

Dhammacakka-ppavattana-sutta

SETTING IN MOTION THE WHEEL OF THE DHAMMA

Samyutta Nikaya LVI, 11

Based upon a translation by Bhikkhu Nanamoli

Thus I have heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana. There he addressed the group of five bhikkhus.

Bhikkhus, there are two extremes which should not be cultivated by the wise. What are these two extremes? There is indulgence in pleasure in the objects of sensual desire, which is inferior, low, vulgar, ignoble, and leads to no good; and there is indulgence in self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble and leads to no good.

The middle way discovered by the Tathagata avoids both these extremes; it gives vision, it gives knowledge, and it leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to understanding, to Nibbana. And what is that middle way? It is simply the noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right intention; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the middle way discovered by the Tathagata, which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to understanding, to Nibbana.

What is the Noble Truth of Suffering? Birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering; association with the disliked is suffering, dissociation from the loved is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering—in short the five aggregates affected by clinging are suffering.

What is the Noble Truth of the origin of suffering? It is the craving that produces renewal of being accompanied by relish and lust, and relishing this and that; in other words, craving for sensual desires, craving for being, and craving for non-being.

What is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering? It is remainderless fading and ceasing, giving up, relinquishing, letting go and rejecting, of that same craving.

What is the Noble Truth of the way leading to cessation of suffering? It is simply the noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right aspiration; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

There is this Noble Truth of Suffering : such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

This Noble Truth must be penetrated by fully understanding suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

This Noble truth has been penetrated by fully understanding suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

There is this Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before .

This Noble Truth must be penetrated by abandoning the origin of suffering : such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

This Noble Truth has been penetrated by abandoning the origin of suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

There is this Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering : such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

This Noble Truth must be penetrated by realising the cessation of suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

This Noble Truth has been penetrated by realising the cessation of suffering: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

There is this Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering : such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

This Noble Truth must be penetrated by cultivating the Way: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

This Noble truth has been penetrated by cultivating the Path: such was the vision, insight, wisdom, knowing and light, that arose in me about things not heard before.

As long as my knowing and seeing how things are was not quite purified in these twelve aspects, in these three phases of each of the four noble truths, I did not claim in the world with its gods, its Maras and divine beings, in this generation with its monks and brahmans, with its princes and men, to have discovered the full and supreme awakening. But as soon as my knowing and seeing how things are, was quite purified in these twelve aspects, in these three phases of each of the four noble truths, then I claimed in the world with its gods, its Maras and divine beings, in this generation with its monks and brahmans, its princes and men to have discovered the full and supreme awakening. Knowing and seeing arose in me thus:

“My heart’s deliverance is unassailable. This is the last birth. Now there is no renewal of being”.

That is what the Blessed One said. The group of five bhikkhus were delighted, and they approved of his words.

Now during this discourse, there arose in the venerable Kondanna the perfect, immaculate realisation of the Truth: “Whatever is subject to arising is subject to ceasing.”

When the Wheel of Truth had thus been set rolling by the Blessed One the earthgods raised the cry: “At Benares, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the matchless Wheel of Truth has been set rolling by the Blessed One, not to be stopped by monk or divine being or god or death-angel or high divinity or anyone in the world.”

On hearing the earth-gods’ cry, all of the gods in turn in the six paradises of the sensual sphere took up the cry until it reached beyond the Retinue of High Divinity in the sphere of pure form. And so indeed in that hour, at that moment, the cry soared up to the World of High Divinity, and the ten-thousand worlds shook and rocked and quaked, and a great measureless radiance surpassing the very nature of the gods was displayed in the world.

Then the Blessed One exclaimed: “Kondanna knows! Kondanna knows!”, and that is how that venerable one acquired the name, Anna-Kondanna—Kondanna who knows.