

Karma

The Circle In The Dirt



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The Buddha was sitting on bare ground resting on his right arm with his legs bent off to his left side. His friend wanted to understand Karma, so He began. He looked His friend in the eye, then indicated with the forefinger of His left hand, and reached down and carefully drew a circle in the dirt, then rested back, looking down at the circle with a slight smile on his lips.

His friend looked down at the circle for some time waiting for some insight, and finally said, “I am new to your teachings, and don't have any insight into this. Can you tell me more?”

The Buddha looked up at his friend for a second, leaned forward and reaching down with forefinger again touched the circle, and smiling, said, “*This is you. Do you see?*”

“Please excuse me but I don't see. I see the circle, but I don't understand.”

“The circle is you, and everything you do is inside

this circle.”

“Really? What do you mean, everything I do is inside this circle?”

Laughing the Buddha said, *“Everything you do is inside this circle, and as we sit here you can see the dirt, your body, my body, the trees behind me, and the beautiful skies above me. Can you see what is behind you?”*

“No, I can't see anything behind me.”

“Why?”

“Because my eyes are on the front of my head facing you.”

“Exactly. So everything you see is based on your eyes. Can you see what is beyond the sky?”

“No, I can't see beyond the sky.”

“Why not?”

“I am not sure, but I can't see what is beyond this dirt, and I can't see beyond those trees behind you either. My eyes can't see very far. Everything that I see, limits my ability to see beyond it.

“Exactly, and your ears can hear, but when I touched the dirt with my finger, you didn't hear it, and you can't hear people walking in the nearby village? True?”

“Yes, true.”

“And it is the same with all your other senses, including your mind. You can see the world here, but can you think what is on the other side of the sky above?”

“No!”

“Why not?”

“Because my mind can't go beyond my seeing, but I can imagine things beyond the sky, like I can imagine a black crow flying above the sky. I can see in my mind a blue sky and a black crow flying beyond the sky.”

“Exactly. Your mind can't go beyond the sense experiences, but it can create imaginary experiences. My friend, was the imaginary sky the real sky?”

“No. The color was different and it was like a blue eggshell with a black crow flying above it. It was not the real sky.”

“Exactly. It was not the real sky, but if it was not the real sky, where was that sky?”

“It certainly is not in the world I am seeing, and the image in my mind can be changed to have a white crow flying above a red sky. So, all this does not exist anywhere but in my mind.

“Exactly. You have seen that your mind is limited by the sensory experiences, except when you use your imagination. What are the limits of your imagination? You saw the sky and the crow. How big was this space, and were did it exist?”

“I am not sure.”

“If you keep your eyes open and see Me, and imagine the red sky and the white crow, is the space and distance to me bigger than the space of your imaginary sky?”

“Yes! I see my imaginary sky is very small and it feels like it is inside my head or very near my head. That is incredible. It is like my head is gone, and I see my red sky where my head was and the distance to you is very far. So the limits of my eyes and ears can be very far, but the limits of my imagination is where my head is.

“Exactly, my friend. You are inside the circle I have drawn on the ground. Your seeing has a limit. Your

hearing has a limit. Every sense, likewise, has a limit. Your mind is limited by the senses, and your imagination is a small space in your head. So when I drew this circle in the dirt and said, “It is you?”, and asked you if you see, do you now see?

“Incredible! Now I understand why so many say you are the greatest teacher. I understand completely, and I have this sense of ecstasy that a simple person like myself can understand such deep and profound knowledge, and so quickly! But now, what about Karma? How is this related to Karma?”

“Karma is Action. What we have done is Action, several actions. Were any of these actions outside of the limits you discovered?”

“No”

“Exactly. None of your actions went beyond the limits of your senses, your mind or your imagination. Think carefully. Can you do anything

outside of these limits?

“You are right! How astounding. It impossible to do any action outside of this circle you have drawn in the dirt. I am shocked by this. I am just shocked, and tears are coming to my eyes. I don't know whether to laugh or cry, but tears come to my eyes. Let me recover a minute. This has stirred too much emotion in me. Let me think.”

“So what you are saying is that we are inside a circle and nothing we can do will be beyond this circle you have drawn in the dirt.”

“Exactly. This circle in the dirt is you and all your actions, all your Karma, is inside that circle in the dirt.”

“When I hear you say these words, tears again come to my eyes and my heart is breaking.”

“But, what about what people say? They say if I do good things, good things will happen to me, and if I

do bad things, bad things will come to me.”

