The First Discourse: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta - Turning the Wheel of the Dhamma

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 51:36

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma-sambuddhassa. Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma-sambuddhassa. Namo tassa bhagavato arahato samma-sambuddhassa.

Homage to the Buddha, the blessed, noble and fully self-awakened one.

What I want to do is take the first discourse, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, the turning of the wheel of the law discourse.

Remember that he'd left his family and he'd trained under two particular teachers. *Āḷāra Kālāma* was first, taking him up through the jhānas and through the higher jhānas, and invited him to be a teacher. So he was quite an adept very quickly, because altogether the training took about six years. And then he goes to another person called *Uddaka Rāmaputta*, who takes him through the eight jhānas, the eight steps of jhānas. This doesn't satisfy him, remember.

So he then goes into these austerity exercises mainly around eating. He talks about himself eating less and less and less till he was down to a grain and he could hold his spine through his stomach, so if you try that you'll see how thin he was. And he gets himself to a point of disappointment really because he doesn't feel he's going anywhere and he thinks he's just creating more suffering. So then he's out on the road. He's left his companions.

And then this woman comes along, Sujātā. We know her name means auspicious birth. And she's carrying some sweetmeats for the local shrine, the local god. And seeing this poor wretch, she offers it to him. Of course, the scripture said he was glowing like a god by the side of the road. So you have to put aside all the hagiography, you know, the stories of saints.

So this revives him. He has this memory of childhood where he's watching his father doing the ploughing ceremony. So this is the point where his whole process changes around upon itself, the way he's looking at his practice. So instead of trying to achieve something, these wonderful mental states that people have talked about that he'd heard in the parks where people would gather to listen to the ascetics. By the way that seems to have been one of the big entertainments of the day. On the full moon people would go to these parks where there were shrines and all the ascetics would turn up and give talks and say how they'd got it and this person had completely got it wrong and there were big debates. So he's coming from that sort of background where there was a lot of fermentation going on spiritually speaking.

So his whole practice now turns around upon itself. Instead of seeking happiness, he now turns inward to try and find out how he's creating suffering. And with that inspiration, he sits under the tree. Within six hours, he cracks it. And one thing, remember, there's a point where it's called the Great Doubt, where Māra approaches him and basically says, look, who are you to try and achieve this? And puts a great doubt in his mind as to what he's trying to do. And there comes this point where the Earth Goddess rises and says he has every right to do this because he has the perfection of generosity, he's perfected the virtue of generosity. In other words, he's not doing it just for himself. He's doing it for all beings. So that gives him that little bit of courage. And he carries on and breaks through all the delusion.

So he said he spent seven weeks just sitting there amazed by what he'd discovered and going through his mind as to the meaning of it. And then there comes that point where he says to himself whether he wants to teach or not. And at first he thinks, no, this is just too subtle. I'm never going to be able to get this across. And then he thinks of his two teachers and he finds out they've died, and then he thinks of his old companions, and he goes in search of them.

So he's around Bodh Gaya, presumably he's still where he was liberated, and he makes his way to the deer park at Sarnath, which is near modern-day Varanasi, which was an old capital, Benares, of that kingdom around the Ganges plain. And it's about 250km, about 155 miles he's got to walk. And that's by modern roadways. So presumably in those days it was little pathways from village to village. And he finally finds them.

It takes half an hour by plane. Five hours to drive. So it says actually walking 50 hours. So anyway, as he approaches them, they recognise him.

This is a lovely setting here. This actually comes up in the Vinaya, the book on the rule, and the discourses. And the gracious one, that's Ānanda Jyoti, he's well known for his work on poetry. He's got a rather lovely website. And I knew him, he used to come to, he was part of the group of monks at Kanduboda where I was. He now lives in Thailand, can't stand coming back to England, it's too cold he says. So he talks about the gracious one, the Bhagavā, while walking gradually on walking tour approached Bārāṇasī and the group of five at the deer park in Isipatana.

The group of five saw the Bhagavā coming from afar and after seeing him they resolved among themselves: "This ascetic, Gotama, who is coming, friends, is given to luxury. His forsaking the striving has gone back to luxury. He should certainly not be worshipped or stood up for, nor should his bowl and robe be taken. However, we can prepare a seat, and if he wishes to sit down, then he can do so."

