

THE FOUR TRUTHS.

There was once an old monk who was walking through a forest with a little scholar by his side. The old man suddenly stopped and pointed to four plants close at hand. The first was just beginning to peep above the ground; the second had rooted itself pretty well into the earth; the third was a small shrub; whilst the fourth and last was a full sized tree.

Then the old monk said to his young companion :

"Pull up the first."

The boy easily pulled it up with his fingers.

"Now pull up the second."

The youth obeyed but not so easily.

"And the third."

But the boy had to put forth all his strength and use both arms before he succeeded in uprooting it.

"And now," said the master, "try your hand upon the fourth."

But lo! the trunk of the tall tree (grasped in the arms of the youth) scarcely shook its leaves; and the little fellow found it impossible to tear its roots from the earth.

Then the wise old monk explained to his scholar the meaning of the four trials.

"This, my son, is just what happens with our passions. When they are young and weak, one may, by a little watchfulness over self, and the help of a little self denial, easily tear them up; but if we let them cast their roots deep down into our souls, then no human power can uproot them; the Almighty hand of the Creator alone can pluck them out."

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