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The Discourse on the Turning of the Wheel of Truth

Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta or Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana Sutta

S 56.11 = Mv 1.6.17-31 • Short name: Dhamma,cakka Sutta, The Dharma-wheel Discourse

Theme: The Buddha's first discourse

Translated by Piya Tan ©2002, rev 2010; simplified ©2016

[For full text, commentary and notes, see **SD 1.1** at <http://dharmafarer.org>.]

1 The 2 extremes

At the deer park at Isipatana near Benares, the Lord told the company of 5 monks, thus:

"Bhikshus [Monks], there are these **two extremes** to be avoided by the renunciant [one who has left the home life seeking awakening]:

(1) The devotion to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures—it is worldly, not connected with the goal, and

(2) the devotion to self-mortification [self-punishment]—it is painful, not connected with the goal.

Avoiding these extremes, the Buddha has found **the middle way** that brings peace and nirvana.

2 The middle way

Bhikshus, what is that middle way realized by the Buddha?

It is **this noble eightfold path**, that is to say,

- (1) right view,
- (2) right thought [right intention],
- (3) right speech,
- (4) right action,
- (5) right livelihood,
- (6) right effort,
- (7) right mindfulness,
- (8) right concentration.

3 The 4 noble truths

3.1 This is **the noble truth [reality] that is suffering**:

- (1) birth is suffering;
- (2) decay is suffering;
- (3) disease is suffering;
- (4) death is suffering;
- [grief, lamentation, physical pain, mental pain and despair are suffering];
- (5) to be with the unpleasant is suffering;
- (6) to be without the pleasant is suffering;
- (7) not to get what one desires is suffering,
- (8) in short, **the 5 aggregates of clinging** [form, feeling, perception, formations, consciousness] are suffering.

3.2 This is **the noble truth [reality] that is the arising of suffering**: it is this craving, that is, running after pleasures (both physical and mental), namely:

- (1) craving for sensual pleasures,
- (2) craving for existence,
- (3) craving for non-existence [for extinction].

3.3 This is **the noble truth [reality] that is the ending of suffering**: it is the total ending of craving.

3.4 This is **the noble truth [reality] that is the path leading to the ending of suffering**, that is, the noble eightfold path. [2]

4 The 3 phases and 12 aspects

4.1 THE BUDDHA HAS FULLY UNDERSTOOD, THUS:

- (a) 'This is *the noble truth that is suffering*.'
- (b) 'This noble truth that is suffering is *to be fully understood*'
- (c) 'This noble truth that is suffering *has been fully understood*'

4.2 THE BUDDHA HAS FULLY ABANDONED CRAVING, THUS:

- (a) 'This is *the noble truth that is the arising of suffering*.'
- (b) 'This noble truth, that is, the arising of suffering *should be abandoned*.'
- (c) 'This noble truth, that is, the arising of suffering *has been abandoned*'

4.3 THE BUDDHA HAS FULLY REALIZED NIRVANA, THUS:

- (a) 'This is *the noble truth that is the ending of suffering*.'
- (b) 'This noble truth that is the ending of suffering *should be realized*'
- (c) 'This noble truth that is the ending of suffering *has been realized*'

4.4 THE BUDDHA HAS FULLY CULTIVATED THE PATH, THUS:

- (a) 'This is *the noble truth that is the path [practice] leading to the ending of suffering*'
- (b) 'This noble truth that is the path leading to the ending of suffering *should be cultivated*.'—thus, bhikshus, regarding what are unheard before, there arose in me vision, there arose knowledge, there arose wisdom, there arose insight, there arose light.
- (c) 'This noble truth that is the path leading to the ending of suffering *has been cultivated*'

The supreme awakening

5 So long as I neither knew nor saw these 4 noble truths as they really are in their 3 phases and 12 aspects, I did not claim to the world that I was awakened [buddha].

6 But when I have fully known and seen these 4 noble truths in this way, I claim to have fully awakened in this world, that is to say:

'Unshakable is my freedom of mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more rebirth (for me)!"'

Kondañña

7 While the Buddha was teaching, the venerable Kondañña gained the Dharma eye, that is, the understanding that: "Whatever exists must also cease to exist."

The heavens exult

8 Now, when Dharma wheel had been turned by the Lord, the earth-bound devas proclaimed:

“In the deer park at Isipatana near Benares, the Lord had turned the peerless Dharma wheel, that cannot be stopped by anyone in the world.”

Hearing thus, the devas of the 4 Great Kings echoed the proclamation.

Then, the devas of the 33 echoed the proclamation.

Then, the Yāma devas echoed the proclamation.

Then, the Tusita [Contented] devas echoed the proclamation.

Then, the Nimmāna,rati devas [who delight in creating] echoed the proclamation.

Then, the Para,nimmita,vasavatti devas [who delight in the creation of others] echoed the proclamation.

Then, the devas of Brahmā's host echoed the proclamation.

9 Thus, at that very moment, the proclamation was heard as far as the Brahmā world, and this ten thousandfold world-system quaked and a boundless radiance lit up the world surpassing even the majesty of the devas.

Aññā Kondañña

10 Then, the lord made this inspired utterance:

“Master Kondañña has indeed understood!”

In this way, the venerable Kondañña received the name “Aññā Kondañña” (Kondañña who has understood).

— So it is —

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