed many various *saccas* (*saccāni bahūni nānā*), (which are) eternal in the world, except by reason of (mistaken) perception (*aññatra saññāya niccāni loke*). Devising a reasoning (*takkañ*) in respect of their views, they say there are two things, truth and falsehood (*saccaṃ, musā ti*).

Here, while in some uses *sacca* means ‘truth’, the single *sacca* is perhaps not a spoken truth, but the single *unconditioned* reality, *Nibbāna*.⁵

In another *Sutta-nipāta* passage (147), *sacca* seems to mean genuine and invariable reality: ‘Whatever, *bhikkhus*, is regarded as “this is *sacca*” (*idaṃ saccaṃ ti*) by the world ... that is well seen by the noble ones with right wisdom as it really is as “this is deceptive” (*etaṃ musā ti*)’, and vice versa. Verses 756–58, then explain:

4. On the issue of poetic usage, see note 16.

5. On this, Vibh-a 86 says the one *sacca* is here *paramattha-sacca*, as *Nibbāna* and the path.

See the world together with its *devas*, which thinks that there is Self in non-Self; entrenched (*nivīṭṭaham*) in name-and-form, it conceives, ‘This is *sacca*’ (*idaṃ saccaṃ ti maññati*).

In whatever way they conceive it, it turns out other than that (*aññathā*). For it is deceptive to it(elf) (*taṃ hi tassa musā hoti*). Whatever is transitory indeed has a deceptive nature (*mosa-dhammaṃ hi ittaraṃ*).

Nibbāna does not have a deceptive nature (*amosa-dhammaṃ*). That the noble ones know as *sacca* (*tad ariyā saccato vidū*). Because of (their) breakthrough to *sacca* (*saccābhisamayā*), they are indeed without craving, quenched (*nicchātā parinubbutā*).

In the *Cankī Sutta*, we see a movement from *sacca* as a verbalized ‘truth’ to *sacca* as a reality that one is directly acquainted with though one’s ‘body’ (*kāya*). A brahmin says to the Buddha that brahmins believe of their transmitted hymns, ‘Only this is true (*saccaṃ*), anything else is wrong (*moghaṃ*)’ (MN II 169). The Buddha points out that the grounds on which this is held, such as faith, are unreliable. Thus any:

may be empty, hollow, and false (*rittaṃ tucchaṃ musā*); but something else [not accepted on such a ground] ... may be factual, true, not otherwise (*bhūtaṃ tacchaṃ anaññathā*). [Under these conditions] it is not proper for a wise man (*viññunā*) who preserves the truth (*saccaṃ anurakkhatā*) to come to the definite conclusion, ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong’.

If a person has faith ... he preserves the truth when he says, ‘My faith is thus’; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion, ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong’. In this way, ... there is preservation of truth (MN II 170–71).

So far, *sacca* clearly means verbalized ‘truth’. But the passage goes on to talk of a further ‘discovery of *sacca* (*sacc’ānubodho*)’, which is attained by first finding a reliable teacher, remembering and reflecting on the *dhammas* he teaches, reflectively accepting these, such that zeal springs up, will and scrutiny are applied, and

resolutely striving, he personally experiences with the body the ultimate *sacca* (*kāyena c’eva parama-saccaṃ sacchikaroti*) and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom (*paññāya ca taṃ ativijja passati*). In this way, ... there is the discovery of *sacca*. (MN II 173)⁶

Beyond this is final arrival at *sacca* (*sacc’ānupatti*) — probably meaning Arahathship as a step beyond streamentry —, which comes from ‘the repetition, (meditative) development (*bhāvanā*) and cultivation of those same *dhammas*’ (MN II 174).

In the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* chapter (XII) on the four *saccas*, *sacca* sometimes means ‘real’:

How is there a single penetration (*eka-paṭivedhāni*) of the four *saccas*? ...what is impermanent and painful and not-Self and such (*tathaṃ*) and *sacca* is included as one. What is included as one is a unity (*ekattaṃ*). Unity is penetrated by a single knowledge. (Patis II 106, cf. SN V 436–7).

As a noun, *sacca* can be seen as a reality attuned to truth/reality:

6. Likewise, AN II 115 talks of a person who, as he hears of the illness or death of someone, feels spiritual agitation (*saṃvega*) and applies energy, so that ‘he personally experiences with the body the highest *sacca*, and sees it by penetrating it by wisdom’.

'*Sacca*' (*Saccan ti*): in how many aspects *sacca*? *Sacca* in three aspects: in the sense of search (*esena'ttthena*), in the sense of embracing (*pariggaha'ttthena*), in the sense of penetration (*paṭivedh'ttthena*).

What is *sacca* in the sense of search? 'Ageing-and-death has what for its source, has what for its origin, is born from what, is produced by what?': this is *sacca* in the sense of search. 'Ageing-and death has birth for its source...': this is *sacca* in the sense of embracing. He understands ageing-and-death and its origin and its cessation and the way leading to its cessation: this is *sacca* in the sense of penetration. [and so on for the other *nidānas*] (Patis II 110–111).

More straightforwardly, the four *saccas* are clearly treated as 'realities' with certain qualities, rather than verbalized 'truths'. This can be seen from:

How many characteristics have the *saccas*? The *saccas* have two characteristics: the characteristic of the constructed (*saṅkhata-lakkhaṇā*) and the characteristic of the unconstructed.

How many characteristics have the *saccas*? The *saccas* have six characteristics. Of the constructed *saccas* (*saṅkhatānaṃ saccānaṃ*), their arising is made known, their fall is made known, and their alteration when present is made known; of the unconstructed *sacca* (*asaṅkhatassa saccassa*), no arising is made known, no fall is made known, and no alteration when present is made known. (Patis II 108).

The origin-*sacca* is unwholesome, the path-*sacca* is wholesome, the cessation-*sacca* is indeterminate (*abyākatam*), the *dukkha-sacca* may be wholesome or unwholesome or indeterminate. (Patis II 108–109)

The *saccas* are, though, realities whose specific content varies, depending on how one examines them:

Ageing-and-death is the *dukkha-sacca*, birth is the origin-*sacca*, the escape from both is the cessation-*sacca*, and the understanding of cessation (*nirodha-pajānanā*) is the path-*sacca*.

Birth is the *dukkha-sacca*, becoming is the origin-*sacca*, the escape from both is the cessation-*sacca*, and the understanding of cessation (*nirodha-pajānanā*) is the path-*sacca*. ... (Patis II 113).

Likewise, in the *sacca-vibhaṅga* of the *Vibhaṅga*, the *Abhidhamma*-style exposition talks of the four *saccas* as simply *dukkha*, etc. (106). The explanation gives *dukkha-samudaya* as craving, and *dukkha* as:

The remaining defilements, the remaining unwholesome states, the three wholesome roots that are with-taints (*sāsavā*), the remaining wholesome states that are with-taints, the resultants of wholesome and unwholesome states that are with-taints, the *kiriya* states that are neither wholesome nor unwholesome nor the result of action, and all material form.

There follows explanations which put some of the items at first listed as part of *dukkha* as part of its origin, the minimum items in *dukkha* being resultant, *kiriya* and material states. Here again, the *saccas* are identified as items of existence, realities, not 'truths', and while the four-*sacca structure* is constant, the items in the first two, in particular, are variable.

The four-*sacca* analysis, then, is a way of focussing in on any aspects of reality in terms of their being, or being part of, *dukkha*, its cause, its cessation, or the path to this.

THE SACCA-SAMĪYUTTA

The last of the *saṃyuttas* in the *Saṃyutta-nikāya*, no.56, is the *sacca-saṃyutta* (SN V 414–78). This contains 131 *suttas*, with most, but not all,⁷ ending in the refrain:

Therefore, an exertion (*yogo*) should be made [to understand]: ‘This is *dukkha*’ (*idaṃ dukkhan ti*). ... ‘This is the origin of *dukkha*’ (*ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo ti*)... ‘This is the cessation of *dukkha*’ (*ayaṃ dukkha-nirodho ti*). ... ‘This is the way leading to the cessation of *dukkha*’ (*ayaṃ dukkha-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā ti*).

Within the body of the *suttas*, there is either discussion that focuses on the four phrases in quote marks, “This is...” — what can be called the *idaṃ dukkhan ti* formula, or on what are referred to, without quote marks, as the four *ariya-saccas*, namely: *dukkham ariya-saccaṃ*, *dukkha-samudayam ariya-saccaṃ*, *dukkha-nirodham ariya-saccaṃ*, and *dukkha-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā ariya-saccaṃ*: the *ariya-sacca* formula. Occasionally, both occur, and in some *suttas*, neither occur, except for the first formula, in the above refrain. In two *suttas* (12 and 19, plus 11— see below), there is a mixed formula, “This is the *dukkha ariya-sacca* (*idaṃ dukkham ariya-saccan ti*)”.

The items of the *idaṃ dukkhan ti* formula, as they are enclosed by quote marks, can be seen as verbalised or thought ‘truths’, though they are never specifically called *ariya-saccas*. They are typically things that one should ‘understand as it really is’ (*yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*) (*suttas* 1, 2, 42, 43, 46) or simply ‘understand’ (22). One who ‘understands, as it really is’ each of the items is ‘accomplished in view’ (*diṭṭhisampanno*), freed from the vast plane of misery [of lower rebirths] (36) and ‘a noble disciple, a person accomplished in view who has made the breakthrough (*ariyasāvakaṃ diṭṭhisampannassa puṅgalassa abhisametāvino*)’ (49–60), such that only a little *dukkha* remains for him or her compared to that which has been destroyed. This clearly concerns streamentry.

Sutta 25 says that ‘The destruction of the taints — i.e. Arahantship — is from knowing and seeing (*jānato passato*) “This is *dukkha*” etc., and *sutta* 31 emphasizes that the Buddha has taught, from what he has ‘directly known (*abhiññāya*)’, only what is ‘beneficial... and leads to ... *Nibbāna*’, namely “This is *dukkha*” etc.

Sutta 41 talks of a man reflecting on the world who thought he was mad when he saw an army entering a lotus stalk, as he thought he had ‘seen what does not exist in the world (*yaṃ loke natthi tam mayā diṭṭhan ti*)’. Those he told about this agreed. However, ‘what that man saw was actually real, not unreal (*bhūtaṃ yeva... no abhūtaṃ*)’: it was a retreating *asura* army. Hence, it is said, one should not engage in spiritually unbeneficial reflections, entertaining the views in the ten undetermined questions. Rather, when reflecting, one ‘should reflect (*cinteyyātha*), “This is *dukkha*”...’. This implies that the subjects of the “This is...” phrases, i.e. *dukkha* etc., are things which are surprising to the worldly minded, but are ‘actually real, not unreal’.

