

[The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing]

[Utpadyananirudhyanasūtram]

[The Fourth Recorded Discourse of the Buddha]

from Mahāvastu Vol. III pp. 443-9

Translated by Ānandajoti Bhikkhu

(expanded edition August 2009)

Acknowledgement

I am very grateful indeed to Rod Bucknell who kindly went through the whole work for me and made a number of useful suggestions and corrections, especially in regard to some of the more obscure passages of this discourse.

[The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing]¹

[Introduction]²

Then the Gracious One while walking on walking tour amongst the Magadhans with a great Community of Monks, with one thousand two hundred and fifty monks, entered the town of Rājagṛha of the Magadhans, and having reached there he lived in the Sapling garden wood on the edge of the mountain.

King Śreṇīya Bimbisāra heard from his brāhmaṇa chaplain and royal teacher: “The Gracious One, it seems, while walking on walking tour amongst the Magadhans with a great Community of Monks, with one thousand two hundred and fifty monks, has entered the town of Rājagṛha of the Magadhans, and having reached there he is living in the Sapling garden wood on the edge of the mountain.”

After hearing (it) he addressed a certain King’s Minister (saying): “Good Minister, I am going out to meet the Gracious One, the Awakened One. Decorate Rājagṛha, and prepare magnificent vehicles for the brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha, and all the craftsmen, and all the guildsmen, they must go together with me to meet the Gracious One, the Awakened One.”

“Certainly, Great King”, said the King’s Minister, and after agreeing with Śreṇīya Bimbisāra, he quickly prepared the magnificent vehicles, and had this proclamation made in Rājagṛha at the cross-roads and entrances (to the town): “The Awakened One, the Gracious One has reached the Sapling garden wood on the mountain’s edge and everyone here must go together with King Śreṇīya Bimbisāra to meet the Gracious One.”

a long paragraph describing the different classes of people
who accompanied the King is omitted here

Then the King’s Minister, after seeing that the people had assembled, the magnificent vehicles had been made ready, and approaching King Śreṇīya Bimbisāra, said this to King Śreṇīya

¹ This title is given by the present translator based on the contents on the discourse. It also occurs in the Saṅghabhedavastu of the Mūlasarvāstivādins, contained in the Gilgit manuscripts, and recently Rod Bucknell informed me that it is also preserved in the Chinese in Sūtra 62 of the Sarvāstivādin Madhyamāgama, where it is called 頻鞞娑邏王迎佛 (King Bimbisāra welcomes the Buddha).

The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing

Bimbisāra: “The magnificent vehicles have been made ready, Great King, and a great body of people have assembled, now is the time, your Majesty, for whatever you are thinking.”

Then King Śreṇya Bimbisāra, after mounting a magnificent vehicle, surrounded by twelve myriads of brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha, with great Royal power and a great body of people who were calling and shouting, with the collective noise of drums great and small, and conches, went out from the town of Rajagṛha and to the Sapling garden wood on the edge of the mountain.

Then the King Śreṇya Bimbisāra, having gone as far as the ground for vehicles (would allow), and descending from the vehicle, approached the Gracious One by foot, and after worshipping the Gracious One’s feet with his head, he sat down on one side, Some, after polite and courteous talk with the Gracious One, and exchanging greetings, sat down on one side.

Some, after announcing to the Gracious One their very own Mother’s and Father’s name and lineage, sat down on one side. Some, after raising their hands in respectful salutation to the Gracious One, sat down on one side. Some of the brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha, while keeping silent, sat down on one side.

Then at that time Uruvilvā Kāśyapa was sat not far away from the Gracious One. Then this occurred to those brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha: “How is it: does Uruvilvākāśyapa live the spiritual life under the ascetic Gautama, or does the Great Ascetic Gautama live the spiritual life under Uruvilvākāśyapa?”

Then the Gracious One knowing that such a thought had arisen in the minds of the brāhmaṇas and householders addressed the venerable Uruvilvākāśyapa with a verse:

“Having seen what did you, one of Uruvilvā,
Who spoke of austerity, give up the sacrificial fire?
I ask you the reason for this, Kāśyapa,
Why did you give up the fire sacrifice?”

