

## Pathway to Buddhism

An introduction to essential Buddhist teachings and thought

Sunday, July 18<sup>th</sup> at Kunzang Palchen Ling & Livestreamed



### *Chokhor Duchen, First Turning of the Dharma Wheel*

**Chökhör Düchen** (Tib. ཚོས་འཁོར་དུས་ཚེན།) the 'Festival of Turning the Wheel of Dharma' - one of the [four major Buddhist holidays](#) occurs on the fourth day of the sixth Tibetan lunar month. For seven weeks after his [enlightenment](#), [Buddha](#) did not teach. Finally, encouraged by [Brahma](#), he turned the Wheel of [Dharma](#) for the first time at Deer Park in [Sarnath](#) near Varanasi (located in northern India), by teaching the '[Four Noble Truths](#)'.

### **The Four Noble Truths**

Tib. འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ་བཞི།

In the Four Noble Truths, Buddha spoke about the importance of understanding:

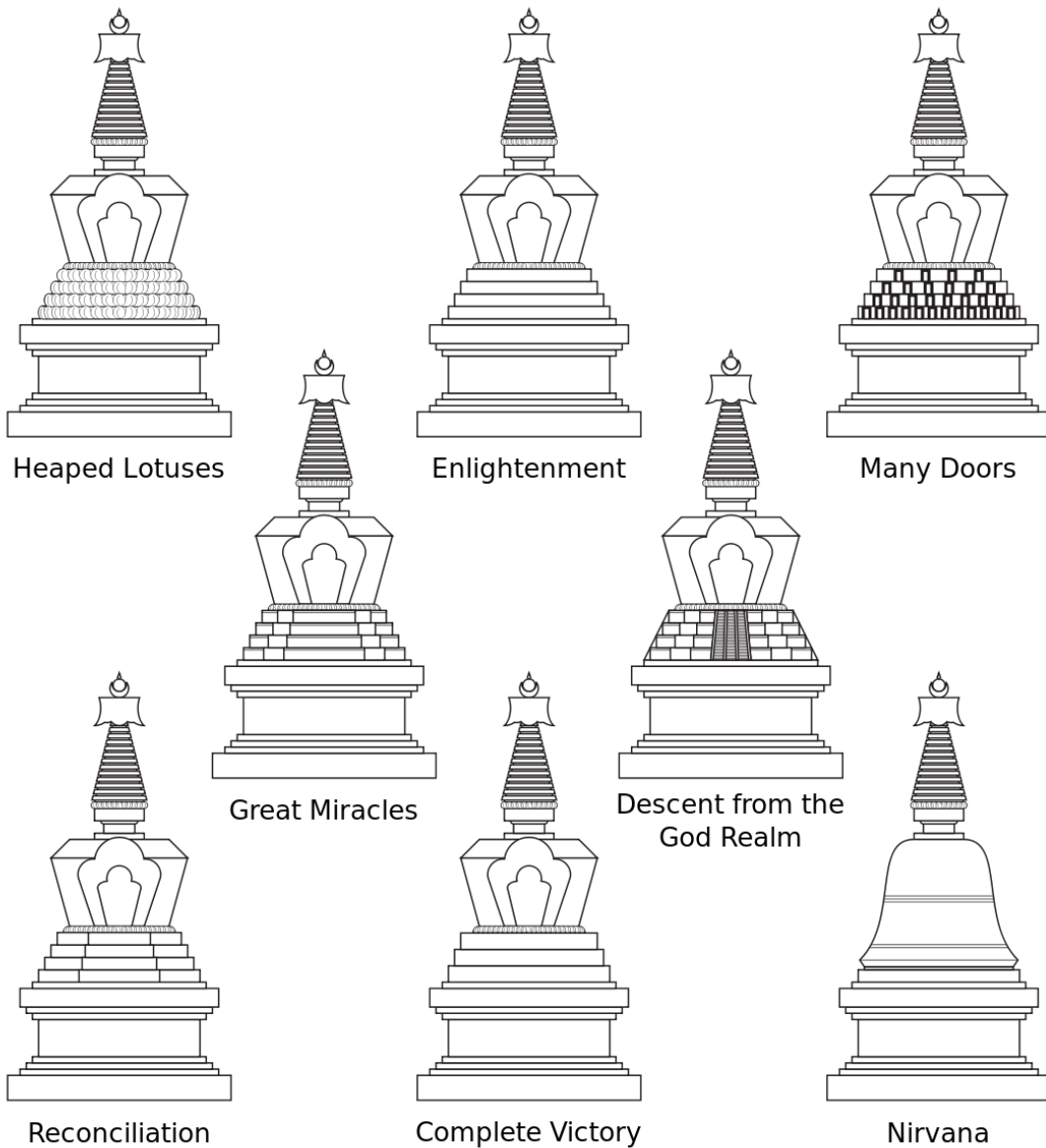
1. Suffering
2. The cause of suffering
3. The cessation of suffering
4. The path to achieve liberation: the practice of Dharma.

