



Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center

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The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

The First Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha) was discussed in the February 2023 Newsletter and the Second Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Origination of Suffering (samudaya) was discussed in the March 2023 Newsletter. This essay will discuss the Third Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha); the next newsletter will expound on the Fourth Noble Truth, The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga).

The Buddha is similar to a doctor who examines the dis-ease, suffering, and prescribes the medicine, the Dhamma, that cures the disease.

The Itivuttaka: The Buddha's Sayings translated from the Pāli by John D. Ireland

100 The Dhamma-offering (Brāhmanadhammayāga Sutta)

Bhikkhus, I am a brahmin, ever accessible to entreaties, open-handed, one bearing his last body, an unsurpassed physician and surgeon. You are my own legitimate sons, born from my mouth, born of Dhamma, fashioned by Dhamma, heirs of Dhamma, not heirs of material things.

Note: The Buddha is called "the great physician" as he offers the treatment to cure the suffering inherent in the round of birth and death. And he is a surgeon (sallakatta) who has the method for excising the poisoned arrows (salla) of lust, hate, and delusion embedded in the minds of beings.

The Path of Purification: Visuddhimagga by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa, translated from the Pāli by Bhikkhu Nanamoli XVI.87.11

The truth of suffering is like a disease, the truth of origin is like the cause of the disease, the truth of cessation is like the cure of the disease, and the truth of the path is like the medicine.

In the Pāli language, suffering is called 'dukkha', the cessation of suffering is called 'nirodha' and the realization of nirodha is called 'nibbāna'. Nirodha is the process of uprooting craving from the mind and nibbāna is the experience of freedom from craving and suffering. As mentioned in the last newsletter, ignorance is the root cause for the arising of craving and craving is the proximate cause for the arising of dukkha. Therefore, to remove craving and dukkha from the mind it is necessary to remove ignorance from the mind. The process of removing ignorance is accomplished by training in and perfecting the Noble Eightfold Path, the Fourth Noble Truth.

Nibbāna is the goal of training the mind within the dispensation (Dhamma) of Lord Buddha, it is ultimate reality and cannot be understood intellectually but only known as an experience. Nibbāna is not a content of mind but the experience of pure consciousness, the "screen" on which contents of mind are known. "Screen" is a metaphor for the watcher or observer that is void of any substance, gross or subtle but is simply aware. Pure consciousness is a synonym for nibbāna.

Pure consciousness is not personal, it is not my consciousness or your consciousness; is not born nor does it die; is permanent, eternal and boundless. The contents of consciousness includes gross and subtle experiences: the five clinging aggregates which constitute the empirical being (forms, thoughts, perceptions, feelings, and sense consciousness), and the six sense bases (eye and forms, ear and sounds, nose and odors, tongue and tastes, body and tangibles, mind and mind-objects). Contents of consciousness have three characteristics: they are impermanent (anicca), they contribute to suffering (dukkha) and they are not-self (anatta). Pure consciousness/nibbāna is empty of the three characteristics.

The Buddha illustrated the characteristics of nibbāna with the following synonyms. "In positive terms, nibbāna means peace, sublimity, purity, release, security, excellent happiness, and so forth;

while in negative terms it is defined as deathless, unconditioned, extinction of craving, extinction of hatred, extension of delusion, cessation of dukkha, extinction of thirst, and so on.”¹

Nibbāna is realized by uprooting from the mind fundamental impurities, defilements: ignorance, greed, craving, hatred, and the false sense of self. Nibbāna is not nothingness but a transcendental reality, transcending the egoic consciousness or the false self and saṃsāra: the round of perpetual wandering and suffering through an endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth. “Nibbana literally means the extinguishing of a flame. The word ‘Nibbāna’ used by the Buddha means the extinguishing of the flame of craving, the extinguishing of the fires of greed, hatred and delusion. ... Nibbāna is not only the destruction of defilements and the end of saṃsāra but a reality transcendent to the entire world of mundane experience, a reality transcendent to all the realms of phenomenal existence. ... Nibbāna is an actual reality and not the mere destruction of defilements or the cessation of existence. Nibbāna is unconditioned, without any origination and is timeless.”²

The three phases of the Third Noble Truth.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of the cessation of suffering is to be realized’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

“This noble truth of the cessation of suffering has been realized’: thus, bhikkhus, in regard to things unheard before, there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.