As regards the *ariya-sacca* formula, *Suttas* 13 and 14 are significant in that they explain the *dukkha ariya-sacca* simply by saying ‘the five *upādāna-kkhandhas*’ and

7. Except 11, 12 and 30. *Sutta* 11 is the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta*, while 12 extracts the part of this on the ‘three phases and twelve aspects’ regarding “This is the *dukkha ariya-sacca* (*idaṃ dukkham ariya-saccan ti*)” and three parallel quote-enclosed statements. 30 says that if one sees (*passati*) any one of *dukkha*, the origin of *dukkha*, etc., one sees the other three. This is the basis for the above Patis II 106 statement on the *saccas* as having one penetration.

‘the six internal āyatanas’.⁸ That is, the *ariya-saccas* are definitely not treated as ‘truths’ about certain existents but as certain existents, certain realities. *Sutta* 19 talks of “‘This is the *dukkha ariya-sacca*” (*Idaṃ dukkham ariyasaccan ti*) etc.; as the *ariya-saccas* are within the quote marks, this does not present them as truths that are expressed by something else in quote marks, such as “‘this is *dukkha*” — as previously pointed out at the start of this article. Thus I think K.R.Norman (1982, 379) is incorrect when he says of an example of the *ariya-saccas* at Thag 492, giving them simply as ‘*dukkhaṃ samudayo nirodho maggo*’, ‘This seems to be a “short-hand” way of referring to the four NTs [Noble Truths], for the first NT is not “Pain”, but the realization of the fact that “This is pain”’. He also later (381) says that the reason people have not translated *idaṃ ... dukkham ariya-saccam* in the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta* as “‘The NT (that) ‘This is pain’ ” ... [is] I presume that the syntax has always dissuaded translators from giving the interpretation that reason told them was the correct one’. But here, ‘reason’ would be distorting both the grammar and the sense, once one sees that an *ariya-sacca* is not a ‘truth’ but a ‘reality’. In fact, as Norman (1982,380) notes, of the formula *dukkhaṃ ariya-saccam, dukkha-samudayaṃ ariya-saccam* etc. (at DN III 277), ‘it would appear that ... the Pāli tradition takes *dukkhaṃ, dukkha-samudayaṃ*, etc., as being in apposition to *ariya-saccam*, so that when the latter is in an oblique case,⁹ so too is the former’. To me, this apposition in fact supports the idea of the *ariya-saccas* as being identical with *dukkha* etc., rather than being ‘truths’ about them.

Sutta 29 echoes a section of the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta*. It uses the *ariya-sacca* formula and says that, ‘The *dukkha ariya-sacca* is to be understood (*pariññeyyam*); the *dukkha-samudaya ariya-sacca* is to be abandoned...’. While one would want to abandon a harmful reality, one would not want to abandon a truth about it — as previously pointed out. Norman (1982, 384–385) highlights the fact that F.L.Woodward, in his translation of the parallel section of the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta* (1930, 358), had:

noted that the word *ariya-saccam* should be omitted, since what the Buddha meant was that the origin of pain should be given up, not the truth about it. ... [but] Woodward did not ... go far enough. He should have suggested the removal of the word *ariya-saccam* from all four items

in this section. But if *ariya-sacca* is seen to refer to a kind of reality, this problem, and the implication that the text is garbled, disappear. It becomes clear that the *ariya-saccas* are not the statements “‘This is *dukkha*” but the realities that these statements are about: *dukkha* etc..

The four *ariya-saccas* are typically things that one should ‘make the breakthrough to (*abhisameti*) as they really are (*yathābhūtaṃ*)’ (*suttas* 3, 4, 26, 32, 34, 35, 44). It is also said that it is ‘from the not seeing (*aditṭhattā*) of the four *ariya-saccas*. ... the *dukkha ariya-sacca*...’ that rebirth continues (*sutta* 33), or a bad rebirth or bad conduct arises (47, 61–131). *Sutta* 21 says beings wander in rebirth due to ‘not seeing (*adassanā*) as they really are’ the four *ariya-saccas*, i.e. ‘not awakening to and

8. Cf. SN III 59, where the Buddha said that he did not claim to have awakened while ‘I did not directly know as they really are the five *upādāna-kkhandhas* in four phases (*catu-parivattam*)’, i.e. with regard to each *upādāna-kkhandha*, its origin, cessation, and the way leading to its cessation.

9. As at MN II 10, DN II 90 and MN I 184.

penetrating (*ananubodhā appativedhā*)' them. It is also said that those who are fully awakened fully awaken (*abhisambujanti*) to 'the four *ariya-saccas* as they really are' (*suttas* 5-6). Those who are *sammā-sambuddhas* do this (23, 24). *Sutta* 28 uses the *ariya-sacca* formula and then says that, 'In this world ... the *Tathāgata* is the noble one (*ariyo*). Therefore they are called "*ariya-saccas*"'.

The *ariya-saccas*, then, are to be broken through to, seen, awoken to, penetrated and fully awoken to.¹⁰ This again makes them sound more like realities than verbalized 'truths'. Nevertheless, they can also, of course, be the subject of verbalized teachings. *Suttas* 15 and 16 assert that one should remember that what the Buddha taught as the four *ariya-saccas*, for example (15), 'I remember *dukkha*, venerable sir, as the first *ariya-sacca* taught (*ariya-saccaṃ desitaṃ*) by the Blessed One'. *Sutta* 38 says that when a perfect Buddha arises in the world, then there is a 'great light and radiance... then there is the explaining (*ācikkhaṇā*) of the four *ariya-saccas* (*ariyasaccānam*); the teaching (*desanā*), proclaiming (*paññāpanā*), establishing (*paṭṭhapanā*), disclosing (*vivaranā*), analysing (*vibhajanā*), and elucidating (*uttānikammaṃ*) (of them). Of what four? Of the *dukkha ariya-sacca ...*'.¹¹

Some *suttas* use both the *idaṃ dukkhaṃ ti* and *ariya-sacca* formulas. *Sutta* 39 says that one who 'understands as it really is, "This is *dukkha*"' etc. does not look to others, wondering if they 'really know really see (*jānaṃ jānāti passam passati*)', but is firm like a deeply planted pillar. Why? 'From the clear seeing (*sudīṭṭhata*) of the four *ariya-saccas*... the *dukkha ariya-sacca*...'. Likewise, *sutta* 40 says that if a renunciant or brahmin comes seeking an argument, thinking "I will refute his thesis (*vādaṃ assa āropessāmi ti*)", he cannot make to tremble a monk who 'understands, as it really is, "This is *dukkha*"...'. Why? 'From the clear seeing (*sudīṭṭhata*) of the four *ariya-saccas*. Of what four? Of the *dukkha ariya-sacca*...'. Hence to clearly see the *ariya-saccas* entails the understanding of what they are, as in "This is *dukkha*" etc. verbalized formula. Likewise, *sutta* 37 says that 'it is to be expected that one with right view will understand as it really is, "This is *dukkha*"...', hence right view is the forerunner and precursor of 'the breakthrough (*abhisamāyāya*) to the four *ariya-saccas* as they really are'.¹² The "This is *dukkha*" etc. statements and related insights, then, are crucial as they are what identify what each *ariya-sacca* actually is in experience, as well as, correlatively, identifying aspects of experience as being of a nature of one or other of the *ariya-saccas*.

In the two *Tathā Suttas* (20 and 27), it is said of each of "This is *dukkha*" etc. and the four *ariya-saccas* as a group that they are *tatha*, *avitatha*, *anaññatha*, which Bodhi translates as: 'actual, unerring, not otherwise'. Now to translate *avitatha* as 'unerring' implies that it is talking of a correct teaching. This is applicable to "This is *dukkha*", but not to the *ariya-saccas* if they are significant realities,

10. *Suttas* 17-18 do not use the expression *ariya-sacca*, but say that ignorance and knowledge (*vijjā*) both concern *dukkha* etc., putting the relevant words or compounds in the locative case. *Sutta* 22 says that those who 'understand (*pajānanti*)' *dukkha* and the other three are liberated.

11. The *Sacca-vibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 141, MN III 248) also says that the Buddha and Sāriputta do this, with Sāriputtā expaining each *ariya-sacca* much as in the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta*, though then explaining each detail, e.g. what 'birth' is, and right view as knowledge (*ñāṇa*) regarding *dukkha*, *dukkha-samudaya*, etc. (251)

12. We also see in the *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta* (DN II 304), 'And how does a *bhikkhu* abide contemplating *dhammas* as *dhammas* in respect of the four *ariya-saccas* (*ariya-saccesu*)? Here, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* understands, as it really is, "This is *dukkha* (*idaṃ dukkhaṃ ti*)".'

rather than teachings. We see, though, that in the *Dasuttara Sutta*, the term *avītathā* clearly means ‘not unreal’: it ends its *Abhidhamma*-like list of items by saying, ‘That makes a hundred *dhammas* that are real, genuine (*bhūtā tacchā*), actual (*tathā*), not unreal (*avītathā*), not otherwise (*anaññathā*), and fully awakened to by the *Tathāgata* (DN III 292).

The *tathā*, *avītathā*, *anaññathā* description is also found at SN II 25–6, where the Conditioned Arising sequence is given, on how each *nidāna* arises conditioned by the one before it. This is so whether or not a *Tathāgata* arises to know it, but a *Tathāgata*

awakens and breaks through to it (*abhisambhujjhati abhisameti*). Having done so, he explains it, teaches it ... elucidates it. And he says: See! With ignorance as condition, *bhikkhus*, volitional formations. Thus, *bhikkhus*, the actuality in this, the *avītathā* (Bodhi: ‘inerrancy’), the not-otherwiseness, specific conditionality: this is called Conditioned Arising (*Iti kho bhikkhave yā tatra tathā avītathā anaññathā idapaccayatā. ayaṃ vuccati bhīhhave paṭicasamuppādo*).

Here, the focus is on a reality that is awoken to, rather than the words then used to elucidate it. It is about the ‘moon’, not the ‘finger’ of words that point at it. Admittedly, at DN II 73, it is said *na hi Tathāgatā vitathaṃ bhaṇanti*, which clearly means ‘*Tathāgatas* do not speak what is untrue’, but at Sn.9, as translated by Norman (1992), it is said that a ‘*bhikkhu* who has not transgressed..., knowing in respect of the world that all this is unreal (*vitathaṃ*), leaves this shore and the far shore as a snake leaves its old worn-out skin’. Here *vitathaṃ* is a feature of the world, not of words about it. Indeed *tathā*, which *vitathā* negates, means either ‘true’ or ‘real’. Hence it seems perfectly acceptable to see *avītathā* as applied to the *ariya-saccas* as meaning ‘not unreal’, rather than as ‘unerring’.