When that was said the venerable Uruvilvākāśyapa replied to the Gracious One with a verse:

“The sacrifices speak of food, drinks,³
And also tastes, sensuality, and women.

² The story in the Introduction is parallel to the story in the Pāli Mahākhandhaka, but with some extra details not found there.

³ *Sounds and forms* are mentioned in the Pāli in place of *food and drinks*.

The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing

Having understood that in the attachments ‘this is a stain’,
I therefore take no delight in offerings and sacrifices.”

When that was said the Gracious One replied to the venerable Uruvilvākāśyapa with a verse:

“If your mind takes no delight
In food and drinks and also tastes,
In what other thing that is good for gods and men
Does your mind take delight, Kāśyapa?”

When that was said venerable Uruvilvākāśyapa replied to the Gracious One with a verse:

“Having seen the silent saint,⁴ free of attachments,
(That) nothingness, unattached to the all realms of existence,⁵
The Unchangeable, unknown to others,
I therefore take no delight in offerings and sacrifices.”

When that was said the Gracious One replied to the venerable Uruvilvākāśyapa with a verse:⁶

“Deluded you lit the fire, deluded you performed austerity,
In the end you gave that up as a snake (gave up) his skin.”

When that was said the venerable Uruvilvākāśyapa replied to the Gracious One with a verse:

“Deluded I lit the fire, deluded I performed austerity,
In the end I gave that up as a snake (gave up) his skin.

‘Through fire sacrifices he is freed,’
Understanding like this in former times,
Blinded, I followed after birth and death,
Not seeing the Supreme State which does not pass away.

⁴ Pāli: *Having seen the state of peace.*

⁵ Pāli: *unattached to the sensual realm.*

⁶ The following verses are not found in the Pāli version of the story.

The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing

But now I see the Undisturbed State,
Well-taught by the Such-like One, the noble Dragon.
I have attained that Perfect State
After giving up the round of birth and death.

Many beings are being destroyed while performing various austerities,
Not having attained Perfection, not having crossed over doubt,

For a long time I was defiled, bound by the bonds of (wrong) view,
The Visionary, the Gracious One has set me free from all of my chains.

The Gracious One is my Teacher, I am a disciple of the Fortunate One.” Then the venerable Uruvilvākāśyapa, after rising from his seat, arranging his robe over one shoulder, placing his right kneecap on the ground, worshipping the Gracious One’s feet with his head, circumambulating him three times, stood behind the Gracious One fanning the Gracious One with peacock feathers. Then this occurred to those brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha: “Uruvilvākāśyapa lives the spiritual life under the ascetic Gautama.”

[The Discourse]

Then the Gracious One presented this Dharma talk to the brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha: “Bodily form, brāhmaṇas and householders, arises and ceases, feeling arises and ceases, perception arises and ceases, (volitional) processes arise and cease, consciousness arises and ceases.

The Noble Disciple, brāhmaṇas and householders, contemplating ‘bodily form has the nature to arise and dissolve’, contemplates ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are impermanent’, contemplating ‘bodily form is impermanent’, contemplating ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are impermanent’,

contemplating ‘bodily form is suffering’ contemplating ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are suffering’, contemplates ‘bodily form is not-self’, he contemplates ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are not-self’,

contemplating ‘bodily form is not-self’, contemplating ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are not-self’, he knows ‘bodily form arises and dissolves’, knowing ‘bodily form arises and dissolves’ he knows ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness arise and dissolve’,

The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing

knowing ‘bodily form is impermanent’ he knows, knowing (thus), he knows ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are impermanent’, knowing (thus), he knows ‘bodily form is suffering’, knowing (thus), he knows ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are suffering’, knowing (thus), he knows ‘bodily form is not-self’,

knowing (thus), he knows ‘feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are not-self’, knowing (thus) he is not attached to anything in the world, being without attachment he personally is emancipated,

‘Destroyed is (re)birth,
accomplished is the spiritual life
done is what ought to be done
there is no more of this mundane state’ - this he knows.