See: [https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Four\\_Noble\\_Truths](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Four_Noble_Truths)

<https://www.universalcompassion.org/event/chokhor-duchen-2021-first-turning-of-the-dharma-wheel/>

[https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Three\\_types\\_of\\_suffering](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Three_types_of_suffering)

[http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Five\\_skandhas](http://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Five_skandhas)



### #3 The Stupa of Turning the Wheel of Dharma / Many Doors

Tib. ཚོས་མཁོར་མཚོན་རྟེན།

In the [Deer Park](#) at [Sarnath](#), the Buddha met with the five ascetics who earlier had been his meditation companions on the banks of the Nairanjara River. They became his first disciples and received his first teachings.

This stupa represents the point at which the Buddha began to 'turn the wheel of the [Dharma](#)', and teach the path to enlightenment to others. Also known as the Stupa of Many Doors, the steps are adorned with doorways symbolizing the opening of the doors of the Dharma. The series of doors on each side of the steps represents the first teachings the Buddha gave: the [Four Noble Truths](#), the Six [Pāramitās](#), the [Noble Eightfold Path](#) and the [Twelve Nidānas](#).<sup>[45]</sup>

See: [https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=The\\_eight\\_stupas](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=The_eight_stupas)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stupa#Tibetan\\_stupas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stupa#Tibetan_stupas)

## The Noble Eightfold Path

Tib. འཕགས་པའི་ལམ་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་པ།

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

“Right” here means righteous or virtuous, which means having the quality of being morally right or justifiable.

Further descriptions:

1. Right View: our actions have consequences, death is not the end, and our actions and beliefs have consequences after death. The Buddha followed and taught a successful path out of this world and [the other world](#) (heaven and underworld/hell).<sup>[26][27][28][29][note 3]</sup> Later on, right view came to explicitly include [karma](#) and [rebirth](#), and the importance of the [Four Noble Truths](#), when "insight" became central to Buddhist [soteriology](#).<sup>[30][31]</sup>
2. Right Intention: the giving up of home and adopting the life of a religious mendicant in order to follow the path; this concept aims at peaceful renunciation, into an environment of non-sensuality, non-ill-will (to loving kindness), away from cruelty (to compassion).<sup>[32]</sup> Such an environment aids contemplation of [impermanence](#), [suffering](#), and [non-Self](#).<sup>[32]</sup>
3. Right Speech: no lying, no rude speech, no telling one person what another says about him to cause discord or harm their relationship.<sup>[25]</sup>
4. Right Action: no killing or injuring, no taking what is not given, no sexual acts, no material desires.<sup>[25]</sup>
5. Right Livelihood: beg to feed, only possessing what is essential to sustain life;<sup>[25]</sup>
6. Right Effort: preventing the arising of [unwholesome states](#), and generating [wholesome states](#), the [bojjhagā](#) (seven factors of awakening). This includes *indriya-samvara*, "guarding the sense-doors", restraint of the sense faculties.<sup>[33][32]</sup>
7. Right Mindfulness ([sati](#); [Satipatthana](#); [Sampajañña](#)): "retention", being mindful of the *dhammas* ("teachings", "elements") that are beneficial to the Buddhist path.<sup>[34][note 4]</sup> In the [vipassana movement](#), *sati* is interpreted as "bare attention": never be absent minded,

being conscious of what one is doing; this encourages the awareness of the impermanence of body, feeling and mind, as well as to experience the five aggregates (*skandhas*), the [five hindrances](#), the four True Realities and seven factors of awakening.<sup>[32]</sup>