But as the Bhagavā approached the group of five, the group of five were unable to continue with their agreement. And after going out to greet the gracious one, one of them took his bowl and robe, one prepared his seat, one placed water for washing his feet, the footstool and the footstand. And the Bhagavā then sat down on the prepared seat and washed his feet.

So you've got this lovely scene where they've determined him to be a waster now. He's lost it, really. But there must have been either old friendship, the connection of old friendship. He might have been, in a way, an unrecognised leader of the group. But something made them drop this rather cold greeting that they were going to give him. And they're finally sitting down.

But anyway, they're not letting him off the hook because they approached him and they called him by name, presumably Siddhattha, it doesn't actually say, but presumably by his ordinary name. They address him as *āvuso*, a friend. So in the order, if somebody is younger than you in years, that's in how many years they've been in the order, you address them as *āvuso*. And if they're older than you, you address them as *bhante*. That's scriptural. Every culture has its own way of distinguishing between younger monks and older monks.

Then the Buddha addresses them. So he now calls Nibbāna the deathless. He's pumping it for them, you see.

And they reply: "But you, friend Gotama, by that ascetic lifestyle, that practice, that difficult way of living, did not arrive" - so the practice that he was doing with them - "did not arrive at the state beyond ordinary human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight. So how can you now, given to luxury, forsaking the striving, gone back to luxury, attain a state beyond human beings, a distinction of what is truly noble knowledge and insight?"

Ha! So he then repeats this then. He said, the realised one, the Tathāgata. The Tathāgata literally means someone who's gone there. And it's translated in lots of ways. I think Professor Harvey, whom some of you might know, he's written a couple of good books and he used to run the online course, says "one who is attuned to reality." So that's taking it a little bit far.

"The Tathāgata is not given to luxury, is not forsaking the striving, and has not gone back to luxury. The Tathāgata is a worthy one, a perfect sambuddho, lend an ear, monks, I'll instruct you about the attainment of the deathless, and so on and so forth, to be experienced and attained by yourselves in this very life."

So again, in those times, presumably, everything was said three times, and if you didn't get what you wanted after three times, you had to shut up. So they approached him again with the same accusation that he's gone back to luxury. How could he possibly have attained any enlightenment if, while he was doing the real practice of self-mortification, he'd attained nothing at all?

So he goes through the round a second time and the third time they approach him. But this time he answers, "Are you aware of my having spoken to you like this before?" And they say, well, certainly not. And then he goes through it again. And finally, they're ready to be, they're ready to open to the teachings.

So that's a lovely little scene, if you can imagine that for yourselves.

This came up, I did a Skype with the Brighton group. What happens to a lot of people, especially if they've

come from a religion which is devotional, like Catholicism, they come into Buddhism with that fervour for the meditation and all that. And then there comes this dryness, this lack of heart connection with the teachings. And I know people who, because of that, will continue their practice, but then will go to church. And I know of one person, for instance, who really doesn't go to the monastery, Amaravati, anymore, but actually just goes to join the Christian group, mainly because of that heart connection.

So the way you would develop that, if you feel that, is by contemplating the life of the Buddha and making that connection to a past personage. So a person might do it for many various things. Like for instance, if somebody now was into civil rights, they might bring to mind people like Nelson Mandela and reading their history, reading their biography, you get that connection and from that connection you get that energy that comes of wanting to be like that person. So that's the devotional thing that some people are drawn to. I mean that's why I've got all these statues around. So there you go, you can make a visual heart connection with the Buddha. So you see my Catholic upbringing.

So anyway, then he begins the teachings, and he starts off: "There are these two extremes amongst that one who's gone forth not to associate with, which is devotion and clinging to the pleasures of the senses, and which is low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, and not connected with the goal." It's not leading anywhere, in other words.

Now, that would attune to us as a materialist goal, whereby if you think that this is the only life you have, you may as well enjoy it, for heaven's sake. I mean, what's the point of not enjoying it? So your whole effort is in trying to make this time, to make this life something which is going to deliver at least some level of happiness and as regular as possible. So that's why you get people moving, whether they're entirely conscious of it or not, towards fame, power, riches or just sensual pleasure, or all of them if they can.

So it's a case of, the goal for a materialist has to be to be happy now. But their happiness has to be based upon what this psychophysical organism can give them. So it has to be some mental, emotional, mental state, some emotion, which they generate in themselves by accumulating something outside themselves.

