

Dharma

The Rock in The Air



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The Buddha was sitting upright with crossed legs under a tree in deep Dhyana, when a friend came and approached him, and sat in front of him, waiting and watching. He waited for a long time. He noticed that the tree roots had made a perfect platform for sitting, as the ground slanted downward away from the tree, and he was below his friend and teacher. He sat and meditated, watching and looking at his teacher. Everything seemed so uniquely peaceful and quiet. Sounds seemed so far away, and didn't break the peace. It was an unearthly beauty, and it moved his heart as he watched, and tears almost came to his eyes.

At that moment Buddha moved his eyelids as if to see. Something was remarkable in that moment. Something in the air had changed, and the friend bowed his head, put his hands together in front of his face, and waited. A long time passed, and he saw his teacher start to unfold his legs. He glanced at Buddhas eyes and nothing had changed. He thought to himself, "Is He seeing? His eyes are open, but no one is there." Buddha leaned back against the tree, and put one knee upright. Slowly the eyes opened more and moved once. Then the

Buddha smiled broadly and said, “Welcome my friend. What have you learned?”

The Buddha still seemed far away, and after a few moments of surprise at the question, the friend said, “What have I learned?” At that moment the Buddha's eyes looked directly at him. A little startled, the friend said, “I came with a question, but as I sat here with you, I forgot my question, and just felt an extraordinary silence and peace. Sounds seemed so far away and they did not touch this place. I had never felt this, and then I felt my heart melt and tears almost came to my eyes. I don't know what I learned. Maybe that is all I learned.”

“Exactly. You meditated here with me and felt something unearthy. Do you think I have anything earthly to teach? Do you think I teach the earthly, or do you think I teach the unearthy?”

“My great teacher, even when you are silent, I think you are teaching something unearthy. Now I feel like I came here with a silly question, a common question, and before you even heard me, my question was forgotten and I was experiencing

unearthly things, so now my question seems foolish and I don't need any answers.”

“I have heard so many things from people about Dharma, and I don't know what to believe, and I thought to come here and see what you say.”

“Exactly. Many people say many things about Dharma, and what have you heard, my friend?”

“Some people say that whenever you speak that is Dharma. They say you speak Dharma. I don't understand this.”

“Exactly. You have experienced that my teaching is not earthly, and the unearthly teaching began before I spoke. Do you think my speaking is my teaching? Do you think my speaking to you is unearthly?”

“No, the words you use are simple and everybody says similar words. They are common words, and when you say them, they are not unearthly.”

“Exactly. My words are simple, and people use

these words and we can understand them. They are not special words, they are earthly words. I am not speaking of earthly things. I am not teaching earthly things. Dharma is something very earthly, very mundane. Do you think my teaching should be called Dharma?

“I understand. If Dharma is something mundane, then your teachings should not be called Dharma, because your teaching is not mundane.”

“I have heard that Dharma is the true nature of all things, that which sustains and supports this world. So people think it means the truth or the laws of this world, so they use this word about your teachings, to glorify your teachings.”

“Exactly. Dharma is the nature of this world, the truth and the laws of this world. You have experienced and said my teachings are not of this world. Do you think it is wise to call my teachings Dharma?”

“Unbelievable. I understand. Dharma is all about this world, what sustains, and supports this world,

the truth and the laws of this world, and your teachings are not of this world, so to say your teachings are Dharma is an insult to my experience of your teachings. Dharma is about the world, and your teaching are not of this world. This is a profound awakening for me. Every hair on my body is standing on end, when I realize what you are saying. No one has ever said these things so clearly to me. Words cannot express my joy. I am truly blessed.”

“But, I have heard you speak of Dharma, and now I am not sure why you speak of Dharma.”

“Yes, I have spoken many times of Dharma, and Dharma is only about this world. Let me ask you, my friend, would a person who has completely left this world, fully enlightened, whose teachings are totally not of this world, speak of this world to glorify this world, to support this world, to help you indulge in this world?”

“When I hear you say these words, the hair stands on end again, and my body is thrilled.”

“ It is not possible for the enlightened one, who has completely left this world, to speak and glorify this world, support this world, or help us indulge in this world. It is not possible!”

“Exactly. It is not possible! What do you think, my friend, what would be my purpose in speaking about Dharma, the truth and laws of this world?”

