

The Four Nobel Truths

How Buddha Created Arahants



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We have heard that the Buddha's original teaching was this: 'There is suffering, there is a cause, there is an end, and there is a way out of suffering'. Whatever words were spoken on that day to his friends in the deer park, we can be clear that these were not the only words spoken that day. He probably did not repeat those words one hundred times and leave. Likewise, whatever was said transferred enough power and insight to enlighten his friends. He did not carry on an intellectual discussion with his friends. He may have answered questions, but he was conveying a direct experience, not having an intellectual discussion. Whatever happened that day we know the flame of enlightenment was conveyed.

When he said there is suffering, he was not asking listeners to think about suffering and all the details of suffering. He was awakening a understanding, an experience, a recognition in the listener. It must have been something like what we now call a guided meditation. The person understood the meaning of his words, and his mind moved to that understanding and awareness. Buddha had to get the listener's agreement about the nature of the world,

something they could agree on, so that the door would begin to open. Maybe he said something like this:

“My Friends. We have all come to this path because of suffering. We feel in our hearts that this world is unsatisfactory, so we have abandoned everything in this world for liberation. Even now, after we have abandoned so much, we still find this world an unhappy place. We have not found our home, free from this miserable world, and we have abandoned everything. Right?”

“My friends, what is the cause of this suffering? What is it that we have not abandoned that keeps us bound to this suffering? As we look at this world, we see we have the five sense organs and the mind. We see that this mind is creating everything we know. We have meditated, tortured our bodies, and twisted our minds in a thousand ways, and we are still bound to this suffering. We have twisted our minds and created dreams of heavens and liberation, but this has not brought us the freedom we seek. Can we use the mind to free us from the mind? Can twisting the mind with greater visions free us from

the bondage to the mind? If we imagine liberation and freedom, is it real liberation? We have made this mind the basis of our existence, our foundation, so we are bound to it, and therefore, we are bound to it's suffering.”

“As we sit here, we can see that we are a solitary human being with a body-mind consciousness, just like every other animal on this planet has a body-mind consciousness. We have sought liberation, but we have sought liberation inside of this body-mind consciousness, and there can be no liberation inside this human consciousness. Do you understand? We twist it and torture it and there is no freedom, no bliss. We speak of attachment to this mind, so we try to break attachments, but we are this mind. The mind is the attachment. It is us. How can the mind break attachment to the mind, when we are that mind and we are that attachment? It can't. It is that simple. It can't. Something else is needed.

“We speak of desire as the basis of our bondage. We say it is our desire for food, for clothing, for shelter, for sensual enjoyment, and desire for the body itself, which causes our bondage to this world. So

we have eliminated all these things from our lives, and we have still not found happiness. We still want food and find pleasure in sensual enjoyments. As we see this beautiful sunset, we are thrilled by its beauty, and how can we stop that? Even if we could stop the beauty in this world, will that give us happiness and liberation? I think not. How can you kill this extraordinary experience and say you will find happiness there? You can't.”

“We speak of the mind's grasping at objects of perception, and thinking about things, and we seek to end our thoughts. So one thought struggles with the next thought to end thinking. Can one thought end the previous thought? No! Can the current thought end the next thought? No! Can your mind destroy your mind? If you want to destroy your mind you will become insane. Is insanity our goal for liberation? Thinking gives you knowledge of this world and allows you to remain alive. How can you destroy your mind, and destroy your ability to survive and find liberation from suffering. You will only suffer more.”

“We have heard and seen visions of heavens where

suffering does not appear, and we wish to go there. But we are here in this body, in this park, sitting on the ground together, and what is that vision of heaven we had? Is it real? Is not that vision just in your imagination, no matter how real it seemed when you were dreaming. You can see that you are sitting here. Where is that vision now? It is gone. If you return to that fantasy world, your body is still sitting here with me. Is this the liberation you were seeking? You have seen the insane people who seem to be living in another world. Is that the bliss and freedom you seek? Of course not!”

“So we have to be real. You are sitting here with me in the beauty of this world, in this extraordinary body and mind, and we want some ultimate freedom, liberation from this experience, liberation from the continual cycle of rebirth, and we have done everything. Is there something we have missed? When I was young, I was sitting like this under a tree and an extraordinary experience of liberation came upon me, and I knew I was not of this world. You also have had such experiences, and we know there is more than this world, and it was not a dream. It was real. Do you remember?”

“When I went away I remembered this natural experience of my youth, and thought of my great struggle, and realized all my work had taken me away from that natural experience. So I pondered hard about what had happened to me, and I came upon a clue. There was nothing I did to cause this experience. It came upon me! It came upon me! Do you see the point? It was not something I did with my body or my mind. It was outside of all that. Do you see what I mean? We have done everything with our bodies and minds, and nothing has happened, because it is outside of all that. We are just a human being with consciousness, just like every other animal on this earth, and we have been trying to twist everything for an experience, and the experience of liberation does not come from this human body. It is a human being like everyone else, and it is not capable of producing freedom from itself! Do you understand the simplicity of this? You can not end suffering by twisting this human body.”