Then this occurred to those brāhmaṇas and householders: “Since bodily form, it seems, is surely not-self, (since) feeling, perception, (volitional) processes, and consciousness are not-self, then who is the maker, or the one who makes, who is the animator, or the originator, or the one who puts (them) down, who takes up these processes or puts them down, for whom are these processes empty, not capable of being self, or having a self or with a capability of being self?

Then the Gracious One, knowing with his mind the reflection that had arisen in the minds of those brāhmaṇas and householders, addressed the monks (saying): “The fool, monks, though he declares he has arrived at (the view of) not-self (thinks) his feelings, perceptions, (volitional) processes, or consciousness are ‘my self’; but again I do not say thus: ‘I am the maker here, or the one who makes, the animator, or the originator, or the one who puts (them) down, he who puts down these processes here and takes (them) up elsewhere.’

The processes arise and the processes cease, they arise with causes, and they cease with causes, with causes for the process of rebirth, (thus) monks, does the Realised One [explain] ‘self’ and ‘the one who takes up’. I declare there is a falling away and a rearing up of beings.

I see, monks, with my divine eye which is purified and surpasses that of (normal) men beings falling away and rearing up: beautiful and ugly, well born and low born, base and excellent, I know that beings are born according to their actions, but again I do not say thus: ‘I am the

The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing

maker, or the one who makes, the animator, or the activator,⁷ or the originator, or the one who puts (them) down, who puts down these processes here and takes (them) up elsewhere.’

The processes arise and the processes cease, they arise with causes and conditions, and they cease with causes and conditions. There is the view about causes, and the view about continuity in existence, ‘with causes processes arise’, monks, seeing this with right wisdom as it really is there will be no existence-view or eternity-view; ‘with causes processes cease’, monks, seeing this with right wisdom as it really is there will be no extinction view, or annihilation view.

So not having approached either of these two extremes, monks, the Realised One teaches the Dhamma which is a middle practice (thus):

Because of ignorance there are (volitional) processes,
because of (volitional) processes: consciousness,
because of consciousness: mind and body,
because of mind and body: the six sense spheres,
because of the six sense spheres: contact,
because of contact: feeling,
because of feeling: craving,
because of craving: attachment,
because of attachment: continuation,
because of continuation: birth,
because of birth: old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair.

And so there is an origination of this [whole] great mass of suffering.

From the cessation of ignorance, there is the cessation of (volitional) processes,
from the cessation of (volitional) processes, the cessation of consciousness,
from the cessation of consciousness, the cessation of mind and body,
from the cessation of mind and body, the cessation of the six sense spheres,
from the cessation of the six sense spheres, the cessation of contact,
from the cessation of contact, the cessation of feeling,
from the cessation of feeling, the cessation of craving,
from the cessation of craving, the cessation of attachment,
from the cessation of attachment, the cessation of continuation,
from the cessation of continuation, the cessation of birth,

⁷ This is additional to the formulas above.

The Discourse on Arising and Ceasing

from the cessation of birth, the cessation of old age and death,
from the cessation of old age and death,⁸ grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair
(all) cease,

and so there is a cessation of this whole great mass of suffering.

The Gracious One said this while living near Rājagṛha on the side of the mountain in the Sapling garden wood, moreover, as this sermon was being given, as King Śreṇya Bimbisāra was sitting right there on the seat, the dust-free, stainless, Vision-of-the-Dhamma regarding (all) things arose.

Also to eleven thousand (of the brāhmaṇas and householders) the dust-free, stainless, Vision-of-the-Dhamma regarding (all) things arose. Also the twelve thousand coachman and drivers at the back went for refuge to the Buddha, went for refuge to the Dhamma, went for refuge to the Saṅgha, and those monks, King Śreṇya Bimbisāra, and the brāhmaṇas and householders from Magadha were uplifted and greatly rejoiced in what was said by the Gracious One.

⁸ This differs from the standard formula, which reads: *from the cessation of birth, old age and death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair (all) cease.*