Samatha and/or Vipassanā

Bhante Bodhidhamma · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Bhante Bodhidhamma · 51:52

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa. Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa. Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Sambuddhassa. Homage to the Buddha, the Blessed, Noble and fully Self-Enlightened One.

I want to make a distinction between the two types of meditation that we find in all forms of Buddhism: Samatha and Vipassanā. Samatha means peacefulness, quietening. Vipassanā means insight. To get an angle on this, it's always good to go back to the Buddha's own personal experience and how it comes across to us through the scriptures.

Here we have a young man, probably in his mid-twenties, slowly becoming disillusioned with life. He's living the good life, belonging to a ruling family—although in later commentaries he's elevated to some huge eastern potentate. Really, he's just a local boss, a local head of a tribe who actually has to pay tribute to the king of Kosala. He's what you might call upper middle class. He has a wife and an ordinary extended family life, lots of cousins, many of whom join him when he starts the order. And of course the women join him eventually.

He leaves just about the time his son is born. From a psychodynamic point of view, from our Western psychology viewpoint, it's rather interesting that his own mother died when he was only a week old. That must have had some psychological effects on him, even though it was his mother's sister who became his stepmother. And somehow he leaves just as his child is born—a rather interesting coincidence of facts. Freudians or Jungians might say something about that.

One perhaps could say that this trauma, even at that young age, the loss of your mother, does create some imbalance in the psyche which begins to manifest in his early twenties as what we would call an existential crisis, leading perhaps to an identity crisis. What brings it about is a sudden growing realization that once youth has passed, once you've come out of the fantasy of youth where things like sickness, old age, and death are very far away—when one isn't concerned with these things anyway, concerned only with good living—around about twenty-five, there is a change of view. Something happens within most of us where we realize that youth is passing, and we're looking ahead to a hopeful middle age. We start taking things seriously. We tend to think about pensions, getting married, taking up a career. We move away from the easiness of youth.

Within that context, he comes to realize that actually, in the end, there's just sickness, old age, and death. It's a crisis which builds up in him to such a degree that it makes him leave.

But there's another side which reinforces that search. He's experienced what Blake would call the road of excess—the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom. At some point, when he's had all his parties and a good time, he sees the vanity of it. He sees the other side, the emptiness of it. It's expressed in a visual sense: he wakes up at the end of a big carousing and just sees disheveled bodies, perhaps the smell of sickness. That gives him the other side of pleasure, the downside of pleasure.

Psychologically, remember, this indulgence brings about frustration when you can't get what you want, grief when you lose what you've got, and anxiety when you've got what you want and you're afraid to lose it. All that psychology is in there. We can say that he was waking up to the fact that the life he was leading had this deeper emptiness to it. He hadn't found any real purpose in the family life he was leading, in the career being offered to him as a kshatriya, a warrior caste, a ruler. And so there comes this crisis point. We know about crisis, don't we? A financial crisis. He's having a psychological crisis. And so he leaves.

Now, he wouldn't have left if he didn't have somewhere to go. Just as in the 1970s there was a great movement of hippies searching for love, in those days there was quite a movement of people searching for the answer to life. In what we call Hinduism, the Vedas, there was this slowly growing new literature, the Upanishads, which manifests this questioning of the age. It was also an age of cultural change—a movement away from pastoral societies dotted here and there with local rulers, toward a city-based civilization in which there grew a merchant class that had not been there before, a rich merchant class that began to have power. And kingship, which the Buddha didn't particularly like. He preferred the more democratic meetings of the pastoral societies. So there's ferment, there's change happening in society, not perhaps as vicious as we've experienced, but definitely some dislocation.

There were groups of men—very rare for women to do it because of the dangers involved, and of course the sexism too—who went out into the forests and tried to find the meaning of life. That was their job. One of the strains of understanding which empowered them was the belief in rebirth, the belief in reincarnation. There were many answers to it, but central was the horror of having to be reborn again into this life.

Remember, these times were a bit harder. There were no videos, no DVDs, no cars. It was dog work—out in the field digging, and when you come back, what do you do? The only entertainments, you might say, were occasional military parades, and believe it or not, the holy men who would turn up in their parks and shrines. Everybody would go out on a full moon night, ask questions, do some chanting. That was, in a sense, the fullness of their entertainment, apart from playing games.