They might be adept, they might get into spiritual practice and get into these beautiful mental states, and there would have been people, even in the Buddha's time, who would have practised those without any real understanding, or without any real faith, shall we say, or belief in some sort of future life, because there were materialists in the Buddha's time. And some who even said that it didn't really matter whether you went down one side of the Ganges murdering and pillaging and all that, and up the other side, with great acts of compassion, your fate was set. And when you died, that was the end of it. So there was all sorts of understandings in those days, as we have these days.

In fact, this materialism in a sense has entered into Buddhist mainstream as secular Buddhism. Not all secular Buddhists are materialists in that complete way, but definitely it opens up the Buddhist teachings to people who are grounded in science, scientism really. You know, the belief that everything comes out of

matter, and that's about it. So at least it gives them some way of creating happiness in this life, which is a bit more lasting, really by seeing this whole process of attachment and desire. So that's where it centres, on desire and attachment. And that, of course, takes them back to the whole business of identity. So you never know. They might become fully liberated and they'll be in a state of shock for eternity.

So that's the business of self-indulgence. And of course he'd left all that. What had awakened him, remember, was seeing these four great signs, these four messengers from the gods, as they said. So he's realising in his late, middle twenties maybe, which is a time when normally you leave youth, and you suddenly realise that what you're looking at is sickness, ageing and death, and that there might be an escape. So those were the four images that are given in the scriptures in a metaphorical way: the sick person, the elderly person, the corpse, and somebody sitting under a tree suggesting that there might be a way out of this problem. So he's left the life.

Now, then he, in a sense, followed a similar trajectory when he did the jhāna. He was trying to attain happiness through this psychophysical organism. And he finds that that also has a problem because when he comes out of those jhānic states, then he just gets neurotic again and depressed and anxious.

So that's one reason, I think, why he then goes into this mortification stuff. Remember that mortification is not the same as renunciation. So this mortification that he was practising, the general understanding was that the soul was trapped in the body. The body was an expression of your *kamma*, your bad *kamma*. You know, else you wouldn't be born here. And so the idea was that through this self-mortification, letting go of the body, the soul would be released into a heavenly place.

This is, the Jains definitely have that idea. That's why they're so careful about not doing anything which harms, even when they don't mean to. Because even when you don't mean to, something suffers. I mean, you stand by accident on an elephant and it suffers and you've got consequences, which you might never have meant, you see, is the point. So that's why you see Jain monks being very careful, you know, sweeping. Even when they are sleeping, when they want to turn over, they wake up in order to brush away any insects that might be underneath them. I mean, they really are spot on.

So that was the idea anyway, at least one of the main ideas. So the Buddha would have had that in the back of his mind, that he was going to attain this eternal bliss by drawing the body down almost to the point of death.

In the Jain religion, it's considered to be a saintly thing to do, by the way, is to let go of the body through starving yourself. And I actually looked that up for myself, about starvation. There's no suffering, it seems. This idea that we have that if you stop eating, you become ravenous, and you'd eat an animal alive if you caught one, is based on images that we see of people in famine situations where they eat a little starvation. So you're feeding the body and the body wakes up with its hunger. But actually, if you just stop eating, the body goes into this starvation mode. And the passage I read says that the vast majority of animals die just because they can't eat anymore. You know, like the bird gets too old, it can't feed itself, it just dies. And you

get these ketones, which I haven't a clue what they are, but...

But what happens is the body seems not to suffer at all. It knows how to just draw on itself, and then one or two of the organs just stop and that's the end of it. I was particularly interested in this because a very close friend of mine died from Crohn's disease.

Anyway, that's the underlying philosophy, should we say, that's driving him to practise these self-mortifications. Renunciation is letting go of attachment to something, so it's not as though you stop eating—you just try to distinguish between the desire which is coming from ordinary appetite from the desire which is seeking happiness in food, which is a completely different idea.

So what he says of that: he says it's painful, *dukkha*; he says it's ignoble, and it's not connected with the goal. So he's trying to get this balanced.

Now, we talk about the middle way, which he then goes on to explain. Just to read it to you: "Not having approached either of these two extremes, monks, the middle practice—the middle way—was awakened to by the Realised One, by the *Tathāgata*, which produces vision, produces knowledge, which leads to peace, deep knowledge, complete awakening and emancipation." *Abhiññāṇa* means knowledge. *Abhi* means very great or very deep—probably could translate it as transcendent knowledge.