In a discussion at Kv VI 3 (pp. 322–325), the Vibhajjavādin (later Theravādin) critiques the view, attributed by the commentary (Kv-a 90–1) to the Pubbaseliyas, that while *dukkha*, *samudaya* and *magga* are conditioned (*saṅkhata*), not only *nirodha*, but also all four *saccas* (*dukkha-sacca* etc.) are unconditioned. The Vibhajjavādin sees this position as implying that there is more than one *Nibbāna*, which is unacceptable, and his questioning shows that he sees it as inappropriate (in this context) to distinguish e.g. *dukkha* and *dukkha-sacca*: so *dukkha-sacca* simply is *dukkha*, etc.. The opponent cites, in his support, SN V 430, on “‘This is *dukkha*’” etc. as things which are ‘actual, not unreal, not otherwise (*tathāni, avītathāni, anaññathāni*)’, implying that he takes the *saccas* as the true statements about *dukkha* etc. The commentary sees the Pubbaseliyas as holding that the four *saccas* are permanent as well as unconditioned, and explains that they distinguish between *lakkhaṇa-sacca*, i.e. *sacca* as characteristic — the true characteristic of something whenever it exists — and *vatthu-sacca*, *sacca* as the thing itself. It is the *lakkhaṇa-saccas* that they see as the *saccas*, and as unconditioned. It is evident that the Vibhajjavādin does not see the *saccas* in this way, but as the actual things, *dukkha* etc., along with their characteristics, as well as not seeing any statements as unconditioned.¹³

13. The Vibh-a 85 discussion of the *ariya-saccas* explains *sacca* as meaning a real state with a definite characteristic:

What is the meaning of *sacca*? It is that which, for those who examine it with the eye of understanding (*paññā-cakkhunā*), is not equivocal like an illusion (*māyā va viparīto*), deceptive like a mirage (*marīci va viṣaṃvāḍako*), or undiscoverable like the Self of the ford-

Possible objections to taking the ariya-saccas as ‘realities’ rather than ‘truths’

In the context of the *ariya-saccas*, I have found only one canonical passage, and that in verse, that alludes to the statements “‘This is *dukkha*”” etc. as what the *saccas* are. *Dhammapada* 273 says:

Of the paths, the eightfold is best; of *saccas* the four sayings (*saccānaṃ caturo padā*);
of states, freedom from passion; of two-footed ones the Seeing One.¹⁴

In an email, Bhikkhu Anālayo had some reservations on ‘realities for the noble ones’ as regards losing an explicit link to ‘truth’, but said that ‘I find the idea of treating *sacca* as “reality” a useful approach, especially from a practical side. This gives the applying of the four *saccas* to everyday life more meaning’. Bhikkhu Bodhi, though, made this point in an email:

Although the four *saccas* have an ontological rather propositional significance, if the Buddha wanted simply to point to four entities, or classes of entities, why didn’t he use ‘*dhammā*’ or ‘*dhātuyo*’ or ‘*ṭhānāni*’ or ‘*padā*’?

Here, my response is that the English word ‘truth’ does not capture the ontological significance, here, and that the word *sacca* is used to indicate things that are the four significant or key aspects of reality as seen by one with wisdom: the limited conditioned realm, what keeps it going, that which is beyond this, and the path to this. Bhikkhu Bodhi continues:

Using the word *sacca*, it seems, connects the referents of the four *saccas* with propositions made about them, and also thereby bolsters the Buddha’s stature as *saccavādin*, ‘the speaker of truth’.

Here, there is again an acknowledgement that the *ariya-saccas* are not propositions, but what certain propositions are *about*. Of course there is a close association between what is real and truth, i.e. with words that correspond with what is real. ‘*Sacca*’ as a noun means ‘truth’ in many contexts, but the word seems to cover both ‘truth’ and ‘reality’. In my understanding of *English* usage, though, the only things that can be ‘truths’ — other than in some poetic usages — are propositions, i.e. something that is expressed in words (spoken, written, or thought). If *dukkha*, for example, is a *sacca*, it cannot be this as a ‘truth’. Only when one starts to assert something *about* *dukkha*, even the simple ‘this is *dukkha*’, can

makers, but is rather the domain of noble knowledge (*ariya-nāṇassa gocaro*) as the true, unequivocal and real state (*tacchāvīparīta-bhūta-bhāvo*) which has the (respective) aspects of affliction, production, peace and outlet (*bādhana-pabhava-santi-niyyāna*). It is this true, unequivocal and real state that should be understood as the meaning of *sacca*, like the characteristic of fire (*aggi-lakkhaṇaṃ*), like the nature of the world (*loka-pakati*), according as it is said: “‘This is *dukkha*” is actual, it is not unreal, it is not otherwise (*tatham etaṃ avitatham etaṃ anaññatham etaṃ*; SN V 430)’, and so on, in detail. Furthermore:

Since *dukkha* is not unafflicting,
And nought other than *dukkha* afflicts (*bādhakaṃ*):
The certainty of afflictingness (*bādhakatta-niyāmena*)
It is what is reckoned here as *sacca* (*tato saccam idaṃ mataṃ*).
... This true, undistorted and real state (*Iti tacchāvīpallāsa-bhūta-bhāvaṃ*) in the four,
With the characteristic of *dukkha* etc. (*dukkhādisv’avisesena*) Is what the wise declare
to be the meaning of *sacca*.

14. Cf. MN I 480 refers, without explanation, to ‘a four-phrased statement (*catuppadam veyyākaraṇaṃ*), and when it is recited a wise man would quickly understand it’.

what is said be a ‘truth’. This should be reflected in the translation of *ariya-sacca*. One could perhaps say the four *saccas* are ‘true realities’, as they are this in the sense of genuine, not seeming, ones,¹⁵ just as a ‘true musician’ is one who genuinely accords with what a musician is and should be. ‘True realities’ also keeps a clear connection to ‘truth’, the other meaning of *sacca*, and to the positive associations of this word.¹⁶ In any case, while the *ariya-saccas* are not verbalized *truths* about anything, of course there can also be true teachings about these realities.

The fact that *sacca* can mean both ‘truth’ and ‘(true) reality’ does not mean that the Buddha and his audience could not differentiate between these meanings, any more than the existence of English words with a range of meanings — such as ‘bank’, ‘class’, or ‘feeling’ — mean that English speakers cannot differentiate between their meanings in different contexts. Many words have several meanings within their semantic range, but context and usage indicates the difference between these.

The *ariya-saccas*, then, are true realities, in the sense of the most significant aspects of experience, the fundamental divisions or dimensions of reality, as seen by one with wisdom and attention that is *yoniso* — that gets to the fundamental basics of things. Thus SN III 157–158 says that the four ‘ends’ (*antā*; commentary *koṭṭhāsā*, portions or divisions) are those of the ‘existing group’ (*sakkāya*), the origin (*samudaya*) of this, the cessation (*nirodha*) of this, and the way going to the cessation of it. These are explained as are the *ariya-saccas* in the *Dhammacaccappavātana Sutta*, except that *sakkāya* is explained simply as the five *upādāna-kkhandhas*. The next *Sutta* (158) also explains *dukkha* in this way. While the *ariya-saccas* are the key dimensions of reality, to truly see one means that one sees the others (SN V 436–437). This is because the full nature and extent of *dukkha* can only be known in knowing that which is beyond *dukkha*, and vice versa. Moreover, to know *dukkha* is to know it as craving-originated, to know craving is to know that it generates *dukkha*; to know the cessation of *dukkha* is to know what leads to it, the path; to know the path is to know where it leads.

THE ROLE OF THE WORD ARIYA IN THE COMPOUND ARIYA-SACCA

What of *ariya-sacca*? It actually sounds a little odd to call either a truth, or a reality such as craving, ‘noble’ (though the path is certainly noble).

At Vism 495 and Vibh-a 84–5, Buddhaghosa gives four explanations of the term *ariya-sacca*:

1. ‘They are called *ariya-saccas* because the noble ones, the Buddhas etc., penetrate them (*buddhādayo ariyā paṭivijjhanti*)’. He then quotes from e.g. SN 56.28 where it is said:

15. Even if the second *sacca*, craving, is delusion-related, and so can itself be deceptive when not wisely attended to. Nānamoli used ‘actuality’ for *sacca* in his translation of *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *The Path of Discrimination*, but though it straddles ‘truth’ and ‘reality’, it seems a little arcane.

16. In English, for example in Keats’ ‘Beauty is Truth and Truth is Beauty!’, or ‘I saw the truth’; in Pāli, the Buddha as a speaker of *sacca*/truth, and the idea of the power of an ‘act of truth’ (*sacca-kiriya*). My thanks to Sarah Shaw and L.S. Cousins for emphasising this kind of point to me. The ‘is’ of the Keats quote can mean many things: is deeply associated with, embodies.... But I think that while the *suttas* certainly have a place for poetry, a crucial prose *sutta*, such as the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavātana*, and its translation, is more a place for clarity — though not a flat, unnuanced one.

Bhikkhus, there are these four *ariya-saccas*. What four? The *dukkha ariya-sacca*, the *dukkha-samudaya ariya-sacca*, the *dukkha-nirodha ariya-sacca* the *dukkha-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā ariya-sacca*.

2. ‘Besides, the *ariya-saccas* are “*saccas of/for the noble one (ariyassa saccāni ti)*”,¹⁷ citing the passage which continues at SN 56.28:

In this world ... the *Tathāgata* is the noble one (*tathāgato ariyo*). Therefore they are called ‘*ariya-saccas (ariya-saccāni ti)*’. (SN V 435).

3. ‘Or alternatively, they are called *ariya-saccas* because of the noble state implied by awakening to them (*abhibuddhattā ariya-bhāva-siddhito*)’, quoting from SN 56.23. Thus repeats the SN 56.28 statement on the *ariya-saccas*, then says:

It is because he has fully awakened to (*abhisambuddhattā*) these four *ariya-saccas* as they really are (*ariya-saccānaṃ yathābhūtam*) that he is called ‘a Thus-gone (*tathāgato*), *Arahat*, Perfectly Enlightened One’ (*sammā-sambuddho ti*). (SN V 433).

4. ‘Besides, the *ariya-saccas* are the *saccas* which are *ariya (ariyāni saccāni ti)*. “Noble (*ariyāni ti*)” means “actual, not unreal (*tathāni avitathāni*), not deceptive (*avisamvādakāni ti*)”, quoting from SN 56.27, one of the *Tathā Suttas*, which lists the *ariya-saccas*, as at 56.28, then says:

These four *ariya-saccas*, *bhikkhus*, are actual, not unreal, not otherwise (*tathāni avitathāni anaññathāni*). Therefore they are called ‘*ariya-saccas*’. (SN V 435).

