

Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, “Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma”

(*Samyutta Nikaya* 56.11, translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Bodhi in Bodhi, *In the Buddha’s Words*, pp. 75-78)

THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion 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 who has gone forth into homelessness. What two? The pursuit of sensual happiness in sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of worldlings, ignoble, unbeneficial; and the pursuit of self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, unbeneficial. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathāgata has awakened to the middle way, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.

“And what, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision ... which leads to Nibbana? It is this noble eightfold path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This, bhikkhus, is that middle way awakened to by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision, which gives rise to knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbana.

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this craving which leads to re-becoming, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there; that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for becoming, craving for un-becoming.

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: 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.

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: it is this noble eightfold path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

“‘This is the noble truth of suffering’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“‘This noble truth of suffering is to be fully understood’: thus...

“‘This noble truth of suffering has been fully understood’: thus...

“‘This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering’: thus...

“‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering is to be abandoned’: thus...

“‘This noble truth of the origin of suffering has been abandoned’: thus...

“‘This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering’: thus...

“‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering is to be realized’: thus...

“‘This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized’: thus...

“This is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering’: thus...

“This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering is to be developed’: thus...

“This noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering has been developed’: thus...

“So long, bhikkhus, as my knowledge and vision of these four noble truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was not thoroughly purified in this way, I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Mara, and Brahma, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its devas and humans. But when my knowledge and vision of these four noble truths as they really are in their three phases and twelve aspects was thoroughly purified in this way, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world with its devas, Mara, and Brahma, in this generation with its recluses and brahmins, its devas and humans. The knowledge and the vision arose in me: ‘Unshakeable is the liberation of my mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more re-becoming.’”

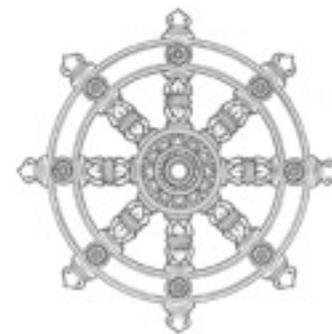
This is what the Blessed One said. Being pleased, the bhikkhus of the group of five delighted in the Blessed One’s statement. And while this discourse was being spoken, there arose in the Venerable Koṇḍañña the dust-free, stainless vision of the Dhamma: “Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.”

And when the Wheel of the Dhamma had been set in motion by the Blessed One, the earth devas raised a cry: “At Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, this unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva

or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.” Having heard the cry of the earth devas, the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings raised a cry: “At Bārāṇasī ... this unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped ... by anyone in the world.” Having heard the cry of the devas of the realm of the Four Great Kings, the Tāvātimsa devas ... the Yāma devas ... the Tusita devas ... the Nimmānaratī devas ... the Paranimmita-vasavatti devas ... the devas of Brahmā’s company raised a cry: “At Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, this unsurpassed Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion by the Blessed One, which cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or deva or Māra or Brahmā or by anyone in the world.”

Thus at that moment, at that instant, at that second, the cry spread as far as the Brahma-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 inspired utterance: “Koṇḍañña has indeed understood! Koṇḍañña has indeed understood!” In this way the Venerable Koṇḍañña acquired the name “Añña Koṇḍañña — Koṇḍañña Who Has Understood.”



“Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma” [SN 56.11]

The Middle Way

...between the extremes of sensual indulgence & self-mortification.

The Four Noble Truths

1. suffering/stress (Pāli: *dukkha*)
task: to be understood
2. craving, the origin of suffering (Pāli/Sanskrit: *taṇhā/trṣṇa*)
task: to be abandoned
3. the cessation of suffering (*nirodha*)
task: to be realized
4. the way/path leading to the cessation of suffering (*magga/marga*)
task: to be developed

The 4 Noble Truths are to be known in 3 phases (*tiparivā*):

1. knowledge of each truth (*sacca-ñāna*)
2. ...of the task to be accomplished regarding each truth (*kicca-ñāna*)
3. ...of accomplishment regarding each truth (*kata-ñāna*)

The Five Aggregates subject to clinging [see SN 22.56 (Bodhi 335)]

1. Form (*rūpa*): the objects of the 5 physical senses
2. Feeling (*vedanā*): pleasant, unpleasant, or neither-pleasant-nor-unpleasant
3. Perception (*saññā*): recognition, naming
4. Formations (*saṅkhāra*): volitional mental activity, thoughts & emotions
5. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*): the quality of being aware of a sense-contact

The Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya atthangika magga/arya-aṣṭanga-marga*)
[see SN 45.8 (Bodhi 239); MN 27 (Bodhi 241)]