8. Right Concentration *samadhi* (*Passaddhi*; *Ekaggata*; *sampasadana*): practicing four stages of *dhyāna* ("meditation"), which includes *samadhi* proper in the second stage, and reinforces the development of the *bojjhagā*, culminating into *upekkha* (equanimity) and mindfulness.<sup>[36]</sup> In the Theravada tradition and the Vipassana movement, this is interpreted as *ekaggata*, concentration or one-pointedness of the mind, and supplemented with *Vipassana*-meditation, which aims at insight.

See: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noble\\_Eightfold\\_Path](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noble_Eightfold_Path)  
<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eightfold-Path>

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## Seated Meditation



Find a quiet and uplifted place where you can do your meditation practice. When starting out, see if you can allow 5 minutes for the practice and increase the length as you progress.

1. Take your seat. Sit cross-legged on a meditation cushion or on a straight-backed chair with your feet flat on the floor, without leaning against the back of the chair.
2. Find your sitting posture. Place your hands palms-down on your thighs and sit in an upright posture with a straight back—relaxed yet dignified. With your eyes open, let your gaze rest comfortably as you look slightly downward about six feet in front of you.

3. Notice and follow your breath. Place your attention lightly on your out-breath, while remaining aware of your environment. Be with each breath as the air goes out through your mouth and nostrils and dissolves into the space around you.

At the end of each out-breath, simply rest until the next in-breath naturally begins. For a more focused meditation, you can follow both the out-breaths and in-breaths.

4. Note the thoughts and feelings that arise. Whenever you notice that a thought, feeling, or perception has taken your attention away from the breath, just say to yourself, “thinking,” and return to following the breath. No need to judge yourself when this happens; just gently note it and attend to your breath and posture.

5. End your session. Dedicate the merit of this practice to the enlightenment of all beings. See if you can consciously allow your awareness to remain present through the rest of your day.

See: <https://www.lionsroar.com/category/how-to/>  
[http://www.kurukulla.org/resources/Med101/Med101-7\\_Point\\_Posture.pdf](http://www.kurukulla.org/resources/Med101/Med101-7_Point_Posture.pdf)  
[https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Seven-point\\_posture\\_of\\_Vairochana](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Seven-point_posture_of_Vairochana)  
<https://khenposodargye.org/meditations/seven-point-meditation-posture-vairochana/>

## The Six Perfections

Tib. བ་ཚོལ་རྒྱ་ཕྱིན་པ་དུག་

The six [paramitas](#) or 'transcendent perfections' comprise the training of a [bodhisattva](#), who is enacting bodhicitta / [bodhichitta in action](#).

1. [Generosity](#): to give and cultivate the attitude of generosity/non-attachment
2. [Discipline](#): to refraining from harm and acting morally.
3. [Patience](#): to be tolerant, accepting, have forbearance and endurance.
4. [Diligence](#): to strive for virtue with effort and vigor.
5. [Meditative concentration](#): not to be distracted in meditation or contemplation.
6. [Wisdom](#): to cultivate the correct understanding of phenomena, all [knowable things](#).

The first five paramitas correspond to the accumulation of [merit](#), and the sixth to the accumulation of **wisdom**.

See: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P%C4%81ramit%C4%81>  
[https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Six\\_paramitas](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Six_paramitas)  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zvw9dxs/revision/4>  
<https://maitripa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/The-Perfection-of-Wisdom-in-8000-verses.pdf>

Excerpts from the Diamond Sutra:

I will read a little from The Diamond Sutra, from the end of chapter one:

**THIRTY-ONE:** “And how so? Subhuti, if someone should claim that the Tathagata speaks of a view of a self, or that the Tathagata speaks of a view of a being, a view of a life, or a view of a soul, Subhuti, would such a claim be true?”

Subhuti said, “No, indeed, Bhagavan. No, indeed, Sugata. Such a claim would not be true. And why not? Bhagavan, when the Tathagata speaks of a view of a self, the Tathagata speaks of it as no view. Thus is it called a ‘view of a self.’”