Norman (1990, 11–12) sees the meaning of *ariya-sacca* in these four explanations as, respectively: 1. “the noble ones’ truths”; 2. “the Noble One’s (=the Buddha’s) truths”; 3. “truths for a noble one, for becoming a noble one”/ “the ennobling truths”;¹⁸ and 4. “the true truths”. Elsewhere, Buddhaghosa only gives explanation 3, or 3 and 1: “of the *ariya-saccas*” as they are *saccas* which cause the noble state (*saccānaṃ ti ariya-bhāva-karānaṃ saccānaṃ*) (DN-a 542). “*Ariya-saccas*” as they cause the noble state or as they are *saccas* penetrated by noble ones (*ariya-saccāni ti, ariya-bhāva-karāni, ariya-paṭividdhāni vā saccāni*) (AA.II 281). We also see that Buddhaghosa makes it clear that the third *ariya-sacca* is not a truth about cessation, but *Nibbāna* itself: ‘in the ultimate sense, it is *Nibbāna* that is called the *dukkha-nirodha ariya-sacca (paramatthato hi dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccan ti nibbānaṃ vuccati)*’ (Vism 507).

Of the passages cited by Buddhaghosa, that in his second explanation above (SN 56.28) supports ‘for/of the noble one’. The passage in his fourth explanation (SN 56.27) is compatible with seeing a *sacca* as a true and genuine ‘reality’ rather than a ‘truth’. While Buddhaghosa says that the *saccas* are all ‘*ariya*’, he here explains this as meaning ‘actual, not unreal, not deceptive’, rather than ‘noble’, which is appropriate, given that the *saccas* as true realities are not all ‘noble’. The passage in his third explanation (SN 56.23) says a person is a *Tathāgata* (Thus-gone or Thus-come) as they have awakened to these *saccas*; you could say that, having awakened to the four true realities, a person is ‘One Attuned to Reality’, though his

17. Cf. AKB VI 2cd: ‘*Sūtra* says, “They are *satyas* for/of the *Āryans*: this is why they are called *āryasatyas*” (*āryānaṃ etāni satyāni tasmād āryasatyāni ti sūtra evoktam*)’.

18. Hence in my entries on the *ariya-saccas* in the Routledge *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (2007a), I headed the entries with titles such as ‘The Ennobling Truths/Realities as a Whole’.

orientation to truth is also emphasized: AN II 24 says that a *Tathāgata* is so called as: all objects of sense or mind are 'fully understood (*abhisambuddham*)' by him; whatever he says after his enlightenment, 'all that is just so and not otherwise (*tath'eva hoti no aññathā*)'; and, 'as he speaks, so he acts (*yathāvādī ...yathākārī*); as he acts, so he speaks' (cf. Bodhi 1978).

Dhammapāla (It-a 85) interprets '*ariya-sacca*' thus:

They are '*ariya-saccas*' since they are *ariya* on account of their needing to be approached (*arañiyato*), and '*saccas*' on account of their not being unreal (*avitatha-bhāvena*) [equivalent to Buddhaghosa 4]; or the *ariya-saccas* are those *saccas* bringing about the noble state (*ariya-bhāvakarāni*) [equivalent to Buddhaghosa 3], or the *ariya-saccas* are those *saccas* to be penetrated by those who are nobles, such as the Buddhas and so on [equivalent to Buddhaghosa 1]. Or again, the *ariya-saccas* are the *saccas* of the noble one. For the Lord is noble one, on account of his needing to be approached (*arañiyato*) as a 'refuge' by the world, together with its *devas*, the *ariya-saccas* are '*saccas*' from being seen by him through his omniscience [equivalent to Buddhaghosa 2].

Norman (1990,12) comments on this:

If we accept that the four explanations, of which the last three are introduced by *vā*, represent a series of 'or preferably' propositions, then the final one ('the Noble's [= the Buddha's] truths') is Dhammapāla's most preferred explanation, with the ... first ... the least likely explanation.

Norman thus sees 'noble truth' as 'the least likely of all the possibilities' for the meaning of *ariya-sacca* (1997, 16), and summarises that the commentators interpret it as:

"truth of the noble one", "truth of the noble ones", "truth for a noble one", i.e. the truth that will make one noble, as well as the translation "noble truth" so familiar to us. The last possibility, however, they put at the very bottom of the list of possibilities, if they mention it at all. (Norman 1997, 16)

He prefers 'truth of the noble one (the Buddha)', but acknowledges that the term may be deliberately multivalent. I basically agree with him — apart from 'truth' for *sacca*, here; so I think 'true reality for the noble ones' is best, with 'the noble ones' meaning either the Buddha or, more generally, any noble person: stream-enterer, once-returner, non-returner or *Arahat*,¹⁹ all of whom attain their states by insight into the *ariya-saccas*. We need 'for the ...' not 'of the ...' as the realities are those as 'broken through to' and 'seen' by the noble ones, not things that are only *about* the noble ones.

For the Tibetan tradition, Jeffrey Hopkins (1983, 289–290, on the basis of a range of sources, says:

The four noble truths are called 'noble' (*ārya*) because they are taught by the Nobles or Superiors (*Āryan, 'Phags pa*) [cf. Buddhaghosa explanation 1] or because they are ennobling [=Buddhaghosa explanation 3]. They are called truths (*satya, bden pa*) because through meditation on them one unmistakably enters into the paths of liberation and omniscience [also = Buddhaghosa explanation 3]. Because the teachings that sufferings and their origins are to be abandoned and that cessa-

19. And those intently 'practising for the realisation' of each of these states: while the commentators, based on the *Abhidhamma*, see such persons as only lasting for the time of the single moment of their respective *magga-citta*, the *suttas* see them as lasting longer than this. This is a matter on which I will publish in the future.

tions and the paths that actualize them are to be adopted are true and thus do not deceive disciples, they are truths [=Buddhaghosa explanation 4]. However, unlike ultimate truths they do not necessarily exist the way they appear, because except for true cessations, they are falsities in the sense that true sufferings, for instance, appear in direct perception to exist inherently but do not.

In Tibetan, the full expression for the *ariya-saccas* is '*phags pa'i bden pa*, with '*phags pa* meaning noble one(s) and '*i*' being a genitive particle. The word *bden pa* has 'a principle meaning of true/truth as opposed to false/falsity, and is used in this sense in everyday language as well as religious language',²⁰ but the *Nitartha International Online Dictionary* includes in its meanings 'true existence/nature', *bden par grub pa* means 'belief in reality', *bden par 'dod pa* means 'to regard as/believe to be real', and *bden pas stong* means 'empty of reality/true existence'. Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche (2004) actually uses the translation 'Four Realities of the Noble Ones', and talks of 'the four noble truths or the four realities', 'The first reality: Suffering', 'the reality of cessation is that which is to be manifested or actualized, or to be attained. The reality of the path is that on which one has to rely'.

The *ariya-saccas* as 'true realities for the noble ones' are reminiscent of such passages as SN IV 95, which says, 'That in the world by which one is a perceiver of the world, a conceiver of the world — this is called the world in the discipline of the noble one (*ariyassa vinaye*)'. That is, the noble one understands things in a different way from ordinary people. Indeed we have seen above that at Sn. p.147, it is said, 'Whatever, *bhikkhus*, is regarded as "this is *sacca*" (*idaṃ saccaṃ ti*) by the world ... that is well seen by the noble ones with right wisdom as it really is as "this is deceptive" (*etaṃ musā ti*)', and vice versa. Sn. 148 then says 'Whatever, *bhikkhus*, is regarded as "This is *sukha*" (*idaṃ sukhaṃ ti*) by the world ... this is well seen by the noble ones with right wisdom as "this is *dukkha*" (*etaṃ dukkhaṃ ti*)', and vice versa. The following verses (759–762) are also found at SN IV 126–127, which prefaces them by saying that humans and *devas* delight in the six kinds of sense objects, but 'dwell in *dukkha* (*dukkhaṃ ... viharanti*)' when they change and cease. The *Tathāgata* has 'understood as they really are (*yathābhūtaṃ viditvā*) the origin and the passing away, the gratification, the danger, and the escape' regarding them, and so does not delight in them; with their change and cessation, he 'dwells in *sukha*'. The following verses then say:

Forms, sounds, odours, tastes, tactiles and all objects of mind — desirable, lovely, agreeable, as long as it's said 'They are' (*yāvat'atthyīti vuccati*).

These are considered *sukha* by the world with its *devas*; but when they cease, that they consider *dukkha*.

The ceasing of *sakkāya*²¹ [the 'existing group' defined at MN I 299 as the five *upādāna-kkhandhas*] is seen by the noble ones as *sukha* (*sukhaṃ diṭṭhaṃ ariyehi*). This (view) of those who see (properly) is contrary to (that held) by the entire world.²²

What others speak of as *sukha*, that the noble ones say is *dukkha* (*yam pare sukhatō āhu, tad ariyā āhu dukkhato*); what others speak of as *dukkha*, that the noble ones know as *sukha*.²³

20. Cathy Cantwell email. My thanks to her for her help on this.

21. Sn *sakkāyassa'uparodhanaṃ*, SN *sakkā yassa nirodhanam*.

22. *paccanīkam idaṃ hoti, sabbalokena passataṃ* (SN *dassanam*).

23. Cited at AKB VI 2cd, in explaining the term *āryasatya*.

Behold this *Dhamma*, hard to comprehend: here the foolish are bewildered.

Again, reality as seen by noble ones is rather different from how other people see things. Indeed SN 56.45 says that to ‘pierce (*paṭivijjhanti*) as it really is, “This is *dukkha*” etc. is more difficult than piercing a hair with an arrow. Of course, those who are not noble ones may agree, for example, that ‘not to get what one wants is *dukkha*’, but not that ‘the five *upādāna-kkhandhas* are *dukkha*’, or that ‘birth’, that is, being born, ‘is *dukkha*’.

We should remember that the Buddha typically taught the *ariya-saccas* to people only after first giving them a preparatory discourse to ensure they were in the right frame of mind:

Then the Blessed One gave the householder Upāli a step-by-step discourse, that is, talk on giving, talk on moral virtue, talk on the heaven worlds; he made known the danger, the inferior nature and tendency to defilement of sense-pleasures, and the advantage of renouncing them. When the Blessed One knew that the householder Upāli’s mind was ready, open, without hindrances [implying a level of concentration that came to be known as access *samādhi*], inspired and confident, then he expounded to him the *Dhamma*-teaching special to the buddhas (*buddhānaṃ sāmukkaṃsikā*): *dukkha*, (its) origin, (its) cessation, the path (MN I 379–380).