"Now, what is this middle way, monks? The awakened to has realised one," etcetera, etcetera, and that's the Eightfold Path.

Now, when we say the middle way, you might think, well, it's a bit of moderation. You do a bit of this and a bit of that, and you're in the middle somewhere. But although it's called the middle way, it's a completely different psychology, a completely different understanding. The middle way doesn't quite—"middle" doesn't quite get to the root of it. It's more, I would have thought, transcendent of those two paths and yet feeding into these two paths.

So on the one side you're still enjoying life, but you're trying not to be attached to it. And on the other side, you're not mortifying yourself, you're not trying to blame the body for anything, but on the other hand, you are renouncing things that you see is not good for you. But it's coming from a different understanding about how we've got into this situation, which goes back to this business of identity and the self.

Anyway, that's just a little side point. So then there's the Eightfold Path, which we'll come to in a bit. And then he goes through the actual Four Noble Truths.

This discourse isn't verbatim, obviously. I mean, he wouldn't have come out with such a formula, such a formulated talk. I mean, you might think, well, he's been there under a tree for seven weeks, so he's got his talk in his head. Because remember, he's illiterate. It's very difficult for us to grasp that, isn't it? He's illiterate. People didn't read, didn't write. It was all memory stuff. But obviously he would have continued in a conversational mode, and then later on the teaching becomes formalised. And so this is a formalised

teaching just laying the basis upon which all this teaching is based. And that's why in a sense it can be called the turning of the wheel of the law.

There was a monk who actually suggested they put the symbol of the wheel on one of the doors of the monastery, on the top of the door of the monastery.

So we have to see this discourse not so much as verbatim—in fact it's very difficult to say we have any of the original words of the Buddha. There are parts of the scriptures which are very, very old, but of course they developed as they went through. And what happened was that they would hear a talk. It would be systematised into ways of memory. That's why we've got so many lists. And then groups of monks would take responsibility for remembering certain groups of scriptures. They were called the *bhāṇakas*, the reciters. So it would be very rare if there was ever one monk or nun who knew all the scriptures. So it depended on which group of monks you were with, the flavour of the teachings that you got, because it's quite a collection when you think about it.

So scholars, academics can see that there are different levels in the Pali, in the way the Pali is structured. So Bhikkhu Bodhi has just translated the *Sutta Nipāta*, which is one of the earliest strata. It's a great big book—which isn't such a collection of discourses, it's not such a big collection, but he's added all the commentarial stuff to it. Included in that are the two chants that we do in the evening. The loving-kindness one and the—sorry, the morning loving-kindness one—and the *Maṅgala Sutta*, the blessings. That comes from that stratum too.

So also they would create verse, which would make it easy to remember. So we have to see this discourse as really turning the wheel of the law in the sense that it's the platform upon which all his teaching is based.

So he starts off now by saying: "Look, this, monks, is the noble truth of suffering." Now, birth is suffering, old age is suffering, sickness is suffering. Death is also suffering. Getting what you don't want is suffering, and being separated from what is dear to you is suffering. Not obtaining what one longs for is suffering. In short, the five grasping *khandhas* is suffering.

So now, here in the discourse, we have the first way that he looks at the human being through these five aggregates. And there's a purpose to it, of course. The first one is the body and how the mind experiences the body—so that's the primary sensations that you feel: heat, cold, etcetera. And then there's feeling, where we distinguish between what's pleasant and unpleasant. That's a natural process within us. You can't stop it. As soon as you feel something, we judge it to be either pleasant or unpleasant. This isn't a bad judging—this is just the way we are in the world.

And then there's perception, which moves into memory. And also those feelings, remember, include the feelings caused in the body by mental states. And then we have these volitional conditionings. And then finally consciousness, which is the screen upon which everything happens. It's a multidimensional screen.

Everything you experience is flashing on that screen.

So what he's pointing to there is the volitional conditionings which we actually are developing, producing—our habits. That's the best word I've come across for it, just our habits, the way we reinforce certain patterns of behaviour, patterns of thinking, etcetera. And some of them are wholesome, some of them aren't.

But he says it's the clinging nature of these—it's the way we cling to this psychophysical organism. That's what it amounts to. Is what is suffering. The clinging. That's really important. If I give another talk on dependent origination, remember that. There's the feeling, there's the reaction to it of not wanting it or trying to overcome it, and then there's the identity: "I don't want." And what we've got to really grasp is that the suffering doesn't start until the point of identity.