“True. People say these things. Look around you now, and find the most pleasant thing.”

“Right now the most beautiful thing is You and Your wisdom”

“And have good things come to you from this Action?”

“Yes, my great wise teacher. I am astonished.”

And what is the most unpleasant thing you can find?

I think there is a mangy, sick dog over there, which may be dieing, and it has a bad smell of feces, and I smell it when the wind shifts.

“Has this Action brought good things to you?”

“No, my Lord. No good things have come to me

from this Action. I am sad for that dog, and the smell has made me slightly sick.”

“Exactly, my friend. You have seen the truth. You have seen you are inside of this circle in the dirt, and there is no Action you can do outside this circle in the dirt. All your actions will be inside this circle in the dirt. Some of your Actions will bring good things to you. Some of your Actions will bring bad things to you.”

“This so simple my great teacher. What an insight for me. Many teachers talk and say many things, but their ideas of Karma are nothing I can verify or believe in, but you have lead me to my own knowledge and experience of Karma, so now I have this knowledge in my heart. Previously, when I repeated what other teachers said about Karma, it was not my understanding, so now I realize, those words I said before were like a parrot repeating the words I had heard, and they were meaningless, because they were not my experience. Now I can speak from my own understanding, which you, my

great teacher, have given me. I am blessed by you.

“But, I have this thought. How is Karma related to meditation, to the states of Dhyana, to freedom from suffering, which I hear people here discussing?”

The Buddha leans forward and points to the circle in the dirt and says, *“My friend, you have said there is no Action which you can do outside of this circle in the dirt, and your imagination only exists around your head. Do people say that there is liberation inside the imagination or inside the circle of dirt?”*

Yes, there are many teachers, who say that there is liberation inside the circle and inside of imagination. Wherever I have gone the teachers teach this, and they say that I can experience liberation with enough effort.

“What ideas have you heard, my friend?”

One teacher says I should watch my thoughts and end them, or to ignore them, and I can find liberation.

The Buddha smiled and said, *“And do they say the waves of thought are like waves in the ocean, coming constantly and creating a white froth of bubbles obscuring your true vision, such that neither the wave nor the bubble can know the ocean, until you end the waves and the bubbles of the mind?”*

“Yes, they say many things like that, and I have done that style of meditation for many years, but my mind is still not quiet.”

“Exactly. My friend, I am happy you are skilled in that style of meditation. Let's look at that meditation. Off to my right you can see the horizon. With your eyes open, look to the furthest point of that horizon, and do that meditation on thoughts, and tell me when you have it, OK?”

“OK, I am ready.”

“Where are you? Where do you feel you are?”

“I feel I am here, perhaps I feel I am inside my body. Maybe I feel I am located in my heart.”

“Can you see the waves of your thoughts?”

“Yes, I can see the waves of my thoughts”

“Look at the horizon for a moment, and then look again at your thoughts, back and forth, judging the size of each experience, and tell me which has the greater depth and distance, the greatest spatiality.

This is interesting. It is so obvious that horizon is far away and my thoughts are either the same as my body or in and around my head. I see my thoughts flash across my eyes, and they are right here close to me. It seems like that sometimes there are waves of thought encompassing my entire body or there are little waves around my head. I suppose the little

waves are what the teachers have said are the bubbles and foam from the waves at the sea shore.

“Exactly. All the waves that you see are in and around your body and head. They each have a different style and different content, but they are always nearby, and the horizon is very far. So, my friend, do any of these things you see and feel have any Action, any Karma, outside the circle in the dirt?”

No, my great teacher. Again I am amazed. This is not what the teachers have told me. They said if I ended or silenced these waves of thought, I would find freedom, but what I am seeing is they are just further Actions and Karma inside the circle. They mostly go on without my control, and seem to be the same as my body and mind. These waves of thought are who I am, and I am now thinking that to end them would be the end of my life!

“Exactly. Do you think there is anything you can do with those thoughts, which will be outside the

circle in the dirt?

“No, there is no possibility of thoughts being outside the circle, and even if I killed those waves of thought, I would be killing my body and mind. I would be dead! I am shocked at this.”

“I will switch into another meditation style. I am going to shut my eyes and see the entire universe and become one with it. I will become an infinite being like Krishna.”

“And now I will open my eyes and look at the horizon. Incredible! The entire universe has just become a small picture around my head! This is astounding. Now I understand why those teachers tell us to shut our eyes. If you don't shut your eyes, you might see that you are having a hallucination, a dream, and how would they answer such a question?”