The idea that one had to be reborn again and again and go through this horror—because in those days sickness, old age, and death weren't something that happened in hospitals or shut away somewhere. The dead were taken to charnel grounds. You could see the bodies rotting. When the wind changed, you knew where it was coming from. It was there, in the open, as you might still see in India when you go there. That's one of the great things about India—it doesn't disguise these things.

This whole idea of having to come back to this again—one was looking for an escape. Where was the escape? That was the atmosphere in which the Buddha left home. And I dare say that when he left, he didn't say, "I'm off for good."

He probably said, "Well, I'm just nipping off for a little while to check this thing out, see if I can find an answer to my deep disturbance."

I remember when I told my mother that I was going to become a monk. She collapsed into such a deep weeping that came from the deepest part of her heart. Even I started crying. So I gave her a hug and said, "Mum, it's only for three years." And she stopped just like that.

You have to put it in the context of Catholicism, because priests are around—you can see a priest there. But if you become a monk, that's it. You cut your ties. You enter the monastery and nobody ever sees you again. I think they've softened up on that now; I believe they can see people once a month or something. But in the old days, that was it. You left. Hence her collapse.

So I dare say there was a lot of gnashing of teeth when the Buddha left. In later tales they describe how his parents wept at his leaving. His wife wept. Everybody wept. And I'm sure he said, "Well, I'm only going for a bit. I'll be back. Going to see what it's like."

So he goes off and joins these ascetics living in the forest. The first two teachers he goes to teach him what we now call the jhānas, what we now call absorption meditations. When you practice this samatha type of meditation, you're creating a state of mind. But the beauty of it is that although you begin with an outside object—either a candle flame, as you all know, or a circle, or an inner object like a mantra, or an inner object like your breath—it's still an object. You're only using it to bring about a certain laser quality to the mind.

I think you'll know that when the mind begins to concentrate, bliss arises naturally. It's just the quality of the mind as it concentrates—a sort of energy in it—and we experience it as a certain type of inner happiness. The first teacher really took him right through what we now recognize as the jhānas: the rūpa-jhānas and the arūpa-jhānas.

The rūpa-jhānas are those states that you get by deepening your concentration until, as it were, the mental state leaves the body, goes inward, and finds its own joy—and then even leaves that to find a perfect peace. This is not the equanimity of the seven factors of enlightenment. They use the same word, you see. These words are used variously. It's the same word, but they have slightly different meanings.

Then, leaving that, as it were, one enters into a stranger place where there's no object at all. Right up until that point, there's always an object—a light, the feeling, a sense, something there. But when that disappears and this consciousness, as it were (if I want a better word), flips into a different state, there's nothing there. Those places are called infinite space, infinite consciousness, infinite nothingness.

These relate—I'm talking now to people who know the Dharma a bit deeper—these relate to the four khandhas, you see. When you're in that area of nothingness, it's out of that nothingness that the saṅkhāra arises, the manifestations of mind. When you're in that space of consciousness, you're at the beginning of the viññāṇa process of consciousness, which manifests eventually as one of the aggregates. When you're in the space where everywhere there's just space, you're at the subtle level of vedanā, feeling. And when you're at neither perception nor non-perception, that's the beginning level of perception as consciousness descends into the mind and finally coagulates into what we call physical body.

So that process a person might go through has its own insightfulness as you pass through it. The Buddha undertook this with his teacher and became an adept. The teacher said, "Please, join me." But he said no. He said, "Although I've done all this and they're very blissful states and all that, it hasn't really answered my question: is there an end to suffering?"

Now that's the core thing which I should have mentioned earlier. The quest was: is there an end to suffering? That eventually puts his whole teaching in just three words in the texts—dukkha, dukkha nirodha—suffering and the end of suffering. This dukkha, of course, has a very wide meaning. Here I've translated it as suffering, dissatisfaction, sense of lack, meaninglessness. It's the whole gamut of human suffering, from the smallest little disturbance to the deepest despair and horror.

So he leaves that teacher and finds another one who takes him just one step further than these arūpa-jhānas. There he becomes an adept, and again he's asked to teach, but he says no—he leaves. Although he's practiced these concentration meditations, although he's taken them to the fullest development recognized by his own teachers, there's just something lacking. There's something which has not been undermined, which is still causing him suffering, still causing him some feeling of dissatisfaction.