“My great teacher, there can only be one reason to speak about Dharma, the truth and laws of this world. Your teaching is not of this world. You can only be speaking about Dharma as a way to teach what is not of this world. There is no other way. Your teaching is not of this world, so your teaching of Dharma must lead us out of this world, and be unworldly.”

“Exactly, my friend. My teaching of Dharma is not about this world. It is just a way of teaching what is not of this world.”

“How do you teach Dharma?”

“When you experienced the profound peace and

silence, where sounds seemed so far away, unable to break into that space, and the beauty of this experience caused your heart to break, and tears came to your eyes, did you feel this was an earthly experience?”

“No, my Lord, this was not a normal experience, it was very unearthly.”

“Exactly. As you sit hear now, are you hearing sounds normally or is there this space where silence comes and sounds are far away?”

“Now everything seems normal.”

Why?

“I am not sure. When I hear your words, there is no space of silence, and they touch me. I hear the words and they enter me, affect me. Before those sounds did not touch me. I don't understand what has happened.”

“As you listen to my words, do you think they are inside or outside your body?”

“All sounds are outside my body.”

“OK, shut your eyes. Now, listen to my words and all the sounds you can hear, and tell me what you experience. Are these sounds outside your body or are they inside your body?”

“I am not sure anymore. My mind has clouded images, which seem to trying to make the sounds appear outside, but I don't feel them outside like before.”

“Keeping your eyes shut, focus only on your hearing, and ask yourself if the sounds are inside or outside your body.”

“Interesting. I feel the vibration of the sound in my ear, so I think the hearing is inside my body. Then I see an image in my mind of a space which surrounds the hearing and the space confuses me. In the center of the space is the vibration in my ear and the space or envelope goes both outside and inside. This is confusing.”

“OK, is it the ear which hears, or is the mind which hears?”

“It is the ear which hears.”

“Yes, so concentrating only on the hearing, are the sounds inside or outside?”

“They are inside. The mind was confusing the situation for me.”

“Exactly. All the senses are the same way. They are inside your body, and the mind confuses that reality, by making them seem outside your body.”

“Now open your eyes and see the explosion of the world the mind creates. Now do you feel any of the senses inside the body? Do you feel that your hearing is inside your body?”

“This is astounding! My hearing was inside my ear before and now I hear things far away. I see things far away. Before, I felt my mind trying to make me think the sounds were far away, then my mind created an image in which the sounds could have

been outside my body, and when I opened my eyes, all the sounds are coming to me from far away. This is strange. But how does this relate to Dharma and your teaching about Dharma?”

“Good, my friend. Was there anything that you experienced, which was not of this world?”

“No, everything was very normal, except discovering that my hearing was inside my body, and opening my eyes caused my hearing to feel like sounds were coming from far away, but that was still a worldly discovery.”

“Exactly. Every experience you had was worldly, and each one is a Dharma, a phenomenon. All those experiences together are also Dharma, and that is the Dharma world, whether it is what you hear, what you see, or what is perceived in your mind. They are all phenomenon in your Dharma world. Do you understand what Dharma is now?”

Incredible, my great teacher. I understand what Dharma is now. It is not your words or their meanings, it is all the phenomenon which come to

me and create who I think I am. This is an incredible gift of insight for me. Now it is so simple to understand, but this is only worldly understanding and experience, and you said your teaching of Dharma is not this worldly experience. There must be more.”

“Truly, my friend. There must be more. Thinking carefully about Dharma, is there anything which is not Dharma, is not a phenomenon?”

“Oh, Lord. This puts me in a prison. I should be sad and unhappy, but the hair again stand up all over my body, and I am thrilled. This Dharma world, my Dharma world, is just like some fantastic prison, and I am thrilled by this discovery, this insight, and I don't know how I can be thrilled by this.”

“I have meditated for many years with many great teachers and I have never heard this, experienced this. Everybody speaks of freedom from bondage and liberation, but now I see what prison I am in, and when I think of all the meditation I did, I feel embarrassed, because I always had a Dharma in my mind, whether it was staring at something, or

having some image in my mind, it was always me holding onto a Dharma. Everybody uses Dharmas to seek liberation. Isn't there some Dharma, which used correctly could lead to liberation?"

"What Dharma have you used to seek liberation?"

"I studied with a teacher who said to use sound, an inner sound, and follow it. When I started I had to repeat "OM" softly in my mind until the sound repeated automatically. Then a round circle was supposed to appear in your mind, possibly like an eye or a sun. This happened, and then I was told to penetrate that circle with my mind or heart and following the inner sound, I would achieve liberation."