In the case of the Buddha himself, his penetration of these four realities was from the fourth *jhāna*, in which his mind was, ‘serene, purified, cleansed, without blemish, with defilements gone, become pliable, workable, firm, imperturbable’ (DN I 76).

So, we see that what are normally called the ‘noble truths’ — “this is *dukkha*” or “birth is *dukkha*” etc. — are really teachings *about* the *ariya-saccas*, the ‘true realities for the noble ones’. Just as in the *Upaniṣads*, where *satya* often means a fundamental division of reality, the *ariya-saccas* are the fundamental, basic, key or most significant realities that noble ones see in the flow of experience of themselves and/or others. An *ariya-sacca* is a *basic genuine reality as identified by the Buddha and other noble ones*. As, though, the meaning of ‘noble ones’ may not sufficiently convey that the referent is to a fully or partially enlightened person,²⁴ it may be clearer to use ‘the spiritually ennobled’ as a more nuanced translation.

Bhikkhu Bodhi, though, commented on the proposed translation:

One can, of course, justify this rendering on the basis of SN 56.28... Nevertheless, I still feel more comfortable with the translation with which I am more familiar, ‘noble truth’. It might not be more accurate; but I feel it has stronger resonance. ... Ithink a few cogent reasons can be brought forth in support of ‘noble truths’... I understand their ‘nobility’ to consist in the fact that these are the truths in terms of which a noble person views the world, or the truths that will transform a person who comprehends them into a noble person, or the truths that require nobility of character and understanding to acknowledge.

I of course agree with these last points — *if* one is talking of the insights “This is *dukkha*” etc., but these are not themselves the *ariya-saccas*. Moreover, the *ariya-saccas* — *dukkha*, *dukkha-samudaya*, etc. — themselves include one which should be abandoned: why abandon a ‘noble truth’? Also, the fourth *ariya-sacca*, the path, is to be developed or cultivated, but how do you ‘develop/cultivate’ a ‘truth’?

24. A concern raised by L.S. Cousins.

That said, ‘true realities for the spiritually ennobled’ does keep an association with ‘truth’.

In line with the above arguments, it should be noted that, of the four *ariya-saccas*, the *Suttas* only ever talk of the fourth one as itself being *ariya*, noble, by using this word in a clearly adjectival sense, not in a compound, applied the Eight-factored Path, or some equivalent of it. There is no talk of four *ariyāni saccāni*, four noble *saccas*. Indeed we see that Vasubandhu says (AKB VI 2cd), ‘According to other masters, two are [just] *satyas* for/of the *Āryans*, and two are [both] *satyas* for *Āryans* and additionally are *āryan satyas* (*dve āryāṇāṃ satye dve ārye cāryāṇāṃ ca satye ity apare*)’. P’u-kuang (T 41, 333c2) says that the ‘other masters’ are the *Sāūtrantikas* and *Sthaviras*.²⁵ The *Vibhāṣa*, T 27, 401c27 explains that the *ārya-satyas* are not so-called because they are *kuśala* or without *āśravas*, as only the last two are wholly *kuśala*, and are without *āśravas*. The *ārya-satyas* are not so-called because only the *Āryans* are endowed with them, as all beings are endowed with the first two *satyas* (even if they do not know this).²⁶ In the Theravādin *Abhidhamma*, the *Vibhaṅga* classifies the *saccas* thus:

| Vibh page | <i>Dukkha-sacca</i> | <i>Samudaya-sacca</i> | <i>Nirodha-sacca</i> | <i>Magga-sacca</i> |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 112 | May be skilful (<i>kusala</i>), unskilful, or neither | Unskilful | Neither | Skilful |
| 114 | May be inferior (<i>hīna</i>), or intermediate (<i>majjhima</i>) | Inferior | Superior (<i>paṇīta</i>) | Superior |
| 116 | Conditioned (<i>saṅkhata</i>) | Conditioned | Unconditioned | Conditioned |
| 116 | Mundane (<i>lokiya</i>) | Mundane | Supramundane (<i>lokuttara</i>) | Supramundane |
| 116 | May be a taint (<i>āsava</i>) or not | A taint | Not a taint | Not a taint |

There is no discussion of the characteristic of being *ariya*/noble, but it is clear from the above that the first and second *sacca* could not be called ‘noble’. So, of the *ariya-saccas*, only the fourth, the path, is definitely itself ‘noble’.

THE TRANSLATION OF ‘DUKKHA’

Below, I suggest a new way of translating the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta*, but before I get to this I need to discuss the translation of ‘*dukkha*’. This word can be either a noun or an adjective. As an adjective, its basic everyday meaning is ‘painful’ as opposed to ‘pleasant’ (*sukha*). Thus the three kinds of feeling are *sukha vedanā*, *dukkha vedanā* and neither-*sukha*-nor-*dukkha vedanā* (e.g. SN IV 232): pleasant, painful and neutral feeling. SN V 209–210 talks instead of five ‘faculties’ (*indriyas*), those of *sukha*, *dukkha*, *somanassa*, *domanassa* and *upekhā*, the explanations including:

- *dukkha*: ‘whatever bodily (*kāyikaṃ*) *dukkha* there is, whatever bodily discomfort (*asātaṃ*), the *dukkha*, uncomfortable experience (*vedayitaṃ*) born of bodily contact’.

25. Pruden 1991, 1042, note 14.

26. Cited at Pruden 1991, 1042, note 12.

- *domanassa*: ‘whatever ‘mental (*cetasikaṃ*) *dukkha* there is, whatever mental discomfort (*asātaṃ*), the *dukkha*, uncomfortable experience (*vedayitaṃ*) born of mind (*mano-*) contact’.

That is, *dukkha* in its simplest noun sense is bodily *dukkha* — physical pain — but there is also *domanassa*, unhappiness, which is mental *dukkha*. Moreover, DN II 306 explains *dukkha* in *soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassa-upāyāsā* (sorrow, lamentation, *dukkha*, *domanassa* and distress) as the first of these, with *domanassa* being the second. This shows that the primary sense of *dukkha*, when used as a noun, is physical ‘pain’, but then its meaning is extended to include mental pain, unhappiness. The same spread of meaning is seen in the English word ‘pain’, for example in the phrase ‘the pleasures and pains of life’; and in the expression ‘it pains me to say...’, the word clearly alludes to *mental* pain.

Dukkha as an adjective of course qualifies things which are not (in most cases) themselves *forms* of mental or physical pain, but which are experienced in way which brings mental or physical pain. As *Yamaka* I 174 says:

Is *dukkha* the *sacca* that is *dukkha*? Yes. Is the *sacca* that is *dukkha*, *dukkha*? Except for physical and mental *dukkha*, the rest of the *dukkha-sacca* is the *sacca* that is *dukkha*, not *dukkha*. Physical and mental *dukkha* is both *dukkha* and the *dukkha-sacca* (adapted from Anderson 2001, 124).

That is: pain as painful physical and mental feeling is only *part* of the ‘reality that is pain/painful’. The rest of this refers to things other than painful feelings, which are ‘painful’ in the sense of *entailing* painful feelings.

In the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana*, when it is said ‘birth is *dukkha* (*jāti pi dukkhā*)’ etc., *dukkha* agrees in number and gender with what it is applied to, and is therefore an adjective. The most usual translation ‘birth is suffering’ does not convey this. The English word ‘suffering’ is either a present participle (as, for example, in ‘he is suffering from malaria’) or a noun (e.g. ‘his suffering is intense’). In the common translation ‘birth is suffering’, it does not make sense to take ‘suffering’ as a present participle — it is not something that birth *is doing*. If ‘suffering’ were intended as a noun, though, it is not the case that birth or ageing are themselves *forms* of suffering — they can only be occasions for or things that entail suffering, which is an experience, a mental state. In English there is no adjective from ‘suffering’. Thānissaro Bhikkhu translates, ‘Now this, monks, is the noble truth of stress: Birth is stressful...’. This has a shift from noun to adjective and captures many of the connotations of *dukkha*. In this respect, it seems better than Bodhi’s, ‘Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering...’. Nevertheless ‘stress/stressful’ is somewhat distant from the basic everyday meaning of the word *dukkha*.

Dukkha in the above context, and as one of the ‘three marks’, still carries an allusion to the root meaning of *dukkha* as physical pain, as seen from a passage saying that the five *khandhas* are to be seen ‘as impermanent; as *dukkha*, as a disease, as a tumour, as a dart, as a misfortune, as an affliction; as alien, as disintegrating, as empty, as not-Self’ (SN III 167, cf. Patis II 241–42). Hence *jāti pi dukkhā* is best translated ‘birth is painful’: painful in a range of senses.

Bhikkhu Anālayo, though, argues for translating *dukkha* in its deepest Buddhist sense as ‘unsatisfactory’/‘unsatisfactoriness’, rather than as ‘suffering’ (or as ‘pain/painful’) (2009, 97–98; cf. 2003, 244–245). He does this partly by

referring to SN II 53. Here, Sāriputta says: ‘Friend, there are these three feelings. What three? Pleasant feeling, painful feeling (*dukkhā vedanā*), neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling. These three feelings are impermanent; whatever is impermanent is *dukkha*’, and the Buddha says, ‘This is another method of explaining in brief that same point: “Whatever is felt is (included) within *dukkha* (*yam kici vedayitam tam dukkhasminti*)”’. Now clearly this last *dukkha* is different from *dukkha vedanā*, as it includes all *three* kinds of feeling,²⁷ so Analāyo’s argument is that *dukkha* in the last sense should be translated in a different way than ‘suffering’ (or ‘pain’). To those who argue from MN I 303 that pleasant feelings are ‘suffering’ as they bring suffering when they change, he points out that the same passage says that when painful feelings change, they are pleasant (*sukha*). Thus the second sense of *dukkha* at SN II 53 cannot simply be that all feelings are ‘suffering’ (or ‘pain/painful’) because they change. Nevertheless, to translate SN II 53 as, for example, ‘is included within unsatisfactoriness’ lessens the impact of its startling statement. The word ‘*dukkha*’ has just been used to refer to painful feeling, so here again it means pain, *though in an extended sense*. If the extended sense is not about changeability, it is about conditionality, a quality that is closely tied up with impermanence. At SN IV 259, when Sāriputta is asked, ‘What, now, is *dukkha*?’, he replies:

There are, friend, three kinds of painfulness (*dukkhatā*): the painfulness of pain (*dukkha-dukkhatā*); the painfulness of conditioned things (*saṅkhāra-dukkhatā*); and the painfulness of change (*vipariṇāma-dukkhatā*).