So now he tries a different tack, which seemingly he gets from an elder teacher, a contemporary teacher: the Nigaṇṭha, the leader of the Jains.

Now his understanding was that bad karma was accrued even when one didn't intend it. This is why Jain monks go around with a whisk, making sure there are no bugs that they might accidentally tread upon. Their understanding is that even accidentally, you still cause suffering, and therefore there will be a karmic comeback.

And the real problem lay — and this runs right the way through Indian literature — in desire, trishna. So one had to live the absolute ascetic life, deny the body any pleasure because there was danger in it. He didn't seemingly make a distinction between pleasurable sensations and the attachment or desire that you have to them. So one had to, as it were, undermine that whole process. And if you think about it, pleasures come through the body, don't they? So you begin to blame the body for your problems. And you fast, you sit in front of very hot fires. You do all sorts of ascetic practices meant to steel you against the pleasures of the body.

So he took this, again, seemingly to his own personal limit. He couldn't go any further with it, and basically he just got thin. He said he could hold his spine through his stomach — that's how thin he was. And still he wasn't achieving anything. This fundamental question about suffering, about meaningfulness, had not been answered.

And he's with five companions at this time, remember. They're going for it, helter-skelter, really whipping themselves and getting into it in a big way. And so he leaves.

Now, in the opening stanzas of his very first talk, he says that the life devoted to sensual pleasure is base, ignoble, a waste of time, leading nowhere. And the life devoted to self-mortification — which is not renunciation; renunciation is not doing something to see your attachment, while self-mortification is based on self-punishment, self-negation in that bad way, rejection of life as it is — that self-mortification was also just painful, he said, and led nowhere. At least the first path was pleasant and led nowhere, but this was painful and led nowhere. But he doesn't say that the jhanas, the other things he learned about developing the qualities of mind, were a waste of time. That becomes part of his system.

But we can — at least I can — get a sense of his despair when he leaves his companions. What was he going to do? He couldn't go home because he would just fall back into that emptiness, bad emptiness. He'd been to all these teachers and he'd talked to so many people. You can see from his teaching that he knew all the local philosophies and psychologies of the time. He'd learned them. And he'd tried everything, and he had nowhere to go.

So I imagine that when he sat on that road along which Sujata came, he was in a state of real existential despair. And when Sujata comes along with her rice pudding — or rice cakes, rather — she takes pity on this man. Now, in the scriptures they soup it up. She's going to offer this to a god and sees the Bodhisattva who is resplendent and believes that this is the god. But actually, he must have been looking miserable. She thought, well, maybe he needs it more than this god. And we all know the salvific effect of rice pudding — enormous in its power.

So having tasted it, he sort of feels better. And around about that time he has this memory of his father doing a plowing ceremony. He's a child, and there's something about the way he remembers, something about the way he's looking at his father doing the plowing ceremony, which offers him another way of seeking the end, seeking the answer to his predicament. And that's why I've got these pictures. The little baby at the back there on the board was on a poster, an advert in Birmingham Station. I came out of the train, saw this — it was part of an advert. And I went home, came all the way back to Birmingham Station to take that picture. I've probably broken some sort of publication rights, but... I thought it was fantastic. Make sure you have a look at it, because what it expresses is that way of looking and the moment of seeing.

And the little girl in the other picture was given to me by a friend in Dublin, Dennis. This was a picture that came into the Irish Times. There was an opening of a nature reserve. And you can see that she's

reaching out to a plant to see what there is there, but the look on her face, if you look at it, has both an intense interest and also a sense of trepidation, a sense of fear of the unknown — like, if I see this, what will happen?

So that comes first, and the baby face comes second.

So here's this child watching his father doing a plowing ceremony, and there is a tremendous interest in what his father is doing. And that interest draws him into an absorbed state. He's just looking. And you see it in children, don't you? You see it when their jaw drops and their eyes become fixated, and you can't shake them out of it unless you give them a clip on the back of the head. And that's it — that's the pure openness of that intuitive intelligence just receiving.

So that's why I try to stress this quiet abiding. Because there you drop your preconceptions, you drop your ideas, you drop your concepts, you drop your history. Dropping your history. And you lay yourself open — just observing, feeling, experiencing what's happening right now.

