

A major concept presented here is that of faith (*pasāda*). The verbal form of this word is *pasīdati*, which means not only “to have faith”, but also “to be clear and calm; to become of peaceful heart; to be purified, reconciled or pleased”.¹⁰⁰ So, *pasāda* appears to signify “calmed faith”. As mentioned in section (4) The Five Faculties, the *faith-faculty* is equated with the *four limbs of stream-entry* or the *four definite faiths* of the present section. The *faith-faculty* is shown to be essentially governed and stabilised by the *wisdom-faculty*, connected with individually full understanding of the *four noble truths*.¹⁰¹ Thus, “faith” in these discourses clearly refers to something very different from fanatical or blind faith.

It is found that where the *four limbs of stream entry* or the *four definite faiths* are expounded, the Buddha is mainly teaching bhiksus, not lay-people. Thus, it is likely that this teaching was an advanced one, primarily for bhiksus, though lay-people are also sometimes included among the listeners.

(11) The four noble truths

The *Sacca Saṃyutta* of SN and its counterpart *Di Xiangying* of SA deal mainly with the *four noble truths* (*cattāri ariyasaccāni* 四聖諦).¹⁰²

(a) The two versions agree completely in listing the four *truths* as follows:

1. The noble truth of suffering
(*dukkham ariyasaccaṃ* 苦聖諦)
2. The noble truth of the arising of suffering
(*dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccaṃ* 苦集聖諦)
3. The noble truth of the cessation of suffering
(*dukkhanirodham ariyasaccaṃ* 苦滅聖諦)
4. The noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering
(*dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ* 苦滅道跡聖諦)

Explanations of the *four noble truths* are found only in the SN version of the *saṃyutta*, for example in SN 56. 11 but not in its counterpart SA 379.¹⁰³ The four are explained as follows:

100 PED, p. 447.

101 See pp. 220-221, above.

102 Their locations relative to other *saṃyuktas* are different in the two collections; see Chapter 1, p. 19 and Appendix 1, pp. 244, 251.

1. Suffering: birth, decay, sickness, death, grief, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair; being conjoined with things one dislikes (*appiyehi sampayogo*), being separated from things one likes (*piyehi vippayogo*); not getting what one wants (*yam p'icchaṃ na labhati*); in short, the *five aggregates of attachment* (*pañcupādānakkhandhā*).¹⁰⁴

2. The arising of suffering: Craving (*taṇhā*) that leads to re-becoming (*ponobhavika*), along with delight and desire (*nandī-rāga*), finding pleasure (*abhinandinī*) here and there, namely: craving for sensuality (*kāmatāṇhā*), becoming (*bhavataṇhā*), and non-becoming (*vibhavataṇhā*).¹⁰⁵

3. The cessation of suffering: The remainder-less fading away and cessation (*asesa-virāga-nirodho*) of this craving, giving up (*cāgo*), renunciation (*paṭinissaggo*), liberation (*mutti*), non-attachment (*anālayo*).¹⁰⁶

4. The way leading to the cessation of suffering: The *noble eightfold way*.¹⁰⁷

Two other SN discourses, both lacking SA counterparts, give the same explanations for the second to fourth Truths, but differ regarding the first: SN 56. 13 says only that suffering is the *five aggregates of attachment*, while SN 56. 14 says it is the *six internal sense spheres* (*cha ajjhattikāni āyatanāni*).¹⁰⁸

Although these explanations of the *four noble truths* are not found in the SA version of the *saṃyukta*, content similar to that given in SN 56. 11, above, regarding suffering, its arising, its ceasing, and the way, is found elsewhere in SA, as seen in previous chapters.

(b) In his well-known first discourse the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, SN 56. 11 and its counterpart SA 379, the Buddha teaches the *four noble truths* in three aspects. The two versions agree in content but differ in sequence, as shown in the table below:

103 SN 56. 11 and 12 are counterparts of SA 379: T 2, pp. 103c-104a (CSA ii, pp. 106-109).

104 SN v, p. 421.

105 SN v, pp. 421, 425-426. On *taṇhā*, see also Chapter 6, pp. 165-167.

106 SN v, pp. 421, 425-426.

107 SN v, pp. 421, 425-426.

108 SN v, pp. 425-426.

SN	SA
- First truth	- First truth
- First truth is to be known (pariññeyya)	- Second truth
- First truth has been known (pariññāta)	- Third truth
- Second truth	- Fourth truth
- Second truth is to be eliminated (pahātabba)	- First truth is to be known (當知)
- Second truth has been eliminated (pahīna)	- Second truth is to be eliminated (當斷)
- Third truth	- Third truth is to be realised (當作證)
- Third truth is to be realised (sacchikātabba)	- Fourth truth is to be cultivated (當修)
- Third truth has been realised (sacchikata)	- First truth has been known (已知)
- Fourth truth	- Second truth has been eliminated (已斷)
- Fourth truth is to be cultivated (bhāvetabba)	- Third truth has been realised (已作證)
- Fourth truth has been cultivated (bhāvita)	- Fourth truth has been cultivated (已修)

Thus, the SN shows each truth in three ways, whereas the SA shows the four truths in each way. This way of teaching the *four noble truths* is called *three-turned, twelvefold* (tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ 三轉十二行).¹⁰⁹

(c) The knowing of the *four noble truths*, as part of the practice is made clearer in SN 56. 25 and its counterpart SA 384. The SN version records the Buddha as saying:¹¹⁰

Bhikṣus, I declare that *extinction of the influxes* (āsavānaṃ khayam) is in one who knows (jānato), who sees (passato), not in one who does not know, who does not see.

