

# **(The Discourse that Set the Dhamma Wheel Rolling)**

*(from Vinaya Mahāvagga 1)*

**Translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu**

## **The Middle Way**

...then the Gracious One addressed the group-of-five monks, saying:

“There are these two extremes, monks, that one who has gone forth ought not to associate with,

which is this: devotion to the pleasure and happiness in sense pleasures,  
which is low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, and not connected with the goal;  
and this: devotion to self-mortification,  
which is painful, ignoble, and not connected with the goal.

Not having approached either of these two extremes, monks, the middle practice was awakened to by the Realised One, which produces vision, produces knowledge, and which leads to peace, deep knowledge, Complete Awakening, and Nibbāna.

Now what is this middle practice, monks, that was awakened to by the Realised One, which produces vision, produces knowledge, and which leads to peace, deep knowledge, Complete Awakening, and Nibbāna?

It is this noble path with eight factors, as follows:

right view  
right thought  
right speech  
right action  
right livelihood  
right endeavour  
right mindfulness  
right concentration.

This is the middle practice, monks, that was awakened to by the Realised One, which produces vision, produces knowledge, and which leads to peace, deep knowledge, Complete Awakening, and Nibbāna.

## The Four Noble Truths

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of suffering:

birth is suffering  
also old age is suffering  
also sickness is suffering  
also death is suffering  
being joined to what is not dear is suffering  
being separated from what is dear is suffering  
also not to obtain what one longs for is suffering  
in brief, the five constituents (of mind and body) that are attached to are suffering.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the arising of suffering:

it is that craving which leads to continuation in existence,  
which is connected with enjoyment and passion, greatly enjoying this and that, as follows:  
craving for sense pleasures  
craving for continuation  
craving for discontinuation.

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering:

it is the complete fading away and cessation without remainder of that craving -  
liberation, letting go, release, and non-adherence.

Now this, monks,

is the noble truth of the practice leading to the end of suffering:

It is this noble path with eight factors, as follows:

right view  
right thought  
right speech  
right action  
right livelihood  
right endeavour  
right mindfulness  
right concentration.

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### Realisation

“This is the noble truth of suffering” - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of suffering” refers (i.e. suffering itself) ought to be fully known - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of suffering” refers has been fully known - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

“This is the noble truth of the arising of suffering” - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the arising of suffering” refers (i.e. craving) ought to be given up - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the arising of suffering” refers has been given up, to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

“This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering” - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering” refers (i.e. Nibbāna) ought to be experienced - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering” refers has been experienced - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

“This is the noble truth of the practice going to the cessation of suffering” - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

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Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the practice leading to the end of suffering” refers (i.e. the practice itself) ought to be developed - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

Now that to which “this is the noble truth of the practice leading to the end of suffering” refers has been developed - to me, monks, regarding these previously unheard-of things vision arose, knowledge arose, wisdom arose, understanding arose, light arose.

### Declaring the Awakening

For as long as to me, monks, in regard to these four noble truths - turned like this, in three ways, twelvefold - knowledge and seeing as it really is was not quite clear, for that long, monks, I did not declare to the world with its gods, Māra, and Brahma, to this generation, with its ascetics and brahmins, princes and men, that I was a Full and Perfect Sambuddha with unsurpassed complete awakening.

But when to me, monks, in regard to these four noble truths - turned like this, in three ways, twelvefold - knowledge and seeing as it really is was quite clear then, monks, I did declare to the world with its gods, Māra, and Brahma, to this generation, with its ascetics and brahmins, princes and men, that I was a Full and Perfect Sambuddha with unsurpassed complete awakening.

To me knowledge and seeing arose:

Sure is my freedom of mind  
this is my last birth  
now there is no continuation of existence.”

### The First Attainment

The Gracious One said this, and the group-of-five monks were uplifted and greatly rejoiced in what was said by the Gracious One.

Moreover, as this sermon was being given, to venerable Koṇḍañña the dust-free, stainless, Vision-of-the-Dhamma arose:

Whatever has the nature of arising,  
all that has the nature of ceasing.

## The Gods Rejoice

Now when the Dhamma Wheel was set rolling by the Gracious One the Earth gods let loose a cry:

“The Gracious One, while near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,  
has set rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel,  
and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brahmin  
or by a god or by a demon or by a deity or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Earth gods the gods called the Four Great Kings let loose a cry:

“The Gracious One, while near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,  
has set rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel,  
and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brahmin  
or by a god or by a demon or by a deity or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the gods called the Four Great Kings the Tāvatiṃsa gods let loose a cry:

“The Gracious One, while near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,  
has set rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel,  
and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brahmin  
or by a god or by a demon or by a deity or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Tāvatiṃsa gods the Yāma gods let loose a cry:

“The Gracious One, while near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,  
has set rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel,  
and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brahmin  
or by a god or by a demon or by a deity or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Yāma gods the Tusita gods let loose a cry:

“The Gracious One, while near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,  
has set rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel,  
and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brahmin  
or by a god or by a demon or by a deity or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Tusita gods the Nimmāṇarati gods let loose a cry:

“The Gracious One, while near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,  
has set rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel,

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and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brahmin  
or by a god or by a demon or by a deity or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Nimmānarati gods the Paranimmitavasavatti gods let loose a cry:

“The Gracious One, while near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,  
has set rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel,  
and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brahmin  
or by a god or by a demon or by a deity or by anyone in the world.”

Having heard the cry of the Paranimmitavasavatti gods the Brahmakāyika gods let loose a cry:

“The Gracious One, while near Bārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Isipatana,  
has set rolling the unsurpassed Dhamma Wheel,  
and it cannot be rolled back by an ascetic or by a brahmin  
or by a god or by a demon or by a deity or by anyone in the world.”

Thus at that moment, at that second, that cry reached as far as the Brahma worlds, and this ten thousand world-element moved, wavered, and shook, and great and measureless light became manifest in the world, transcending the godly power of the gods.

Then the Gracious One uttered this inspired utterance:

“Koṇḍañña surely knows,  
Koṇḍañña surely knows.”

Thus to the venerable Koṇḍañña came the name Añña Koṇḍañña (Koṇḍañña, he-who-knows).