The Buddha said, “Indeed, Subhuti, so it is. Those who set forth on the bodhisattva path know, see, and believe all dharmas but know, see, and believe them without being attached to the perception of a dharma. And why not? The perception of a dharma, Subhuti, the ‘perception of a dharma’ is said by the Tathagata to be no perception. Thus is it called the ‘perception of a dharma.’

**THIRTY-TWO:** “Furthermore, Subhuti, if a fearless bodhisattva filled measureless, infinite worlds with the seven jewels and gave them as an offering to the tathagatas, the arhans, the fully-enlightened ones, and a noble son or daughter grasped but a single four-line gatha of this teaching on the perfection of wisdom and memorized, discussed, recited, mastered, and explained it in detail to others, the body of merit produced by that noble son or daughter as a result would be immeasurably, infinitely greater. And how should they explain it? By not explaining. Thus is it called ‘explaining.’

*“As a lamp, a cataract, a star in space  
an illusion, a dewdrop, a bubble  
a dream, a cloud, a flash of lightning  
view all created things like this.”*

All this was spoken by the Buddha to the joy of the elder Subhuti, the monks and nuns, the laymen and laywomen, the bodhisattvas, the devas, humans, asuras and gandharvas of the world all of whom were greatly pleased with what the Buddha said.

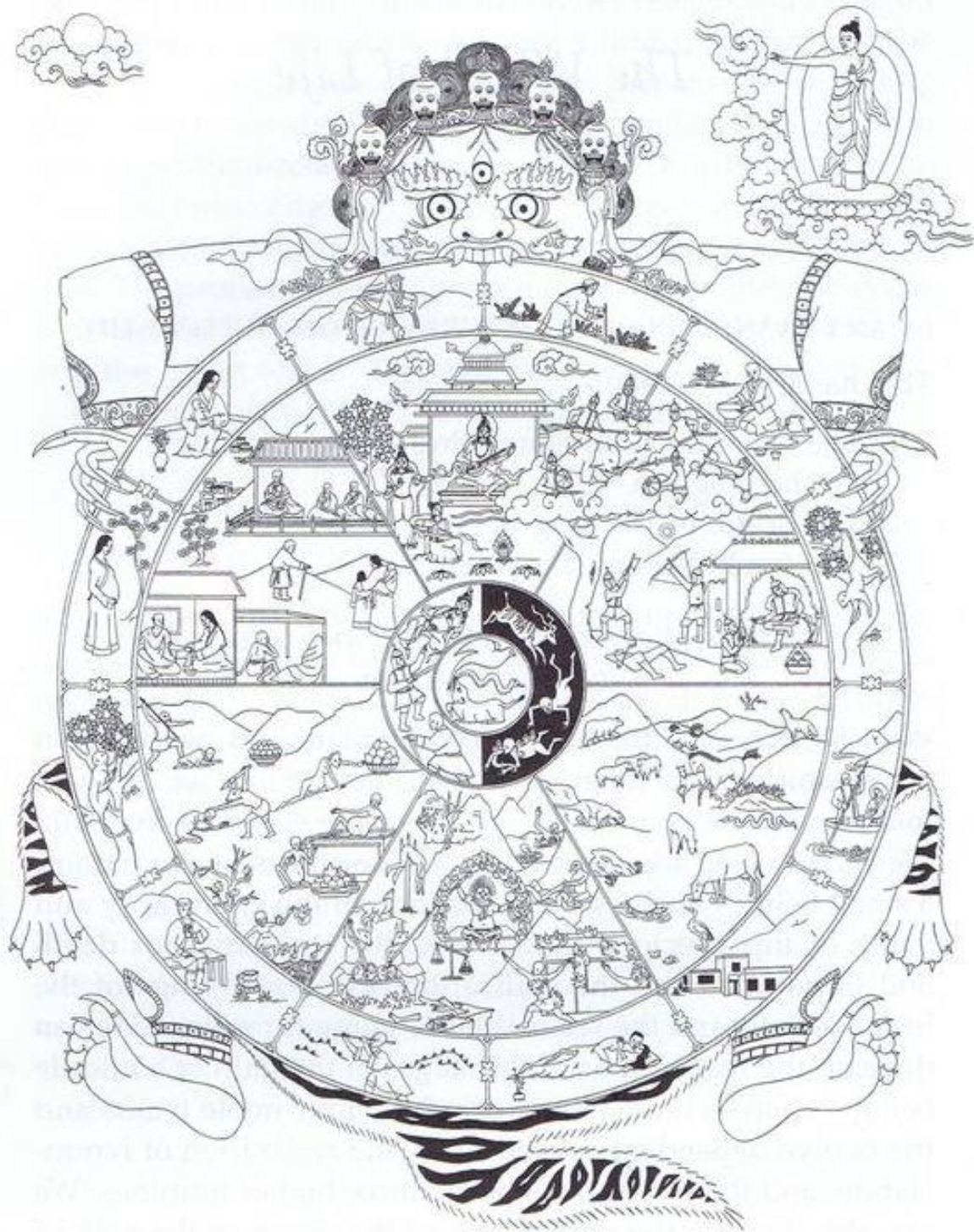
(Trans. by Red Pine, pgs.36-37)