"My friend, can this round stone here jump into the air?"

"No, that stone has no way to jump into the air."

"Just so, my friend, none of those dead Dharmas can propel you beyond those dead Dharmas. Do you see? They were images and sounds in your

mind, and someone told you to push them and penetrate them to have some experience. Do you see the nonsense?”

“Yes, my great Teacher, sadly I see. That stone is not going to cause itself to jump into the air. It has no way. I have wasted many years in foolish dreams. Like I said, I feel embarrassed. This is not what I wanted to hear, but I came here to get help, and you have helped me see the mistakes I have made. Can you help me get that stone into the air?”

“Yes, my friend, let's try. You are already experienced with meditation on sound, so let's start there. Keep you eyes open, and find the softest sound you can hear. Search for a minute and find the softest sound, and tell me when you find it.”

“OK, wait a minute....I hear the crows. Then I hear the leaves rustling when the wind moves. I hear a dog bark in the distance. Maybe it is the sound of those people talking over there, or it could be the wind, but that doesn't happen all the time.”

“Good, keep finding the softest sound, an tell me if

your heart has become silent, expectant.”

“Yes, I feel that. My heart feels like it gets quiet. When I try to find a soft sound, I feel like I make my heart quiet, so I can hear soft sounds?”

“Why do you do that?”

“I don't know. This is the first time I have seen this happen. It's strange.”

“Do it a few times, experiment with it and tell me why you do it?”

“This is weird. I have never seen myself do this before, but when I listen, I have to quiet my heart and mind, because they are making too much noise for me hear very soft sounds. I feel myself putting pressure on my heart and mind to silence them. Then when I listen intently, I feel like I am in my heart listening very softly, waiting.”

“Yes, Exactly. To listen carefully and find the softest sound, you naturally know your heart and mind are making so much noise that you have to

silence them to hear small sounds. Is this right?”

“Yes, it is a strange thing to say, but that seems to be the truth, and that is what I see happening. I never experienced that before, that my mind and heart were so noisy. Not only that, but I knew how to silence my mind and heart quickly! I meditated many years trying to silence the mind, and nobody showed me this, and I didn't know I already knew how to do it until now, until you gave me this experience. This is amazing, and I am thrilled with this, and again my body has every hair standing on end. What kind of teacher are you? This is like magic, and I am doing it, not you.” (The Buddha and the friend laugh together for a few moments.)

“Yes, I am happy for this insight. It is good to know you have a noisy mind, isn't it (more laughter)?”

So now you know you can quiet your mind and heart in a second, and you also know that your mind is noisier than all the soft sounds in this world, and you have meditated for many years, and still your mind and heart are noisy. Also you saw that when you silenced your mind, you made a

movement, which felt like a pressure to the heart, then you felt your center was at the heart, then the heart and mind was silent enough, and then you were able to hear very soft sounds. Correct?”

“Yes, exactly. So what do we do next?”

“We could do many thing from here (smiling), but we will stay on your track, sound. So stay in that posture of finding the most silent sound, and you are listening for sounds outside yourself, right?”

“Yes. From my quiet heart, I am listening outside myself.”

Concentrate on the softest sound, and carefully feel if the hearing is steady. Is the hearing pulsating or steady. Shut your eyes for this, and listen to the hearing very carefully.

“This is a strange experience, and I see many things. Although my mind and heart are quiet, there is still a big noise there, which prevents continual hearing. I think it is my heartbeat, which is interrupting my hearing. That movement or sound

makes my hearing seem intermittent, like it is pulsating. It seems like my whole body is still noisy, so I can't hear continually. What is weird, maybe it is my imagination, but outside of my body is the image or feeling of perfect continual hearing, so I am confused, and my ear is tingling inside.”

“OK, try it again with your eyes open.”

OK. That ear was tingling so I am switching ears...this time is different. Now my hearing is interrupted by my breathing and my heartbeat, and that ear begins to tingle. But this is a strange feeling, because my body interferes with my hearing, and outside my body it feels like hearing is uninterrupted. Maybe I am imagining this, I don't know. The sound of my breath and heart beat are now so loud, I can't hear from there, from my heart. OK, I get it, the sound which is softest is nothing I know. It is a vibration in the air or something, and now my breath and heartbeat are too loud. So that's why I felt good hearing was outside, because I can't quiet those 2 noises. Is this what you are talking about?”