109 SN v, p. 422. T 2, pp. 103c-104a (CSA ii, pp. 106-107).

110 SN v, p. 434.

Bhiksus, in one who knows, who sees “this is suffering, this is the arising of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering,” there is *extinction of the influxes*.

The corresponding SA version states:¹¹¹

If by a bhikṣu the noble truth of suffering has been known, has been understood; the noble truth of the arising of suffering has been known, has been eliminated; the noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been known, has been attained; the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering has been known, has been cultivated, then such a bhikṣu is called arhant, he has extinguished the *influxes* ...

The two versions differ in expression, but they say in common that knowing (wisdom) or seeing (insight) refers to knowing or seeing the *four noble truths*; and knowing or seeing is essential in the practice, leading the mind to liberation from the *influxes*.

For knowing or seeing the *four noble truths*, both traditions encourage the practice of concentrative meditation. In SN 56. 1 the Buddha says:¹¹²

Bhiksus, practise (bhāvētha) *concentration* (samādhiṃ). The bhikṣu who is concentrated (samāhito) knows (pañānāti) [things] as they really are (yathābhūtam). And what does he know as they really are?

In this connection, he knows as it really is: this is suffering, this is the arising of suffering, this is the ceasing of suffering, this is the way leading to the ceasing of suffering.

Similarly, in SN 56. 2 he says “Bhiksus, apply yourselves to solitary meditation (paṭisallāne yogam āpajjatha).¹¹³ The corresponding SA 429 and 428 have almost the same content.¹¹⁴ Thus, both versions indicate that practising concentrative meditation is a means to knowing or seeing the *four noble truths*.

111 SA 384: T 2, p. 104c (CSA ii, pp. 111-112).

112 SN v, p. 414.

113 SN v, p. 414.

114 T 2, p. 112a-b (CSA ii, pp. 144-145).

(d) Regarding how to fully know the *four noble truths*, there is a disagreement between the two versions. SN 56. 30 (no SA counterpart) says that whoever sees (passati) one of the *four noble truths* also sees the rest of them.¹¹⁵ By contrast, SA 435-437 say that one must first fully know the *noble truth of suffering*, and then come to fully know the rest of them in order; they also say that one must come to fully know the *four noble truths* in sequence, step by step.¹¹⁶ SA 435 has no SN counterpart. The counterpart of SA 436-437 is SN 56. 44, but it states only that by fully knowing the *four noble truths*, one will make a complete end of suffering.¹¹⁷ Thus, the SN tradition indicates here that to know one of the *four noble truths* is to know the rest of them as well, whereas the SA tradition indicates that the *four* must be known in sequence.

(e) There are discourses in both versions of the saṃyukta that mention the teaching of *the middle way* (majjhimā paṭipadā)¹¹⁸ in connection with the *four noble truths*, namely SN 56. 11 (but not its counterpart SA 379), and SN 56. 8 = SA 408.¹¹⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the main teachings contained in the Māha-Vagga of SN and its counterpart Dao-pin Song (道品誦) of SA. It has covered seven saṃyuktas corresponding to the bodhipakkhiyā dhammā, followed by a further four saṃyuktas on related topics. The comparison has revealed that, while most of the main teachings are shared, there do exist some unshared elements, which may reflect sectarian differences. The principal unshared elements between the two versions are as follows.

- The terms “great vehicle” (mahāyāna) and “bodhicitta” are found in SA 769 and SA 659 respectively, but not in their SN counterparts, SN 45. 4 and SN 48. 50 – see sections (1) and (4).

- In references to the *seven factors of enlightenment* some disagreements exist, though these possibly do not represent any significant sectarian division – see section (2).

115 SN v, pp. 436-437.

116 T 2, pp. 112c-113b (CSA ii, pp. 148-150).

117 SN v, pp. 452-453.

118 SN v, p. 421.

119 SN v, pp. 421, 418; T 2, p. 109a-b (CSA ii, p. 132); SA 379, the counterpart of SN 56. 11-12, makes no mention of *the middle way* (T 2, pp. 103c-104a; CSA ii, p. 107).

• In respect of teachings on the *four noble truths*, the two versions differ in their presentation of them as *three-turned, twelvefold* (tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ 三轉 十二行). Also, SN says that to know one of the *four truths* is likewise to know the rest of them, while SA says that the *four* must be known in order – see section (11).