See: <https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/Diamond-Sutra.pdf>  
[http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/prajparagen2.pdf](http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/prajparagen2.pdf)  
<https://www.lifelonglearningcollaborative.org/silkroads/articles/diamond-sutra-translation.pdf>

## Twelve links of dependent origination

Tib. རྟོན་འབྲེལ་ཡན་ལག་བཅུ་གཉིས།

via The Wheel of Life



See: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhavacakra>

The circles from the inside out:

1. The pig, rooster and snake in the hub of the wheel represent the [three poisons](#) of ignorance, attachment and aversion.
2. The second layer represents [karma](#).
3. The third layer represents the [six realms of samsara](#).
4. The fourth layer represents the [twelve links of dependent origination](#).

The twelve causal links, paired with their corresponding symbols, are:

1. Ignorance ([Avidyā](#)) – *a blind person walking*. Fundamental ignorance of the [truths](#) and the delusion of mistakenly perceiving the [skandhas](#) as a self.
2. Formation ([Samskāra](#)) – *a potter shaping a vessel*. As long as there is ignorance there is the formation of fabrications and choices, and thereby [karma](#): positive, negative. This forms the rebirths in the various realms.
3. Consciousness ([Viññāna](#)) – *a monkey grasping at fruit*. Formations cause the consciousness of the next existence. There is the impelling consciousness and the consciousness of the impelled result. These two act a link between two lives.
4. Name and Form ([Nāmarūpa](#)) – *two men in a boat*. By the power of consciousness one is linked to a womb, and there the body develops: the form and the four ‘name’ skandhas of sensation, perception, formation and consciousness.
5. Six Senses ([Sadāyatana](#)) – *a dwelling with six windows*. From there the six senses: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind form.
6. Contact ([Sparśa](#)) – *lovers entwined*. The coming together of objects, sense faculty and consciousness is contact.
7. Sensation ([Vedanā](#)) – *an arrow to the eye*. From contact arises sensation: pleasurable, painful and neutral.
8. Craving ([Trsna](#)) – *a drinker receiving drink*. There then develops a desire not to be separated from pleasurable sensations and to be free from painful sensations.
9. Grasping ([Upādāna](#)) – *a monkey picking fruit*. Craving turns to grasping and actively striving never to be separated from what is pleasurable and to avoid what is painful.
10. Becoming ([Bhava](#)) – *a pregnant woman*. Through this grasping one acts with body, speech and mind, and creates the [karma](#) that determines one’s next existence.
11. Rebirth ([Jāti](#)) – *woman giving birth*. Through the power of this becoming, one is reborn in a particular birthplace whenever the necessary conditions are assembled.
12. Old age and death ([Jarāmarana](#)) – *corpse being carried*. Following rebirth there is a continual process of aging as the aggregates change and develop; and eventually there is death when the aggregates finally cease.

See: [https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Twelve\\_links\\_of\\_dependent\\_origination](https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Twelve_links_of_dependent_origination)