Which is often—it's a difficult point to really grasp because when you're in yourself and something horrible is coming up and you can feel the negativity, it's difficult to realise that actually you've separated out of it. And it's only when that separation becomes more and more obvious that you realise that actually there is this gunk going on, but there is no suffering as such. And that's a different quality when you suddenly say, "I can't handle this," and then you drop into it, as it were. And that's the point of suffering.

So that's why he doesn't say the five desiring *khandhas*. He says the five grasping *khandhas*—the ones that we grasp with a sense of self.

There is, at the same time, in other discourses, a different description of *dukkha*. So this word *dukkha*—tha t's the root word upon which he builds everything, this *dukkha*, which just means hard to bear.

First of all, there is that *dukkha—dukkhatā*—just the pain, the suffering that we engender because of the unsatisfactoriness of the body and mind. Then there's the suffering that arises because of the fact that everything we experience is a compendium. It's a conjunction of things. It's an imminence. It's where all these little bits and pieces come together to create something. And so nothing has any reality. Nothing has any substance to itself. Everything is dependent on something else.

And just contemplating the body—and that it's made up of these billions of cells which can all go their own way if they want, and that's the end of it—you begin to recognise that everything is, it doesn't have that substantiality that we think it has or we experience it as having.

And then of course there's a suffering that comes from change. You can't just stop. You can't say, "Well, this is it, this is what I've always been looking for—stop the world." It doesn't happen.

So those are your three types of suffering: just the ordinary suffering of life and whatnot, which includes sickness, ageing and death; there's a suffering that comes because there's nothing substantial in us—there's nothing we can hold on to and say, "Well, this is truly me" of the psychophysical organism; and everything that we experience is constantly changing.

So that's how he describes the noble truth of suffering. Then there comes the second one: the noble truth of the arising of suffering, *samudaya*, the arising of suffering.

And now he's pointing to this word *taṇhā*. So remember, there's another word in Pali, *chanda*, which means desire. And that can be good or bad—so it's your motivation, it's your intention which makes it good or bad. But the word *taṇhā* is a specific word which refers to desires which just lead to suffering one way or the other. And so you get other translations for it like thirst, lack—a lack. Remember, desire comes out of a state of unsatisfactoriness at some level or other and is itself a state of suffering.

To be in a state of desire is not a pleasant state. It only becomes a pleasant state when we see the end of the desire, that it's going to be satisfied or gratified. If it's not, then it's a state of suffering. So desire comes out of suffering and is itself a state of suffering. Suffering here used in the widest sense—unsatisfactoriness.

That's the other thing too—that *dukkha* used to be translated as suffering. And then of course people said, "Well I don't suffer," meaning that they were having a good life at that time. So they had to find another word for it and they came up with unsatisfactoriness. And that's the other side, remember, that I always keep pumping: this business of how indulgence in pleasure has its comeuppance.

Yes, he says desire is the cause of suffering. The craving for sense pleasure. And he divides it now, this *taṇhā*, into three types: the craving for sense pleasure, *kāma-taṇhā, bhava-taṇhā, vibhava-taṇhā*—craving for continuation and the craving for discontinuation.

Now, *kāma-taṇhā*, the desire for sense pleasures—that's, well we know that, that's sincere enough. *Bhava-taṇhā* is the desire to make it continue, but it's also the desire to keep becoming. So it both refers to the desire of trying to maintain a certain pleasure as best you can, but it's also referring to the self wanting pleasure. The self wants to continue, wants to keep living.

And the same with *vibhava-taṇhā*. *Vibhava-taṇhā* refers to the fact of wanting to get rid of what you don't want—that's sort of aversion to it. But it also refers to wanting to get rid of yourself. Either you're just fed up and bored and depressed and you dive under the duvet or something, or you actually want to make your way to a bridge or something.

Whenever I say that, I always remind this lovely clip that I had from a comedian—I can't remember his name now, but he's extremely funny, around about the '50s, something like that. And he meets this—he's going to jump off a bridge in London, off the Westminster Bridge. And a copper comes. He says, "Excuse me, sir." He says, "You know, you mustn't do that." And they have this sort of argument about life and all that sort of stuff. And the sketch ends when they both jump off the bridge. It was really funny.