“So I asked myself, 'What experience did I have? How did it happen? What were the details?' I tried to remember everything, and I was not sure what

came upon me that day, but I remembered the feelings and experiences. I was resting, noticing my body sitting, nothing special. I noticed the plants, and the trees, and a gentle breeze. My body felt more and more relaxed, and I could feel my soft breathing. It felt good to relax like this, and I could almost hear my breath. I wasn't thinking about feeling good, I was just relaxing and feeling good.”

“Soon, a breeze came and made the leaves of a tree shimmer with light, and I suddenly felt a wave of pleasure in my body. I was happy to feel this feeling, and I rested into it, wanting more of it. As I rested into the feeling of that pleasure, I relaxed even more, and the more I relaxed and fell into that pleasure, other parts of my body felt waves of pleasure. I noticed that without doing anything, each part of my body felt sudden bursts of pleasure, and it felt wonderful, and I fell back into it.”

“I didn't know if I was awake or asleep, but my eyes were open, and as I sat there, falling into greater and greater pleasure, I felt my whole body was in pleasure with sudden bursts of extraordinary pleasure. It was a wonderful feeling, so I just

continued to fall into it. Then the breeze came and the leaves in the tree moved and my mind went there, and suddenly the movement of my mind, the movement in the trees, and the shimmering light felt like one thing....bliss and I fell into that blissful feeling, just relaxing and loving the experience. Something caught my attention above me, and when I reacted, and a huge wave of bliss ripped through my body and mind, obliterating all the pain and suffering of this world, and I knew I was not this body and worldly experience and did not belong here. This was not my home.”

“My friends, as I remembered that day, that experience, that knowledge, I understood why I was so shocked by the ugliness of this world, why I left my family, and why I gave up everything to seek the spiritual life. I knew this was not my home, and along with you I sought guidance from other people to regain that insight. But now I reject all that nonsense, because the path to freedom was always in our hands, but we did not see it clearly, and all the teachers did not know the way.”

“I reflected on each detail of my experience, and

wanted to understand what had happened before. I went alone and sat under a tree, alertly noticing everything. I knew from my own understanding that this body and mind was not the answer. It was just more of the same suffering, and I knew something else came in slowly and created pleasure and happiness. So I investigated this.”

“When I was resting and very relaxed, relaxed in body and relaxed in mind, not looking at anything, I could feel and hear my breathing. It felt good and I relaxed and fell into that feeling, and a pleasure came into me as a small burst of pleasure. I thought to myself, “This pleasure was not created by me or my mind. I have been withdrawing from everything, just relaxing and following the pleasant feeling of my breathing, and suddenly this rapture comes into me. How wonderful.” I relaxed and fell into that feeling of rapture, and rapture and bliss came into another part of my body and my body felt pleasure. I thought to myself, “How extraordinary! Falling into one feeling of rapture, leads to further rapture, and then pleasurable feelings start to fill my body.””

“Whatever rapture appeared, I relaxed and fell into

that rapture, and then rapture occurred somewhere else, and I relaxed and fell into that rapture and pleasure and became even more relaxed. New rapture came into me over and over again, into every part of my body, and I relaxed and fell into each one, until my entire body was filled with rapture and pleasure, and I thought to myself, “I have done nothing but relax and fall into the pleasant feelings of my breathing, and a sudden rapture and pleasure came into me. I relaxed and fell into that one feeling of rapture, and more rapture and pleasure came into me, and I continued like this and now an unearthly rapture and pleasure has come into every part of my body, such that I feel like I will never want to move from this place. How extraordinary!””

“I continued like this relaxing and falling into every rapture that came into me, and the rapture grew and suddenly came as one one wave through my entire body from my toes to the top of my head, over and over again endlessly, and I relaxed and fell into each wave of extraordinary bliss, and the knowledge came to me, “Even if I wanted to move from this place, I would not be able to do it. My eyes are

open, but I don't have ability to see. I am awake, but I have no ability to be awake. I can think, but I have no ability to think. How extraordinary.””

“I continued like this for some time relaxing and falling into the extraordinary rapture from toes to head, from head to toes, wave after wave. Slowly the wave of body rapture faded into the vertical movement of consciousness from head to foot, from foot to head. I immediately had the knowledge, ”This is the entire content of me and the world, nothing exists outside of this. ”.”

“Then I relaxed and fell into the pleasure of this movement allowing the movement to be all there is, releasing the content of all there is, and suddenly I was at the top of the vertical movement “looking” downward from the outside and the vertical movement became what looked like a beautiful white flower blossoming, and then a floating white lace cloth was below me. I immediately had the knowledge, “I am not in that world. I am home”.”

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