“Let me try seeing a light as bright as 10,000 suns above my head. Now when I open my eyes, that

bright light is just in my head. Any meditation technique I have tried seems to be the same way. If I focus on a heavenly world, it turns out to be a vision near my head. If I focus on a light inside my body, it is not in my body, it is a image near my head. How astounding this is! But now I am without hope. Your teaching has left me very shocked and saddened. Your teaching has ripped everything from me. It seems I have wasted so many years, and sacrificed too much for nothing but fantasies, and there seems to be no way out of this suffering world. Please help me!”

“Exactly. The teachers had nothing to teach you beyond shutting your eyes and using your imagination and thoughts, and you have seen the mistakes they have made from your own experience. When I saw the time I wasted and the pain I endured because of these false teachers, I was angry, confused, and sad also, but no one could show me a path, so I was lost and had to find my own way. My friend, be happy, because I am here with you and we will walk this path together,

and not grope alone in the dark.

“Look at that horizon to your left again and focus on the furthest point. Can you still see the thoughts passing before you eyes?”

“Yes, they are within my body and close to my head.”

“Exactly. Now, without thinking, feel yourself move to that point on the horizon. From your heart, feel yourself being at the horizon, and when you feel yourself at the horizon, have the thoughts changed?”

“The thoughts have not moved, but this feels strange. I feel myself at the horizon, and the waves of thought are nearby, around my head and not at the horizon.”

“Exactly. Now from the feeling at the horizon examine the content of the waves of thought. Do you see that within each wave of thought is the

feeling of you and your body?

“Yes, how amazing. There are big waves, which create the knowledge of my body and the ME feeling inside that body, and there are small waves near my head, which mostly contain the feeling of ME inside the body. This is very strange. My thoughts are continually just about ME, constantly creating feelings and images of ME and Me inside my body, and I am witnessing these things from being at the horizon.

“Exactly, my friend. Your thoughts are constantly creating the feelings that there is body, and there is a ME inside that body. Which is more stable, the feeling of you at the horizon or the feeling of your body with the ME feeling inside?”

“Incredible. This is very strange. The thoughts are just flashes of body feeling with the feeling of ME inside. They are like lightning which vanishes as quickly as it appeared, and when each flash appears, I feel I am witnessing the flash of body

and ME from the horizon, but when the flash of ME and body are gone, I am still at the horizon. This is strange, but I am witnessing these events and they are true.

“Exactly. You moved to the horizon on your left. From that viewpoint, do you feel you are viewing everything, your body and thoughts, toward the right side?”

“Yes, when I moved to the left, I feel I am looking back towards the right at my body and mind. I feel my view is from left to the right, and I see the left side of my body.”

“Good.” Buddha leans forward and touches the left-most edge of the circle in the dirt and says, *“You are here. Now move to the horizon on your right side and tell me what happens.”*

“I moved quickly and felt that I moved through myself unobstructed and feel myself at the right horizon, and am now automatically viewing my

body and thought waves from the right towards the left.

“Exactly.” The Buddha leans forward and touches the rightmost edge of the circle in the dirt and says, *“You are here.”* The Buddha moves his finger slowly up and down the right side of the circle, and says, *“Take some time and slowly move up and down slowly like this, and tell me what happens.”*

After a minute of moving up and down, he says, *“This is very strange. Whatever place on the circle I move to, I am always viewing towards the center of the circle. When I move upwards, my view slants downward, and when I move down, my view slants upward.”*

“Exactly.” Buddha leans forward and slowly marks up and down on the left side of the circle and says, *“Now slowly do the same thing on the left side, and tells me what happens.”*

After a minute of slowly moving up and down he

says, “Again the same thing is happening. My witnessing is always back towards my body and thoughts at the center of the circle, And the view is tilting so I always face the center of the circle.”

“Exactly. Slowly try the same thing in front and back, and tell me what happens.”

“This is extraordinary. The same thing happens. I don't understand this at all.”

“Let me ask you my friend. From your own experience, is this circle in the dirt a real experience? Does it exist in your experience? Would you say you have seen it?”

“Yes, absolutely. I don't understand it yet, but I have seen it. It is true. I can see I am on the edges of the circle, but how do I get out of Karma? How does this help me?”

“Good question, my friend. We need to keep going further. You are on the edge of the circle in the dirt,

not inside and not outside. You went to all sides of the circle in the dirt, and it was the same right?

“Yes”

“Now slowly move around the top of the circle and tell me what you find?”