So yes, that's the *taṇhā*, right? Sense pleasures, always wanting to maintain, wanting to continue, wanting to live, wanting to get rid of—*vibhava-taṇhā*. I mean, these are pointing us to actually investigate in our practice—to actually name it and say, "Oh, that's an aversion, and that's me being averse to myself, I want

to get rid of myself at this present time." So it's just being aware of these—it's just pointing to certain mental habits that we have.

And then, of course, he makes this great statement: he says that there is a noble truth of the cessation of suffering. He says it's the complete fading away, the cessation without remainder of that craving. It's the liberation, the letting go, the release and non-adherence.

So that's a really very direct statement. There's no pulling back on that statement. It's not as though, say, modern psychotherapies might say, "Well, you can get to a decent accommodation with life, you can sort of be generally content and whatnot," but here he makes—I don't know of any psychotherapist that says that there's a complete end to suffering here and now. Not—I mean, a lot of religions will point to the afterlife, you know, like you're working at it now and then you get to the gates and you're away. But this statement is right here and now. And of course you find the same in Hinduism of course—that liberation is right here and now if we work hard enough for it, or if we want it enough.

So that brings us to now the path itself: the Eightfold Path. Now, the normal way that it's written down is, of course, right view, right attitude, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. But it's normally taught in the division of *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*, which is moral, ethical—ethic life, your development of meditation, and then the wisdom comes from it.

So now this actually brings it, looking at it that way, actually brings it to, I think, a correct view of how to approach our lives. Coming back from the way that the Buddha—that is put here—there is this great misunderstanding that lies within us, this delusion about who we are, or what it is, or however you want to phrase it. And because of that, we make a sort of bargain with life. We say, "Well look, this is it, this is the way it is, so I'm now going to try and make the best I can of this life, seeking happiness there."

So remember, that's our—that's the platform that we're working off. We're not working off—nobody works off, even the most horrible characters in history—they're not working off the platform "I hate." They're working off the platform of "I want to be happy." If that "I want to be happy" moves towards, "Well, for me to be happy, I've got to hate you," and that's the way it moves. But our basic human nature right down at that basic is we're actually seeking happiness. Everybody's trying to seek happiness one way or the other.

And because of this wrong understanding, of course, we form a wrong relationship with the world, thinking that if I accumulate things, that's going to make me happy. So there's your greed. And then you've got to defend it because somebody else wants your accumulation. And if whoever wants your accumulation is bigger than you, we've got to run for it.

So those three things—acquisitiveness, aversion and fear—are right at the base manifesting this wrong understanding. So the way that we behave from this wrong understanding—we're not always behaving from wrong understanding, but the way we're behaving from wrong understanding is the way back to

undermining that wrong understanding. So it's by living ethically, looking at our moral lives, being careful about what we allow the mind to get caught up in—

or what we indulge the mind with that's the way back as it were to the original problem because as you come back you can feel the energies that are based on this delusion you know renouncing something that renunciation gives you an inkling of how much you are attached to what you want to give up yeah when you're with somebody whom there's a natural aversion for then you're with that part of you that doesn't want to be with anything which is upsetting.

And when you're in a frightening situation, a situation that causes anxiety, you're coming back from it. So by working with our ethical life, by working with our moral lives, which manifests in these attitudes, mental states, emotional states, we're actually coming back to the original problems.

Which is the identity and at base the last guard against undoing that delusion is fear. See, the loss of identity. Who are you? And all that sort of stuff. And that we come close to whenever we are struck by a serious illness or eventually our death. That's when we'll hit that point. And the fear and the aversion that arises for that is the measure of this delusion.

So I always think rather than our meditation, always trying to think about attaining something, some sort of insight, some great explosive experience that's going to change my life. You're far better off working with the negativity within us because there you can eventually begin to see some results. And as the heart begins to purify itself, this intelligence, this *satipaññā*, this intuitive awareness is clearer, because remember, the delusion lies in looking, it doesn't lie in the body, the body's not deluded, the body's just the body, it doesn't lie within the heart, the heart's just feeling, that's all it is, it's only because we personalise it, it's only because I say, I am angry, or I am afraid that it becomes a sense of me, the heart is just feeling, that's all it is, feeling and the head is just thinking imagining so the delusion isn't there they are manifestations of delusion the delusion lies in this *satipaññā* itself, in other words it's the Buddha himself within us which is deluded so it's coming back on that where we can begin to have little insights as to this business of how we create suffering, how we imagine things are going to last when nothing lasts at all.