So there was something in that looking which raised again, that encouraged him to have another go. And he was so certain that this would actually be the answer that he makes a determination. He sits under the tree and will either die or find the answer to his existential problem of suffering.

Looking for him, looking for us, he does six hours. It seems there's an interesting moment which is worth pondering. The great doubt arises. I'm sure you've seen that posture of the Buddha where he's putting his hand touching the earth to ground himself, and Mara the evil one attacks him. And although it's put in pictures of all sorts of things attacking him, what it is is the great doubt. It's known as the moment of great doubt, and the doubt is: Who are you? Who are you to try and work this out? There's no single human being you know of, nobody's ever worked this out. Who are you? How come you've even started on this quest?

And with it there comes the temptation of going back into the ordinary life. That's what Mara is. Later on in Buddhism, Mara is put across as sort of an evil figure, a bit like the Christian devil, trying to kill you and do all sorts of bad things to you. But he's much more the tempter. The god Mara is actually the chief of a most delightful heaven. So what he symbolizes is the attraction of the sensual life.

It's interesting that when he touches the earth and the earth goddess appears, it's his perfection of generosity which makes him continue to sit. Now what is generosity? Generosity is doing something for somebody else, and I presume that what came to him at that moment was that this wasn't just for him. This was for humanity. It wasn't a selfish thing, that he wanted to get out of suffering, that he was trying to save himself. It was in the greater context that this was the question, and it was for the benefit of others that I think gave him that strength to sit there and continue that investigation.

This is my own interpretation, by the way. The commentaries just say it was the quality, the perfection of generosity that gave him the strength.

So when he began to teach, he taught these two things in tandem, and the absorption states were something that he really pushed. The thing about the mind is that if it's very concentrated, very open, very still, obviously it sees something. Obviously it's more capable of seeing something, rather than a mind that's scattered, unable to be gathered onto a single point. One can develop that sort of single-pointed mind through various exercises, and you can do it, as it were, just by repetition.

But remember that when you do that, there's a tendency to be able to block, to stop the purification process. And that's what the Buddha found. When he was in these beautiful states, fine. But when he came out again, he was still the same old depressed Gautama. It hadn't done anything to purify the heart. It had built another mindset which as an adept he could enter any time. So he could always go to this place when he felt a bit depressed, push it away, do his mantra, in he goes, blissed out. But it never actually dealt with this problem. That's what he came back to. It can't do, because these jhānic states are about developing the mind.

Now we see this, and this is the distinction between a charismatic who is not wise, and somebody who is wise, and somebody who is charismatic and wise. Somebody who's charismatic builds up this huge love and it can become a radiance. You can be attracted to it, and then one day you stand on their foot and they go berserk. So that's why the Buddha says you can't tell how wise somebody is until you live with them for quite some time. Then you suddenly see these little defilements, these little odd bits of behavior come out, and you know that something has not been purified.

That doesn't mean to say that in that charismatic form the person might not be doing a huge amount of good. But even that person may be confusing their charisma with wisdom. And the great enemy, the Buddha points out, of the leader are the followers. Because they keep telling you how wonderful you are.

The person who is fully liberated might not be charismatic at all. Might be quite an ordinary person. Even though the Buddha definitely had some charisma, there's a lovely moment in the scriptures where somebody, a monk or perhaps a lay person, comes into a group of monks and has to ask which one is the Bhagavan. So it's not as though he displayed this huge charisma, or it doesn't seem to have done. But then again, you can have somebody who is charismatic and who is fully liberated.

Now what the jhāna does, all these jhānas, is to produce charisma, depending on what you practice. So if you practice love, that's the charisma you'll get.

In my travels in Thailand, I met about four or five people really. Five monks, because you only get to see monks as a monk. Who were all highly developed, and all of them were generally considered to be liberated monks. They all had very different atmospheres around them.

The two I remember most is Ajahn Sim, who lived just up beyond Chiang Mai. There were three of us traveling together, a couple of Americans. When you sat in his presence, you were immediately drawn into his sense of peace. It was a tangible feeling. It immediately affected you, and you sat in peace. Just like

that.

When I went to Ajahn Tate, who had this beautiful monastery up on the borders of Laos, on the Mekong, I went to see him. It was just me at the time, I think. You were just enveloped with this very, very lovely, loving kindness. He might just have been feeling that at the time, I don't know. But it was tangible. It was a real tangible feeling. Immediately softening. Immediately you felt this open friendship.