1. Right (or Wise) View (*sammā-diṭṭhi/dṛṣṭi*) [see MN 9 (Bodhi 323)]
understanding what is wholesome & unwholesome
...the 4 Nutriments: food, contact, volition, consciousness
...the 4 Noble Truths [primary aspect of Right View]
...Aging & Death ...Birth ...Being
...Clinging: to pleasures, views, rituals, a doctrine of self
...Craving: for the experiences of the 6 Senses
...Feeling: born of the experiences of the 6 Senses
...Contact: with the world through the 6 Senses
...the Sixfold Base: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind
...Mentality-Materiality, or “Name & Form”:
 Mentality: feeling, perception, volition, contact, attention
 Materiality: the 4 Great Elements (earth, water, fire, wind)
...Consciousness: of the experiences of the 6 Senses
...Formations: bodily, verbal, mental
...Ignorance: not understanding the 4 Noble Truths
...Taints: sensual desire, being, ignorance
abandons the tendency to: lust, aversion, the view & conceit ‘I am’.
by abandoning ignorance & arousing true knowledge,
 “here and now makes an end of suffering.”
2. Right Intention/Thought (*sammā-sankappa/saṅkalpa*)
right: intention of renunciation ...good will ...harmlessness
wrong: intention governed by desire ...ill will ...harmfulness
3. Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*) [see MN 58]
abstaining from false speech; speaks the truth
...slandorous speech; unites the divided, delights in concord
...harsh speech; speech is gentle ...soothing ...loving ...[goes] to the heart
...idle chatter; ...timely ...true ...useful ...of Dhamma ...[with] reason

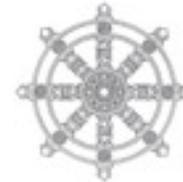
4. Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*) [see MN 41 (Bodhi 156)]
 abstaining from taking life; conscientious, desiring the welfare of all
 ...stealing; not taking what is not given
 ...sexual misconduct; not having sex with [the wrong person]
5. Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*) [see AN 4:61-62 (Bodhi 126)]
 acquire wealth ...legally ...peacefully ...honestly ...harmlessly
 not dealing in weapons ...beings ...butchery ...poisons ...intoxicants
 with no deceit ...treachery ...soothsaying ...trickery ...usury
6. Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*)
prevent the arising of unarisen unwholesome states,
abandon unwholesome states that have already arisen:
 5 Hindrances [see SN 46:55 (Bodhi 270)]
1. sense desire. *antidote*: meditation on impermanence (*anicca*)
 2. ill will. *antidote*: meditation on loving-kindness (*metta*)
 3. sloth+torpor. *antidote*: walking med., visualization of light, death
 4. restlessness+worry. *antidote*: one-pointed concentration (*ekaggatta*)
 5. doubt. *antidote*: investigation, inquiry, study
- arouse wholesome states that have not yet arisen,
maintain and perfect wholesome states already arisen:
 7 Enlightenment Factors [see MN 10 (Bodhi 281)]
1. (balancing) mindfulness
 - 2-4. (energizing) investigation of phenomena, energy, rapture
 - 5-7. (calming) tranquillity, concentration, equanimity
7. Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati/smṛti*) [see MN 10 (Bodhi 281)]
 4 Foundations of Mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*):
 ...of body (*rūpa*): breathing, postures, actions, parts, elements, corpse
 ...of feeling tone (*vedanā*): pleasant, unpleasant & neither
 ...of mind states (*citta*): associated with unwholesome roots or not
 ...of mental phenomena (*dhamma*): 5 Hindrances, 5 Aggregates,
 6 Sense-bases, 7 Enlightenment Factors, 4 Noble Truths

8. Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) [see MN 39 (Bodhi 250)]
 “unification of mind”/absorption (*jhāna/dhyāna*):
- 1st jhana: rapture/pleasure (*pīti*) based in seclusion,
 with aiming & sustaining of attention (*vitakka+vicāra*).
 - 2nd jhana: rapture/pleasure (*pīti*) based in concentration,
 without aiming & sustaining of attention (*vitakka+vicāra*).
 - 3rd jhana: equanimity, mindfulness, & clear comprehension,
 with happiness (*sukha*), but without rapture.
 - 4th jhana: neither pleasure-nor-pain, without joy or grief,
 one-pointed-ness (*ekaggatā*),
 perfection of mindfulness through equanimity.

Koṇḍañña understands!

“Whatever is subject to origination is all subject to cessation.”
 the insight into impermanence (*anicca*), the first of
the 3 Marks (*tilakkhaṇa*) [see SN 22:45 (Bodhi 342)]

- Change/Impermanence (*anicca/anitya*)
- Stress/Suffering/Unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*)
- Not-self/Emptiness (*anatta/anatman*)



Further reading: Bodhi, *In the Buddha's Words* [page numbers from this]
 Bodhi, *The Noble Eightfold Path* [traditional overview]
 Kornfield, *A Path with Heart* [contemporary wisdom]