The first of these is clearly the painfulness of physical and mental pain. The second is the painfulness of something’s being a limited, ephemeral, conditioned state, imperfect: an implicit contrast to the unconditioned (*asaṅkhata*). The third is the painfulness of something that is pleasant while it lasts but is associated with the pain of loss, which, as Analāyo rightly argues, only applies to pleasant feeling, but not to unpleasant ones. So, I think that ‘painful’ still works as a translation of ‘*dukkha*’, provided one remembers that ‘painfulness’ can be of a very subtle nature. Yes, ‘unsatisfactory’ captures this subtle sense, yet it also breaks the connection to less subtle meanings of ‘*dukkha*’.

I thus disagree with Bhikkhu Bodhi (email message) when he says:

In our way of thinking, ‘pain’ is so closely connected with physical sensation that it doesn’t seem well suited to bearing the full weight of meaning assigned to the first noble truth. True, ‘suffering’ too does not adequately capture the meaning of *dukkha*. But it seems to me that it serves this purpose better than ‘pain’, and that it resonates better within people’s minds as a ‘skilful means’ for drawing them towards the Dhamma. Few people, apart from those afflicted with chronic illness, will think that life is inherently painful, but many people undergo distressing and disturbing experiences, which convinces them that life involves suffering.

This is in line with what he says in the introduction to his and Ñāṇamoli’s translation of the *Majjhima-nikāya* (1995, 25–26):

dukkha, translated here as ‘suffering’. The Pāli word originally meant simply pain and suffering, a meaning it retains in the texts when it is used as a quality of feeling: in these cases it has been rendered as ‘pain’ or ‘painful’. As the first noble

27. none of which can be simultaneous (DN II 66).

truth, however, *dukkha* has a far wider significance, reflective of a comprehensive philosophical vision. While it draws affective colouring from its connection with pain and suffering, and certainly includes these, it points beyond such restrictive meanings to the inherent unsatisfactoriness of everything conditioned. This unsatisfactoriness is due to its impermanence, its vulnerability to pain, and its inability to provide complete and lasting satisfaction.

For me, though, it is appropriate to *retain* a clear link between the simplest meaning of *dukkha*, as physical 'pain', and its deeper meanings: for these just refer to more subtle pains or things as more subtly painful. While one might think 'pain/painful' is too closely associated in people's minds with physical pain in particular, when I tried out 'birth is painful, ageing is painful' etc. with a group of English Buddhist meditators, they did not take it in this way, but simply as talking about the general pains of life.

Now, I have argued that *sacca* should, according to context, be translated in two ways, 'truth' and 'true reality', but *dukkha* in one way, as 'pain' ('painful' as an adjective). I justify this on the grounds that using only *one* translation for *sacca*, even in different contexts, leads to some confusion, while having, in the context of the Buddha's core teaching, *two or more* translations for *dukkha* obscures an important and striking point — as does not recognising that *dukkha* often functions as an adjective in this context.

THE TRANSLATION OF UPĀDĀNA-KKHANDHA

This compound, found in the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta* and elsewhere, is generally translated as 'groups/aggregates of grasping'. This, however, conveys to the uninformed reader the wrong impression that the term refers to five *forms* of grasping. Of course, the *khandhas* are only the *objects* of grasping, *upādāna*, with the grasping itself being logically classifiable as part of the *khandha* of *sankhāras*. Hence we can translate 'groups/aggregates (as objects) of grasping': material form, feeling, perception, the constructing activities and consciousness that we grasp at as 'I'. But we should remember that *upādāna* also means fuel, that which is 'taken up' by fire, here the 'fire' of grasping and the other defilements. 'Bundles of grasping-fuel' captures both these connotations of '*upādāna*'.²⁸ Indeed, Richard Gombrich says: 'In my opinion it is clear that the term *khandha* too was part of the fire metaphor' (1996, 67). He sees this evidenced in the '*Bhāra Sutta*' (SN III 25–26), which talks of the five *upādāna-kkhandhas* as a 'burden'. 'Each is being metaphorically called a bundle of fuel'. The fuel-like nature of the *khandhas* is explicitly referred to at SN III 33–4 and MN I 140–41, which compare the *khandhas*, as 'not yours', to grass, sticks, branches and foliage being collected to be taken away and burnt, and SN II 84–85 says that arousing craving, which leads on to grasping, then becoming, then birth, then ageing-and-death etc. — 'this whole mass of *dukkha* (*dukkha-kkhandhassa*)' — is like a man casting various kinds of fuel on a burning fire. SN III 71 says each of the five *khandhas* is 'burning', and of course the 'Fire Sermon' (SN II 19–20) talks of the senses and related mental states as 'burning' with the fires of lust/attachment, hatred and delusion and with birth, ageing, death and sorrow etc.: i.e. with what originates *dukkha*, and what has the quality of being *dukkha*.

28. Cf. Ṭhānissaro 1993, ch.2

HOW TO BEST TRANSLATE KEY ASPECTS OF THE DHAMMA-CAKKA-PPAVATTANA SUTTA

So, how is one to best translate the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana Sutta* of the *Saccasamyutta*?²⁹ At its start, the Buddha introduces the two extremes, saying that both are ignoble, *anariya*, and then introduces the middle way (*majjhimā paṭipadā*) that he has awakened to, ‘It is just this noble (or spiritually ennobling) Eight-factored Path (*ayaṃ eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*)’. The Buddha then goes on to talk of four items:

*Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave dukkham ariya-saccaṃ. Jāti pi dukkhā...
 Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave dukkha-samudayaṃ ariya-saccaṃ. Yāyaṃ taṇhā...
 Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave dukkha-nirodham ariya-saccaṃ. Yo tassā
 yeva taṇhāya asesa-virāga-nirodho...
 Idaṃ kho pana bhikkhave dukkha-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā ariya-saccam.
 Ayam eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo...*

Each starts with the neuter word ‘this (*idaṃ*)’, which agrees with the neuter *-saccaṃ*, so the basic frame meaning, here is: ‘Now *this (Idaṃ kho pana)*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled (*ariya-*), is the true reality (*-saccaṃ*) which is...’, then the specification of this kind of reality; or ‘Now *this, bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the ... true reality’.

In translating the first line, there is the question of whether *dukkha* functions as an adjective qualifying *ariya-saccaṃ* or a noun in apposition with it: ‘the painful *ariya-sacca*’ or ‘the *ariya-sacca* which is pain’. In any case, it is notable that what follows is a list of things that are ‘painful’. Hence the adjectival sense of *dukkha* is more likely, or *dukkha* is indeed a noun, but with the meaning ‘the painful’, i.e. that which is painful, rather than ‘pain’. This is supported by the fact that *dukkha* is sometimes simply explained as the ‘five bundles of grasping fuel’ (SN III 158, SN V 425). In line with ‘painful’, moreover, *idaṃ dukkhan ti* would mean ‘This is painful’ — or ‘This is the painful’ — rather than ‘This is pain’. Correspondingly, *ayaṃ dukkha-samudayo ti* would then mean, ‘This is the origin of the painful’, i.e. the origin of those things found to be painful: birth, ageing, etc., as well as of the pain that they bring.

There is also the question of where the emphasis lies:

- a) ‘Now this, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the painful true reality’ has the emphasis on the particular kind of true reality, while
- b) ‘Now this, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the true reality which is the painful’ arguably has the emphasis on a true reality, that is then characterized in a certain way.

On balance, a) seems the most appropriate, as it aligns with the simpler ‘This is *dukkha*’.

The first line, and its continuation, can thus best be translated:

Now *this, bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the painful true reality:³⁰ birth is painful (*jāti pi dukkhā*), ageing is painful, illness is painful, death is painful; sorrow,

29. SN 56.11, SN V 420–24, as at Vin I 10–12.

30. From here on, on *dukkha*, as in the *Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta* (DN II 305), in answer to the question ‘And what, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the painful true reality? (*Katamaṃ ca bhikkhave dukkhaṃ ariya-saccaṃ*)’. Vin I 10 has *dukkhaṃ*, not *dukkham*.

lamentation, (physical³¹) pain, unhappiness and distress are painful (*soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassa-upāyāsā pi dukkhā*³²); union with what is disliked (*appiyehi*) is painful; separation from what is liked is painful; not to get what one wants is painful; in brief, the five bundles of grasping-fuel are painful (*pañcupādāna-kkhandhā dukkhā*).

Here, one might see ‘birth ... death’ as particularly related to the *khandha* of material form, ‘sorrow... distress’ as particularly related to that of feeling, and ‘union ... not to get what one wants’ as involving activities and perceptions. All involve consciousness. Of course passages on the twelve *nidānas* of Conditioned Arising typically end, ‘with birth as condition, ageing-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, unhappiness and distress come to be. Such is the origin of this whole *khandha* of *dukkha* (*dukkha-kkhandhassa samudayo*)’ (SN II 1). Here there is terminology as used in the *Dhamma-cakka-ppavātana* explanation of *dukkha*, and, while there is no reference to the *upādāna-kkhandhas*, they are clearly alluded to in the phrase ‘origin of this whole *khandha* of *dukkha*’: ‘this whole bundle of pain’, ‘this whole painful bundle’, or perhaps this ‘whole bundle of trouble’!

Before translating the following section, it should be noted that with *dukkha-samudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ* and *dukkha-nirodhaṃ ariya-saccaṃ*,³³ the masculine *samudayo* and *nirodho* are not found, as in the “This is *dukkha*” etc. formula, as one would expect if the meaning was ‘Now *this*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the true reality which is the *origination* of the painful’. Anālayo (2006, 150, cf. Norman 1982, 378) says on this:

Weller takes *dukkhasamudayaṃ* and *dukkhanirodhaṃ* to be a faulty transformation of an earlier Māgadhī nominative *dukkhasamudaye* and *dukkhanirodhe*, undertaken in analogy to the correct transformation of the neuter *dukkhe* to *dukkhaṃ* and without taking into account that a Māgadhī nominative in *-e* could also be a masculine form and thus should not be transformed into *-aṃ*, but into *-o* (Weller 1940, 77).

Norman, no doubt because he sees a problem here with *dukkha* etc. as *truths*, instead suggests that the expression *ariya-saccaṃ* was added later, an addition during which an *-m-* was inserted in order to avoid hiatus, producing *dukkhasamudaya-m-ariyasaccaṃ* and *dukkhanirodha-m-ariyasaccaṃ*, then with the compounds being split, so that the first ended *-samudayaṃ* (SN V 434; SN 56.24), then *-samudayaṃ* (Vin I 10, DN III 277) (Norman 1982, 385–386, 389).³⁴ This might be so, but Johansson (1981, 24) seems to have a better solution. He makes the compounds *bahubbhihi* ones, so as to function as adjectives, which agree with and qualify neuter *-saccaṃ*. He thus suggests ‘pain-originating’, and ‘pain-ceasing’ for *dukkha-samudayaṃ* and *dukkha-nirodhaṃ* here. Norman dismisses this (1982,

31. As explained at DN II 306.

32. This is omitted in some manuscripts, though included in the first *ariya-sacca* e.g. at DN II 305, MN I 185 and MN III 249.