When he died, something like a couple of million people turned up for the funeral. He was pretty famous, Ajahn Tate. He's the one I quote, by the way. I've said something elsewhere, but when I do a day of resolution on the retreats: make it simple, take it easy, stay with the one who knows. That's Ajahn Tate.

Make it simple. Take it easy. Stay with the one who knows.

Now, when people began to join him—all the members, bhikkhus and bhikkhunis—they were people who had left the worldly life. So what were they going to do? What do you do all day? You haven't got to go to work. What do you do? And you can't grow anything. You're not allowed to grow crops. You can't cook. You don't have any money. You can't buy anything. You can't get into retail therapy. So what are you going to do? You've got to do something.

These jhānic exercises are specifically for those people who have time. And if you find yourself with time, it's something you might want to practice. It's beneficial—it creates beautiful states of mind.

But the Buddha was traveling once, later on in his teaching, out towards Kammāsadhamma amongst the Kurus. It was a village of the Kurus, and the Kurus lived in what we would now recognize as modern Delhi, that sort of area. He'd been there before. These were ordinary village people—people who looked after cows and sheep and fields. There was nothing technological. This was drawing water from the well, cutting wood, all that sort of thing.

He'd been there before and had given them teachings. When he turns up again, he's quite taken by how they're actually practicing the Dhamma. He says, for a start, there's no well talk—no gossip around the well. Everybody was doing things mindfully, and they were all practicing meditation. He was so moved by this that he gave the talk known as the Discourse on the Establishment or Foundation of Mindfulness, which is recognized as the jewel of the whole collection. Because here he actually tells you how to become liberated. This is it—he puts it all together in one discourse.

And he says it to these ordinary people in Kammāsadhamma. He doesn't give this talk to his monks or anyone else. Now, this for me is highly significant, because normally he's going on about the jhānas and vipassanā, how the one leads to the other and so forth. There are teachers who teach that now. But this, you see, is directed to lay people who haven't got the time to sit there and get into these blissful states. They've got to tend a family and all of that.

It starts off by telling them clearly. The word he uses is *ekāyana magga*, which means "the one-way

proceeding path" or "the path that proceeds in this single way." The commentary normally puts that as opposed to the *dvāyana*, the two-way path, which is the combination of samatha practice with vipassanā.

Those are his first words—*ekāyana magga*—and it's translated variously by scholars depending on their particular viewpoint. So you'll see in Nyanaponika, in his really still the core book on meditation, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, he says it's "the only path." That's a bit fundamentalist. Then there are people who are friends down in Devon who translate Pāli as a sort of hobby, and they call it "the sure path." But Bhikkhu Bodhi, the American monk who is the doyen of Buddhist studies, makes it quite clear that this *ekāyana* means the one-way path as opposed to the two-way path. To me that makes a lot of sense.

So this is the one-way path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for reaching the end of suffering and discontent, for finding the true way, for the realization of emancipation—namely, the four applications of mindfulness. Not a bad translation, really.

So when we practice vipassanā, there has to be included in it a certain concentration content. What the Buddha does is pull out for us seven factors which, when developed, lead to this natural insight process. The first one is simply this awareness.

But it's right awareness, and right awareness always means the observation of the three characteristics—because that's where the delusion lies. It's seeing impermanence. It's seeing how we indulge or resist what is happening, whether pleasant or unpleasant. And the quality of not-self.

This not-self is not a philosophical statement. The Buddha doesn't say there is no self. It's a teaching tool in which everything you experience you make clear to yourself is an object you're aware of. So if you're aware of something, it cannot be that which is aware.

Think of how as children we began to distinguish, out of that mass of sensation, the world out there—object relationship, I think they call it. Out of this mass of sensations, mother starts to loom, your first object, something separate from you that separates out of the mass. Until eventually you're quite clear that this is me and everything else is not me.

All we're doing is taking that process inward and making the inner part of our experience as objective as this room is. This room has a body—walls, ceiling—and it has atmosphere; it has a kind of mind. So it is the same within us. As we begin to push out, push away, objectify the inner world as we've done the outer world, that process is the process of detaching from it, undermining that relationship of it being me or mine. That's why we feel this process of liberation. That's why the Buddha says the taste of Nibbāna is freedom. It's liberation from that wrong connection with what we're experiencing.