And how we give things concrete, how we stabilise things, how we conceptualise things into some sort of reality which we presume will continue. So all that begins to be undermined when we actually begin to look at our ethical lives. So that's produced as right speech, of course, right attitude. He's translated right thought here. But it's more right attitude, I think. Right speech, right action, right livelihood. Don't forget our livelihood, what we do for most of the day, has a conditioning effect on us.

Then there's the meditation itself, which is what we're doing here, the *vipassanā*. And then the insights come, the *sammādiṭṭhi*. So if you look at your practice as *sīla samādhi paññā*, I think it moves much more easily. We don't feel so frustrated about not attaining something. Just allow that to happen as the purity grows.

Anyway, once he'd done this, there's this lovely part now. Then he goes into the three modes of each of these noble truths. The first mode is that there is suffering. It's just a bold statement. There is the noble truth of suffering. And then he says that this ought to be known. It ought to be known. It ought to be understood what he means by suffering. And then he tells us that he has fully understood it.

And then he talks about the arising of suffering, the cause of suffering. And he says that this ought to be given up. So this is where academics become, I think, a little silly. Because it says the noble truth of desire has to be given up. So how can you give up a noble truth? But it's shorthand, isn't it? It's shorthand for it is true to say that we ought to give up desire, you know. Never mind so and then he says that he has given it up see it has been given up then there's a cessation of suffering which has which ought to be realised and he has realised it and then finally the path leading to it which ought to be developed and that he has developed it fully so we ought to be moving to those final statements that you know we have overcome desire we have attained Nibbāna and we have practised the path to its end.

So when to me monks in regard to these four noble truths turned like this in three ways. So that's also this idea of a wheel. Wheel within wheels. Especially in the Abhidhamma you'll find this word *vaṭṭa* coming up all the time. There are little wheels within wheels. Little ways like that one in Dependent Origination is an internal wheel, you see. The feeling, the desire, the *taṇhā*, and then the grasping. It revolves around each other.

Knowledge and insight, as it really is, was quite clear. Then, monks, I did declare to the world with its gods, Māra and Brahmā, to this generation with its ascetics and brahmanas, princes and men, that I was the fully and perfect *Asambuddho* with unsurpassed complete awakening. To me, knowledge and insight arose. Sure is my liberation of mind. This is my last birth. Now there is no more continuation.

That's a lovely statement, right? You can imagine him saying that, you know, it's just... If you said that here in this room, we'd all go, oh yeah.

So then there's this lovely paean that says, the master sweet of the truth, sorry, hearing these words, the earth deities, all the gods in the universe, Heaven of the Four Kings, the matchless wheel, this was heard say, the matchless wheel of the truth that cannot be set in motion by a recluse, by a Brahmana, a Deva, a God, a Māra, a Brahmā, anyone in this world is set in motion by the Blessed One at the Deer Park at Isipatana near Varanasi.

And these words were heard in the upper Deva realms, in the *Cātumahārājika* realms. in the *Tāvatiṃsa* and it goes all the way through these all these heavens to the *mahābrahma* the *parittābha* the *appamāṇābh a* there's a whole load of them and then and and this cry goes up it's a lovely sort of image all the way through these realms from the lowest right up to the heavens and it says the matchless wheel of truth that cannot be set in motion by a recluse or a brahman or a Deva, or a Māra, or a Brahmā, or anyone in this world, is set in motion by the Blessed One and the Deoparkat, Isipatana and Ibn Aris.

Thus, at that very moment, at that instant, the cry that the wheel of truth had been set in motion spread as far as the Brahmā realm, and the system of ten thousand worlds trembled and quaked and shook, and a boundless, a boundless sublime radiance, surpassing the effulgence of the gods, appeared in the world.

And then the Blessed One uttered this paeon of joy. Verily Koṇḍañña has realised. Verily Koṇḍañña has realised. The Venerable Koṇḍañña then receives the name *Aññā* Koṇḍañña. So there was one of his companions who got it.

So that's how this lovely discourse ends with this wonderful sort of image of it rising of the wheel of the teaching rising up through all the heavens and get to the top and then he finally acknowledges that this old companion of his has now become fully liberated so I can only hope this has not confused you or anything but has inspired you to devote yourself entirely to the practice for liberation awaits us

May you be fully liberated from all suffering. Sooner rather than later.

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