The Discourse on
the Turning of the Wheel of Truth

Dhamma,cakka Pavattana Sutta or Dhamma,cakka-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;
(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.

Aṇñā Koṇḍaṇṇa

10 Then, the lord made this inspired utterance:
   “Master Koṇḍaṇṇa has indeed understood!”
   In this way, the venerable Koṇḍaṇṇa received the name “Aṇñā Koṇḍaṇṇa” (Koṇḍaṇṇa who has understood).

— So it is —

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