33. Though *-samudaya* and *-nirodha* actually end with an *m*, not *ṃ* at this point, in the PTS edition.

34. In fact, in the PTS version of the *sacca-samyutta*, in instances where the *ariya-saccas* are not given in genitive form, we find *no nigahita (ṃ)*, but *m* at the end of either *dukkha* or *ariyasacca* in *suttas* 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 16, 19, 28, 29, 32, 27: *nigahita* at just the end of *ariyasacca* in 6, 11, 14, 16, 24, 29, 44, and just at the end of *dukkha* in 15. This may be due to scribal errors or to *sandhi* rules (Johansson 1981, 16; Warder 1974, 217). We see also, for example, *cittaṃ* becoming *cittam* only when followed by a vowel at SN V 410, l.3, 13, 15, 18.

378), as ‘we should expect the grammar and syntax of each of the NTs to be the same’, preferring to see the textual transmission as based on a misunderstanding. Nevertheless, the text as it is, and as construed by Johansson, gives a fair meaning that makes a specific point. One can say that while the *paṭipadā* (nominative, feminine) is a true reality whose nature is simply to be a *paṭipadā*, a way of conducting oneself, craving is craving, but also has the quality of being the origination of *dukkha*; and the cessation of craving is the cessation of craving, but also has the quality of being the cessation of *dukkha*. That is, the meaning and nature of craving and its cessation is not something that as such includes the idea of being the origination or cessation of *dukkha*. In line with the above discussion, moreover, *dukkha-samudayam* would mean ‘originating-of-the-painful’ rather than ‘pain-originating’.

Thus, we can translate the next section of the *sutta* thus:

Now *this*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the originating-of-the-painful true reality. It is this craving which leads to renewed existence (*taṇhā ponobhāvikā*), accompanied by delight and attachment (*nandī rāga-sahagatā*), seeking delight now here, now there (*tatra tatrābhinandini*); that is, craving for sense-pleasures (*kāma-taṇhā*), craving for existence (*bhava-taṇhā*), craving for (something’s) non-existence (*vibhava-taṇhā*).

Now *this*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the ceasing-of-the-painful true reality. It is the remainderless fading away and cessation (*asesa-virāga-nirodho*) of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it (*cāgo paṭinissago mutti anālayo*).

When we come to the passage on the fourth *ariya-sacca*, the *dukkha-nirodha-gāminī paṭipadā*, *paṭipadā* is definitely a nominative, feminine noun, not an adjective, unlike with the identifiers of the other three *ariya-saccas*. That the fourth *ariya-sacca* might be treated slightly differently from the others is also signalled by the fact that the *Sutta* talks of its content, the noble Eight-factored Path, before discussing the *ariya-saccas*. So the next section can be translated, using ‘the true reality which is...’ form:

Now *this*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the true reality which is the way leading to the cessation of the painful. It is just this noble Eight-factored Path (*ayaṃ eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo*), that is to say, right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right mental unification³⁵ (SN V 421–422).

It continues:

‘This, for the spiritually ennobled, is the painful true reality’ (*Idaṃ dukkham ariya-saccan ti*): in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light (*me bhikkhave pubbe ananussetesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi*).

Now on this (*Taṃ³⁶ paṇ’*), ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the painful true reality — is to be fully understood’ (*idaṃ dukkham ariyasaccaṃ pariññeyyan ti*): in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge,

35. *Samādhi*, generally translated as ‘concentration’, does not refer to the process of concentrating the mind, but to the state of being concentrated, unified, in *jhāna*.

36. Cf. Norman 1982, 384 on variations in this pronoun in Sanskrit versions of this passage.

wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

Now on this, ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the painful true reality — has been fully understood’ (*pariññātan ti*): in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

(SN V 422)³⁷

This is then repeated as regards knowledge of:

‘This, for the spiritually ennobled, is the originating-of-the-painful true reality’ (*Idaṃ dukkha-samudayaṃ ariya-saccan ti*).

‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the originating-of-the-painful true reality — is to be abandoned’ (*idaṃ dukkha-samudayaṃ ariyasaccam pahātabban ti*)

‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the originating-of-the-painful true reality — has been abandoned’ (*pahinan ti*).

Then of:

‘This, for the spiritually ennobled, is the ceasing-of-the-painful true reality’ (*Idaṃ dukkha-nirodham ariya-saccan ti*).

‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the ceasing-of-the-painful true reality — is to be personally experienced’ (*idaṃ dukkha-nirodham ariyasaccam sacchikātabban ti*).

‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the ceasing-of-the-painful true reality — has been personally experienced’ (*sacchikatan ti*).

Then of:

‘This, for the spiritually ennobled, is the true reality which is the way leading to the cessation of the painful’ (*Idaṃ dukkha-nirodha-gāmini paṭipadā ariyasaccan ti*).

‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the true reality which is the way leading to the cessation of the painful — is to be developed’ (*idaṃ dukkha-nirodha-gāmini paṭipadā ariyasaccam bhāvitabban ti*).

‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the true reality which is the way leading to the cessation of the painful — has been developed’ (*bhāvitān ti*) (SN V 422).

Having gained such twelvefold ‘purified knowledge and vision (*nāṇadassanaṃ suvisuddham*)’ regarding ‘these four true realities for the spiritually ennobled (*ariyasaccesu*)’, Gotama had perfect awakening.

OTHER FACTORS TO BE FULLY UNDERSTOOD, ABANDONED, PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED, OR DEVELOPED

We thus see that each of the *ariya-saccas* require an appropriate response, respectively to be:

- ‘to fully understood’ (*pariññeyya*)
- ‘to abandoned’ (*pahātabba*)
- ‘to personally experienced’ (*sacchikātabba*): from *sacchikaroti*, to see with one’s own eyes, to experience for oneself, as above at MN II 173 and AN II 115: ‘he personally experiences with the body the ultimate sacca (*kāyena c’eva parama-saccaṃ sacchikaroti*) and sees it by penetrating it with wis-

37. Cf. SN III 159–160: the five *upādāna-kkhandhas* are to be fully understood, and the full understanding of them is the destruction of lust/attachment, hatred and delusion, this being done by the *Arahat*.

dom (*paññāya ca taṃ ativijjha passati*). One is reminded of the epithet of the *Dhamma* as ‘*ehipassiko ... paccataṃ veditabbo viññūhi*’: ‘come-see-ish ... to be experienced individually by the discerning’.

- ‘to be developed’ (*bhāvitabba*): to be cultivated, practised. The term is related to *bhāvanā*, development, cultivation, practice. *Citta-bhāvanā*, or cultivation of the heart-mind, is a term for what is referred to in English as ‘meditation’.

The implication is that when one ‘understands (*pajānāti*) as it really is “This is *dukkha*”, etc., this is stream-entry, but when the above four actions have been fully carried out in respect of the four clearly identified *ariya-saccas*, Arahathship is reached.

The above four terms are also applied, in the *Dasuttara Sutta* (DN III 272–293), to a variety of other items, which are thus implied to be other ways of listing what are *dukkha*, its origin, its cessation (at least in part), and the way to this — the *ariya-saccas*:

- things ‘to be fully understood’ are: ‘stimulation that is with-taint and linked to grasping (*phasso sāsavo upādāniyo*)’; ‘sentience (*nāmañ*) and material form’; the three kinds of feeling; the four nutriments; the five bundles of grasping-fuel; the six internal sense-spheres; the seven stations of consciousness (types of rebirth); the eight worldly conditions – gain and loss, fame and shame, blame and praise, pleasure and pain; the nine abodes of beings; the five physical senses and their objects.
- things ‘to be abandoned’ are: ‘the “I am” conceit’; ‘ignorance and craving for existence’; the three kinds of craving; the four ‘floods’ — of sense-desire, existence, views and ignorance; the five hindrances; craving for the six sense-objects; the seven latent tendencies — to sense-desire, ill-will, views, wavering, conceit, attachment to existence, and ignorance; the eight wrongnesses – wrong view to wrong mental unification; the nine things rooted in craving, such as quarrelling over possessions; the ten wrongnesses- wrong view to wrong mental unification, then wrong knowledge and wrong freedom.
- things ‘to be personally experienced’ are: ‘unshakeable mental liberation’; ‘knowledge and freedom’; knowledge of past lives, the rebirths of other beings, and of destruction of one’s taints; the ‘fruits’ (*-phalas*) which are stream-entry, once-returner-hood, non-returner-hood and Arahathship; the five *dhamma*-groups – of moral virtue, mental unification, wisdom, freedom, and knowledge and vision of freedom; the six higher knowledges; the seven powers of one who has destroyed the taints; the eight liberations; the nine successive cessations – first *jhāna* up to the cessation of perception and feeling; the ten *dhammas* of the non-learner – right view to right *samādhi*, then right knowledge and right freedom. AN II 182 explains that the eight liberations (*vimokhas*) are to be personally experienced (*sacchikaraṇiyyā*) by one’s (mental) body (*kāya*); former lives are to be personally experienced by mindfulness (*sati*); the decease and rebirth of beings are to be personally experienced by (divine) sight (*cakkhu*), and the destruction of the taints is to be personally experienced

by wisdom (*paññā*). The last of these seems that which applies in the case of experiencing the full cessation of *dukkha*.

- things 'to be developed' are: 'mindfulness regarding the body, accompanied by pleasure (*sāta-*)'; calm (*samatha*) and insight (*vipassanā*); three *samādhis* — with both mental application and examination, with just examination, with neither; the four presencings of mindfulness; the five-fold right *samādhi* — (which involve) suffusion of joy, of happiness, of mind (*ceto-*), of light, and the reviewing sign (*nimitta*); recollection of the *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, *Saṅgha*, moral virtue, liberality, and *devas*; the seven factors of awakening; the noble Eight-factored Path; the nine factors of effort for perfect purity; the ten *kasiṇas* (e.g. coloured discs) as meditation objects.

FULL TRANSLATION OF THE *DHAMMA-CAKKA-PPAVATTANA SUTTA*

Before giving this, I still need to discuss the translation of some further crucial terms. *Dhamma* is a difficult word to translate, but 'Basic Pattern' captures something of what in many contexts it is about: it is the nature of things as a network of interdependent processes, teachings which point this out, practices based on an understanding of this, transformative experiences that come from this, and *Nibbāna* as beyond all conditioned patterns. The arising of the *Dhamma-cakkhu*, the *Dhamma*-eye or -vision, marks the attainment of the first breakthrough to becoming a true spiritually ennobled one. Often it means becoming a stream-enterer, but a person may also go straight to becoming a once-returner or non-returner (Anderson 2001, 138). It sees that whatever is *samudaya-dhamma* is *nirodha-dhamma*. Here, the *dhamma* of *dhamma-cakkhu* appears again. To show this link, I suggest translating:

there arose in the venerable Koṇḍañña the dust-free, stainless vision of the Basic Pattern: 'whatever is patterned with an origination, all that is patterned with a cessation'.