“This is so mysterious, like groping around in the dark and my vision is not clear, but there is something very different at the top of the circle. I will describe it as best I can. As I slowly move toward the top of the circle, I am viewing towards the center of the circle, but as I reach the top something else happens. I am not looking downward any more. My view is shaken up, and I felt a vertical movement of what appeared to be energy or light, which changed everything. I felt maybe there was a hole of light, and I suddenly moved up into it, and I couldn't view downward like before. Maybe it is like a tunnel, and my view is not directional anymore. It is so strange. I am not sure what is happening, but this vertical shaft of

energy or light is going up and down this channel I am in, and I feel a little dizzy now being here. I can't view my circle in the dirt anymore, but I feel it is below me, but I can't go there anymore. I am stuck in this tunnel above my head, and I have the feeling to go further in this tunnel. Maybe it is my imagination, but I feel a big light at the end of the tunnel, but I feel dizzy or off-balance again.”

“My friend, are you inside the circle in dirt?”

“No, the circle in the dirt, all my actions and Karma, are below me. I don't know where I am, but my eyes are open, and everything seems to be below me. I feel above my head, my thoughts, my mind, and all my senses are below me, and they are just like lighting flashes inside the circle.”

“When I view the world below me, I see that everything is flickering. Only changing images of knowledge exist inside that circle, and my viewpoint is not flickering. The viewpoint does not feel like the Me inside the circle, it feels more like

my viewpoint from above.”

“OK, let's stay away from the transient images inside the circle, withdraw from the circle as before, not using anything in the circle, and from inside this tunnel, move to the top of the vertical shaft of moving light, and go beyond it, and tell me what happens.”

“How do I move?”

When you came back inside the circle or to the edge of the circle, how did you move?”

“I am not sure. I think I had the feeling to move, and something moved, and then a viewpoint appeared, and when I went into the tunnel the directional viewpoint became a viewpoint to every direction simultaneously, and I knew I was above the circle, but inside a tunnel of some vertical energy or light .”

“Exactly. You had the feeling to move, and

movement happened. Now you feel you can't move, because you can't get the feeling to move. When you found the hole of light at the top of the circle, you felt your view automatically go upward out of the circle into what felt like a tunnel, and you knew you were above the circle. The frame of reference changed automatically and immediately, then a view informed you that the circle was below you. Did you do anything to enter the tunnel?

“No, it was sudden and felt like an automatic shift and the directional viewpoint became multi-directional.”

“Would you say the view knew to move into the tunnel, or did you know to move into the tunnel?”

“It was the view that moved. I had no understanding of all this, and went on without me.”

“Exactly. Did you try to make the view multi-directional or did the view do it?”

“No, it was surprising to me. The view did it.”

“And now when you view the tunnel of energy or light, is it the view or you who understood this.”

“OK, this is interesting. If I take it slowly and carefully, the multi-directional view is illuminating a tunnel. The illumination is the knowing. It is different than mental knowledge, and it is outside the circle.

“How is it different?”

“Normal knowledge is like a lightning flash inside the circle of Karma. It starts with the Body with Me inside, then the image is viewed and recognized inside a flash of consciousness. This view is not a lightning flash, and does not have a ME. There is just illumination of an object and knowing that object because of the illumination. The illumination is constant.

“Exactly, and when you understood the tunnel went

further and there was something else at the end of the tunnel, was it your mind inventing this or did the view know it.”

“The view knew it. The view illumined a tunnel and the way up the tunnel. It did not know the way back into the circle. ”

“So, you feel stuck in the tunnel, and the view went there by itself, and it also knows where to go, and you feel stuck because you cant move the view, because the view does it all, not you, right?”

“Yes. So what do I do?

“Relax and let the view go to where it knows to go. Take a minute and let it go.”

“Uh oh! The view went down the tunnel and is outside, and now the whole world is floating. Gravity is mixed up. I am not sure if I will be able to sit up. I hope I don't get sick. I have lost my bearings.”

“Excellent! Relax and stay as the view, and what do you experience.”

“It is difficult to speak. Speaking seems far away. The view appears to have lost illumination, and is floating somewhere. A distance below me is the circle in the dirt and there are waves of a white energy pulsing along the outside of the circle, which is now like a round ball. There is no viewing of any content inside the circle anymore. It is a distant object.”

“But if I want to see with my eyes, the world inside the circle activates, and I have the ability to see, but gravity is missing, and I am still floating, and I feel the foundation of my existence is not inside this ball, which just has flashes of Me/body feeling and knowledge of senses.

“Excellent.”

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