“Yes, Exactly. When you try to hear soft sounds you first find your heart and mind are too noisy, but you immediately knew how to silence them. You felt yourself make a motion downward which put a pressure on your mind and heart which silenced the mind, so you could hear because they were too noisy.”

Now you find your breath and heartbeat are too noisy to hear a soft vibration outside, and you don't quickly know how to stop the noise, but it is the same way as you did before. You listened to the softest sound and you moved to make the internal noise more quiet, until that soft sound was heard clearly, and it was louder than those internal sounds. Right?”

OK. this is difficult. What I already knew to do before must be done again, because I don't already automatically know this step, but it is the same thing, right?

Yes, that's right.. So you take the sound of the vibration you felt the second time, and make the breath and the heartbeat quieter than the sound of

the vibration. It may take a while. Try it out.

Keeping the sound of the vibration, make the breath and heart quieter than the sound of the vibration, until you are just hearing the vibration. Then tell me what happens.

“This is difficult to describe. I felt the sound of my heart and breath grow quiet, and the sound of the vibration took over, but it changed. I was hearing it outside my body before. Now when that vibration took over, that vibration became my world. My body, the breath, and the heartbeat were far away, not totally silent, and I feel like everything in consciousness is that vibrating sound. When I look at something, I feel or see my seeing, and it becomes the sound of that vibration. This is really strange. I don't feel I am my body anymore, I feel like I am a big ball of this vibration sound, and my legs are hanging out of it. (laughter) I am not sure I can stand up.”

“Laughingly, the Buddha says, “I am not sure I can stand up....but let's sit here and see what we can do next.”

“You are hearing this vibration around you....with your legs hanging out, right?”

“Yes, that sounds so funny when you say it like that.” (and they both have a laugh together)

“And this vibration sound is the primary thing you hear everywhere. When you see me, that seeing has a depth to it, like a dream in front of your eyes, and it is or becomes that vibration sound.”

“Yes.”

“Let's look at the size and shape of this hearing? How far does this vibration sound extend. Hear as far as you can in every direction, and tell me what you experience.”

“OK, I hear to the right and feel the vibration does not go very far, but I try to hear far away, and the vibration hearing stretches out like a bubble. I hear the vibration downward and it again stretches like a bubble, and my feet and legs are now inside the bubble. This is very strange. Wherever I hear the

vibration it feels like a bubble expanding and contracting around me. Is this right?

“I feel a little seasick with all this expansion and contraction. (They both laugh together)”

“But don't get sick yet, we have some more to do. (and they both laugh together again)”

“OK, you have seen that vibration sound was even interrupted by the sound of seeing. The sound of your seeing accompanied a dream-like image, which we commonly know as seeing. When it subsided, the vibration sound resumed in this bubble. Let's do this. Fall away outside this bubble. Just relax and feel yourself fall away outside this bubble, and tell me what happens.”

“I feel myself start to fall away, and suddenly my heart started pounding furiously, and it had a pull on me, so I couldn't fall. It was like I was tethered to my heart with a rope, and was dangling from it, but I am not sure what was falling or what the tether was.”

“Exactly. You are tethered to the center of the bubble you found. Listening carefully, can you hear outside the bubble?”

“No, hearing stops at the edge of the bubble, and all sounds are inside the bubble, and I feel I am falling away, but I can't because I am tethered to the center of the bubble. You know, this falling away feeling is making the bubble feel very blissful. My body is feeling very blissful. Big waves of bliss are starting to roll through me. I am not sure I can continue hearing anymore. What's happening? Is this right? I never felt like this before.”

“Yes, is the bubble now just one repeating wave of bliss?”

“Yes, it is just wave after wave of bliss, and that wave of bliss is the entire bubble.”

“Excellent. And where is the tether that bound you to the center of the bubble?”

“There is no tether anymore. The bubble is blissful and starting starting to float. It is independently

existing and floating, blissful. It is very difficult to talk, and I can't use my eyes, or hear anything!”

“Fall away from it.”

OK, ha ha ha! I see what's happening. This is a crazy joke. Now I understand! You asked, “Can this stone jump into the air?” I said, “No, this stone can not jump into the air.” That's not true. This stone can jump into the air. This stone just jump into the air!

“You are a very funny guy. I can't believe this impossible joke,” and they start laughing together and Buddha's friend suddenly had tears come to his eyes, and he was both laughing and crying uncontrollably.

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