Translating *dhamma* in this way, here — though of course not in all other contexts — links it to the 'Basic Pattern' seen by the *Dhamma-cakkhu*, which in turn is portrayed as triggered by insight into the teachings on the *ariya-saccas*: seeing the pattern in *dukkha* having an origination, and thus having a cessation, too.

One can then take the following reference to the setting in motion of the *Dhamma-cakka* as the setting in motion of 'the Wheel (of Vision) of the Basic Pattern (of things)'. 'Wheel' is *cakka*, and vision or eye is *cakkhu*. Given their similarity, some pun may be implied here, especially as the *Dhamma-cakka* is only said to turn the moment that Koṇḍañña gains the *Dhamma-cakkhu*, vision of the *Dhamma*. It does not turn just from the Buddha teaching; it turns only when it is first understood by another person. Moreover, in Buddhist art, *Dhamma*-wheels sometimes resemble eyes. The *Dhamma*-wheel is set in motion at the time of the transmission of insight into *Dhamma* from the Buddha to another person, thus inaugurating the influence of *Dhamma* in the world. This of course parallels the passage in the *Cakkavatti-sihanāda Sutta*, where a divine wheel appears in the sky only when a *Cakkavatti* (Wheel-turning) ruler, who rules according to *Dhamma* — righteously and with compassion —, ascends the throne, and it follows him as he moves through the world, conquering without violence (DN III 61-2).

Translation

Thus have I heard. At one time the Blessed One was dwelling at Bārāṇasī in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There the Blessed One addressed the *bhikkhus* of the group of five thus:

Bhikkhus, these two extremes should not be followed by one gone forth (into the homeless life). What two? That which is this pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of the ordinary person (*puthujjanīko*), ignoble (*anariyo*), not connected to the goal; and that which is this pursuit of self-mortification, which is painful (*dukkho*), ignoble, not connected to the goal. *Bhikkhus*, without veering towards either of these two extremes, the One Attuned to Reality (*Tathāgato*) has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision (*cakkhu-*), which gives rise to knowledge (*ñāṇa-*), which leads to peace (*upasamāya*), to higher knowledge (*abhiññāya*), to full awakening (*sambodhāya*), to *Nibbāna*.

And what, *bhikkhus*, is that middle way awakened to by the One Attuned to Reality, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to higher knowledge, to full awakening, to *Nibbāna*? It is just this noble (*ariyo*) Eight-factored Path, that is to say, right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right mental unification. This, *bhikkhus*, is that middle way awakened to by the One Attuned to Reality, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to higher knowledge, to full awakening, to *Nibbāna*.

Now *this*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the painful true reality: birth is painful, ageing is painful, illness is painful, death is painful; sorrow, lamentation, (physical) pain, unhappiness and distress are painful; union with what is disliked is painful; separation from what is liked is painful; not to get what one wants is painful; in brief, the five bundles of grasping-fuel are painful.

Now *this*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the originating-of-the-painful true reality. It is this craving³⁸ which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and attachment, seeking delight now here, now there; that is, craving for sense-pleasures, craving for existence, craving for (something's) non-existence.

Now *this*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the ceasing-of-the-painful true reality. It is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, non-reliance on it.³⁹

Now *this*, *bhikkhus*, for the spiritually ennobled, is the true reality which is the way leading to the cessation of the painful. It is this noble Eight-factored

38. *Taṇhā*, which is not just any kind of 'desire', but demanding desire. *Chanda*, the 'desire to do', for example, can have wholesome forms which are part of the path.

39. That is: giving up the thirst for the 'next thing', and giving oneself fully to what is here, now (*cāga*); abandoning attachments, past, present or future (*paṭinissagga*); freedom that comes from contentment (*mutti*); not relying on craving so that the mind does not settle down in anything, sticking to it, roosting there (*anālaya*).

Path, that is to say, right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right mental unification.

‘This, for the spiritually ennobled, is the painful true reality’: in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

Now on this, ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the painful true reality — is to be fully understood (*pariññeyyan*)’: in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

Now on this, ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the painful true reality — has been fully understood’: in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

(Likewise,) in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge and light, with respect to: ‘This, for the spiritually ennobled, is the originating-of-the-painful true reality’, ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the originating-of-the-painful true reality — is to be abandoned (*pahātabban*)’, and ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the originating-of-the-painful true reality — has been abandoned’.

(Likewise,) in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge and light, with respect to: ‘This, for the spiritually ennobled, is the ceasing-of-the-painful true reality’, ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the ceasing-of-the-painful true reality — is to be personally experienced (*sacchikātabban*)’ and ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the ceasing-of-the-painful true reality — has been personally experienced’.

(Likewise,) in me, *bhikkhus*, in regard to things unheard before, there arose vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge and light, with respect to: ‘This, for the spiritually ennobled, is the way leading to the cessation of the painful’, ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the way leading to the cessation of the painful — is to be developed (*bhāvitabban*)’, and ‘This — for the spiritually ennobled, the way leading to the cessation of the painful — has been developed’.

So long, *bhikkhus*, as my knowledge and vision (*nāṇa-dassanam*) of these four true realities of the spiritually ennobled, as they really are (*yathābhūtam*) in their three phases (each) and twelve modes (altogether) was not thoroughly purified in this way, then so long, in the world with its *devas*, *māras* and *brahmās*, in this population with its renunciants and brahmins, its *devas* and humans, I did not claim to be fully awakened (*abhisambuddho*) to the unsurpassed perfect awakening (*sammā-sambodhim*). But when, *bhikkhus*, my knowledge and vision of these four true realities for the spiritually ennobled, as they really are, in their three phases and twelve modes, was thoroughly purified in this way, then, in the world with its *devas*, *māras* and *brahmās*, in this population with its renunciants and brahmins, its *devas* and humans, I claimed to be fully awakened to the unsurpassed perfect awakening. The knowledge and the vision arose in me: ‘Unshakeable is the liberation of my mind (*akuppā me ceto-vimutti*);

this is my last birth: now there is no more renewed existence (*punabbhavo-* rebirth)'.⁴⁰

This is what the Blessed One said. Elated, the *bhikkhus* of the group of five delighted in the Blessed One's statement. And while this explanation was being spoken, there arose in the venerable Koṇḍañña the dust-free, stainless vision of the Basic Pattern (*dhamma-cakkhum*): 'whatever is patterned with an origination, all that is patterned with a cessation'.

And when the Wheel (of Vision) of the Basic Pattern (of things) (*Dhammacakkam*) had been set in motion by the Blessed One, the earth-dwelling *devas* raised a cry: 'At Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the unsurpassed Wheel (of Vision) of the Basic Pattern (of things) has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped by any renunciant or brahmin or *māra* or *brahmā* or by anyone in the world'. Having heard the cry of the earth-dwelling *devas*, the *devas* of the Four Great Kings raised the same cry. Having heard it, the Thirty-three *devas* took it up, then the *Yāma devas*, then the Contented *devas*, then the *devas* Who Delight in Creating, then the *devas* Who Delight in the Creations of Others,⁴⁰ and then the *devas* of the *brahmā* group.

Thus at that moment, at that instant, at that second, the cry spread as far as the *brahmā* world, and this ten thousandfold world system shook, quaked, and trembled, and an immeasurable glorious radiance appeared in the world, surpassing the divine majesty of the *devas*.

Then the Blessed One uttered this inspiring utterance: 'the honourable Koṇḍañña has indeed understood (*aññāsi*)! The honourable Koṇḍañña has indeed understood! In this way, the venerable Koṇḍañña acquired the name Aññata (Who Has Understood)-Koṇḍañña.

CONCLUSION

So, overall, my argument is that the *ariya-saccas* are not 'noble truths' but 'true realities for the spiritually ennobled', and these are *dukkha*, etc., not the teachings which identify what these key aspects of reality are, such as "'This is *dukkha*'" or "'birth is *dukkha*'". These are not to be called 'noble truths', either, but are teachings about the true realities for the spiritually ennobled; though of course, for Buddhism, these teachings are indeed true ones. Moreover, '*dukkha*' has a basic meaning of 'pain' as a noun and 'painful' as an adjective, and then by extension the noun also means 'the painful', that which is painful. As an *ariya-sacca*, it is 'the painful' in a broad sense: painful body-related feeling — *dukkha* in the most straightforward sense; painful mental feeling; and also many things which are neither of these — they are not any form of 'suffering', but part of 'the painful'. They are this in that they engender physical or mental pain, because they are or become otherwise from how one craves and grasps at them being, or because they are conditioned, limited, imperfect — not the deathless unconditioned.

40. The earth-dwelling *devas* and the six following types of *devas* are, in ascending order, the types of *devas* of the sense-desire realm. The *devas* of the *brahmā* group (*brahma-kāyikā*) are the *devas* of the realm of elemental form, the lowest of which are the *devas* of (Great) Brahmā's retinue (*brahma-pārisajjā*); beings attain rebirth at this level due to attaining meditative *jhāna*.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | | | |
|------|--|--------|---|
| AKB | <i>Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣyam</i> | MN | <i>Majjhima-nikāya</i> |
| AN | <i>Aṅguttara-nikāya</i> | PED | <i>Pali-English Dictionary</i> |
| BU | <i>Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad</i> | Patis | <i>Paṭisambhidāmagga</i> |
| CU | <i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i> | Sn | <i>Sutta-nipāta</i> |
| DN | <i>Dīgha-nikāya</i> | SN | <i>Samyutta-nikāya</i> |
| DN-a | <i>Dīgha-nikāya</i> commentary: <i>Sumaṅgalavilāsini</i> | T | Taishō edition of the Chinese Buddhist Canon |
| It-a | <i>Itivuttaka</i> commentary: <i>Paramatthadīpanī II</i> | Thag | <i>Theragāthā</i> |
| Kv | <i>Kathāvatthu</i> | Vibh | <i>Vibhaṅga</i> |
| Kv-a | <i>Kathāvatthu</i> commentary: <i>Kathāvatthupparakaṇa-aṭṭhakathā</i> | Vibh-a | <i>Vibhaṅga</i> commentary: <i>Sammohavinodanī</i> |
| | | Vin | <i>Vinaya</i> |
| | | Vism | <i>Visuddhimagga</i> |

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