But this awareness has to be supported, and the split is between those qualities which are passive and those which are active.

When we practice this quiet abiding, we are practicing those qualities which are passive—which, for us, are not highly developed in our society. It's the active qualities that are developed. Those passive qualities are calmness. Be calm. Not to be excited all the time, not to seek a high level of energy, but to bring ourselves to a real, deep calm.

And interestingly, that's linked with this interest. Because interest can get excited. If you're interested in something you can feel yourself getting all worked up, but that excitement then becomes—that interest becomes tainted with trying to achieve something, trying to see something. And once there's a trying to see something, that self is taking over the process.

To see something at this level, one has to let go of the idea that I'm achieving it. There has to be this business of just having faith, a real confidence that there is within us that which will make insight without us trying. That's the abstraction—that's the taking away of this self which manifests as a sort of over-effort, a trying to see something. You won't relax and just let the eye look.

So tomorrow, when you're wandering around the paddock or the garden or you go for a walk, just rest your eye on something and watch the way the eye perceives. You don't have to try and perceive. Put a leaf in your hand, or just look at a tree, and watch how the eye itself is perceiving. Stand back from that process, and then you gain confidence.

Oh, the eye perceives. I don't have to try and perceive.

So it's the same with intelligence. If we get out of the way, intelligence works naturally because that's the quality of intelligence. It understands. It perceives. It has insight. It doesn't think. This is the thing. Thought is another process. The insight is immediate. You either see it or you don't see it.

Then there is this passive quality of a steadiness of attention—just the steadiness of attention, concentration, focus. Just steadiness. Just keeping the attention steady. And that has to be coupled again with right effort. The effort is just to maintain the focus. You put too much effort and you start getting restless, you start getting a shaking, putting too much effort into it. Too little effort and the concentrated mind very quickly falls into sweet oblivion. Sleep. Because that's what happens when the mind's nicely concentrated. It's calm. And off you go. Sleep.

The passive quality of equanimity—that's so difficult for us. In this sense it's coming from a position of don't know, which means that you're looking at something, investigating something, without any preconceived ideas, preconceived notions that this has to be this way. Very difficult, because on one side we're being fed these three characteristics. And then we're told, just look. Forget about that. Just look and see for yourself. And there's no prejudice in the sense that the heart isn't involved in any over-desire. It's a calm heart.

All these factors we've talked about are natural to daily life. Everybody has these. What turns them into factors that lead to liberation is the investigation of the Dhamma. So these same factors would be present

in anybody involved in science or some active research—they're all the same sort of qualities that you need. But once you turn all that to investigating the Dhamma, which here means these three characteristics, then this leads to a change in the way that we relate to the world we live in.

All that is within this discourse, you see. This is what he taught lay people.

And just as a little aside about the Mahasi, whose picture you see here: after the Second World War, when Burma gained independence from us—oh, pity—the elected prime minister, the only one unfortunately, because in 1963 there was the military coup which they're still suffering from... A group of people were looking for a meditation teacher. And the Mahasi was a sort of well-known teacher up in middle Burma. And they brought him down and set him up in a meditation center. And by all tales, a virtual immediate success. He was teaching this. He wasn't teaching jhāna and absorption, for which you need time. He was teaching a direct path—it's ekāyāna. And he sort of created the parameters whereby people could move quickly, so it was great effort, as you know—it's sitting, walking, sitting, walking, eighteen hours a day. But it was never to try and attain something. It was always trying to relax and to watch and to see, to explore.

So his effect on the local society in Rangoon was immediate. And eventually, you know, it expanded so much that by '56, which is not many years after, he's doing his first world tour around the East. He didn't come West, I don't think, for a while.

So that's the specific place that the Mahasi holds in the vipassanā scene, you might say—that he teaches this ekāyāna magga, this direct path.

So there we have it. What makes the Buddha an especially great person in spiritual history wasn't just simply the amazing insight that he had, but also his amazing ability to get it across—to actually produce a systematic way and a systematic teaching which people could understand. And not just the intellectuals—this is the point. Ordinary people. People of Kuru. Siddhaṃ.

So I can only hope my words have been of some assistance.

May you be liberated from all your suffering—sooner rather than later.

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