

Dhammacakkappavattana-Sutta

Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion

Samyutta Nikaya SN 56

(The Buddha's First Talk)

This how I heard it:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi.

There he addressed the group of five Bhikkhus thus:

'Bhikkhus, these two extremes should be avoided by one who has gone forth into homelessness. What are the two?

The pursuit of sensual happiness based on sensual pleasures, which is inferior, coarse, the way of ordinary people, lacking in refinement and not useful; and the practice of self-exhaustion, which is painful, lacking in refinement, and not useful.

Avoiding both these extremes the Tathagata has awakened to the Middle Way; that gives rise to seeing and understanding, leads to calming and direct knowledge, to full awakening, Nibbana.

And what is that Middle Way that gives rise to seeing and understanding, leads to calming and direct knowledge, to full awakening, Nibbana?

It is this very Noble Eightfold Path:

Right View, Right Intention,

Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood,

Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Unification.

This is the Middle Way realised by the Tathagata that gives rise to seeing and understanding, leads to calming and direct knowledge, to full awakening, Nibbana.

"I teach the Noble Truth of dukkha and the path leading to the cessation of dukkha. "Now this, Bhikkhu's, is the noble truth of dukkha.

Birth is dukkha, aging is dukkha, death is dukkha; sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair are dukkha; association with the unloved is dukkha, separation from the loved is dukkha, not getting what one wants is dukkha. In short, the five aggregates affected by clinging are dukkha.

"And this, Bhikkhu's, is the noble truth of the origination of dukkha:

It is this very craving that seeks passion & delight, now here & now there:
craving for sensual pleasure, craving for existence, craving for non-existence.

"And this, Bhikkhu's, is the noble truth of the cessation of dukkha:

It is the complete fading & cessation, abandonment, relinquishment, release of
that very craving.

"And this, Bhikkhu's, is the noble truth of the path that leads to the cessation
of dukkha:

It is this very Noble Eightfold Path — right view, right intention, right speech,
right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right unification.

"Bhikkhu's:

Vision arose, insight arose, discernment arose, knowledge arose, illumination
arose within me in regard to things never heard before: (repeated)

'This is the noble truth of dukkha.'

..... This noble truth of dukkha needs to be comprehended.'

..... This noble truth of dukkha has been comprehended.'

'This is the noble truth of the origination of dukkha '

.....This noble truth of the origination of dukkha is to be abandoned'

.....This noble truth of the origination of dukkha has been abandoned.'

'This is the noble truth of the cessation of dukkha '

.....This noble truth of the cessation of dukkha is to be directly experienced'

.....This noble truth of the cessation of dukkha has been directly experienced.'

'This is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of
dukkha '

.....This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of dukkha is
to be developed'

.....This noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of dukkha
has been developed.'

" Bhikkhu's, as long as my knowledge & vision concerning these four noble truths was not pure, I did not claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening, that is unexcelled in the world with its deities, Maras, & Brahmas, with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk.

But as soon as this knowledge & vision concerning these four noble truths was truly pure, then I did claim to I did not claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening, that is unexcelled in the cosmos with its deities, Maras & Brahmas, with its contemplatives & brahmans, its royalty & commonfolk.

Knowledge & vision arose in me: 'Unprovoked is my release. Birth has ended, what has to be done has been done, there is now no more becoming.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. Satisfied, the group of five Bhikkhu's delighted at his words. And while this explanation was being given, there arose within Ven. Kondañña the dustless, the stainless vision of Dhamma:

Whatever is of the nature to arise, all that is of the nature to cease.

And with this, the Blessed One had set the Wheel of Dhamma in motion, the earth devas cried out: "At Varanasi, in the Game Refuge at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma that cannot be stopped by brahman or contemplative, deva, Mara or God or anyone in the cosmos."

On hearing the earth devas' cry, the devas of the Four Kings' Heaven took up the cry... the devas of the Thirty-three... the Yama devas... the Tusita devas... the Nimmanarati devas... the Paranimmita-vasavatti devas... the devas of Brahma's retinue took up the cry:

"At Varanasi, in the Game Refuge at Isipatana, the Blessed One has set in motion the unexcelled Wheel of Dhamma that cannot be stopped by brahman or contemplative, deva, Mara, or God or anyone at all in the cosmos."

In that moment, that instant, the cry shot right up to the Brahma worlds. And this ten-thousand fold cosmos shivered & quivered & quaked, while a great, measureless radiance appeared in the cosmos, surpassing the effulgence of the devas.

Then the Blessed One exclaimed:

"Kondañña understands! Kondañña understands!"

And that is how Ven. Kondañña acquired the name Añña-Kondañña — Kondañña who understands.