The first phase is knowledge of the cessation of dukkha. This is the knowledge and experience of the complete cessation of dukkha, nibbāna.

The second phase is knowledge that the cessation of dukkha is to be realized. This is the knowledge and experience of equanimity towards all formations, physical and mental, the realization of nibbāna.

The third phase is knowledge that the cessation of dukkha has been realized. This is the observation in retrospect that the defilements have been uprooted, the fires of dukkha have been cooled, and the mind is perfectly at peace, content and happy.

The following excerpts are from suttas in the Pāli Canon that will illustrate how the Buddha explained the Third Noble Truth.

Definition of The Third Noble Truth.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi Part V.56.11(1) Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma

“Now this, bhikkhus, is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, nonreliance on it.

Definition of nibbāna.

The Numerical Discourses of the Buddha: A Complete Translation of the Anguttara Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi 3.32 (2) Ānanda

“Bhante, could a bhikkhu obtain such a state of concentration that (1) he would have no I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit in regard to this conscious body; (2) he would have no I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit in regard to all external objects; and (3) he would enter and dwell in that liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, through which there is no more I-making, mine-making, and underlying tendency to conceit for one who enters and dwells in it?”

“He could, Ānanda.”

“But how, Bhante, could he obtain such a state of concentration?”

“Here, Ānanda, a bhikkhu thinks thus: ‘This is peaceful, this is sublime, that is, the stilling of all activities, the relinquishing of all acquisitions, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, nibbāna.’

‘I-making’ refers to views, ‘mine-making’ to craving, and ‘all external objects’ to the five sense objects.

The Dhammapada: The Buddha’s Path of Wisdom translated by Acharya Buddhārakkhita

23. The wise ones, ever meditative and steadfastly persevering, experience Nibbāna, the incomparable freedom from bondage.

...
126. Some are born in the womb; the wicked are born in hell; the devout go to heaven; the canker-free attain Nibbāna. Cankers are mental defilements of sensual pleasures, craving for existence, and ignorance.

...
202. There is no fire like lust, no crime like hatred. There is no ill like the aggregates, no bliss higher than the peace (of Nibbāna).

Aggregates: the five groups into which the Buddha analyzes the living being – material form, feeling, perception, mental formations, and [sense] consciousness.

203. Hunger is the worst disease, conditioned things the worst suffering. Knowing this as it really is, the wise realize Nibbāna, the highest bliss.

204. Health is the highest gain, contentment the greatest wealth. A trustworthy person is the best kinsman, Nibbāna the highest bliss.

205. Having savoured the taste of solitude and of peace, pain-free and stainless he becomes, drinking deep the taste of the bliss of the Dhamma.

Udana: Inspired Utterances of the Buddha translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland

1.10 Bāhiya (Bhāiya Sutta)

Where neither water nor yet earth
Nor fire nor air gain a foothold,
There gleam no stars, no sun sheds light,
There shines no moon, yet there no darkness reigns.
When a sage, a brahmin, has come to know this
For himself through his own wisdom,
Then he is freed from form and formless.
Freed from pleasure and from pain.

This is the experience of the arahant: “the moment of illumination that outshines even the sun and moon.” The arahant is liberated from the form and formless planes of existence, and from the sense-sphere planes.

...

8.1 Parinibbāna (1) (Paṭhamaparinibbāna Sutta)

There is, bhikkhus, that base where there is no earth, no water, no fire, no air; no base consisting of the infinity of space, no base consisting of the infinity of consciousness, no base consisting of nothingness, no base consisting of neither-perception-nor-non-perception; neither this world nor another world nor both; neither sun nor moon. Here, bhikkhus, I say there is no coming, no going, no staying, no deceasing, no uprising. Not fixed, not movable, it has no support. Just this is the end of suffering.

‘Base’ refers to nibbāna and ‘no support’ refers to the unconditioned.

8.2 Parinibbāna (2) (Dutiya-parinibbāna Sutta)

The uninclined is hard to see,
The truth is not easy to see;
Craving is penetrated by one who knows,
For one who sees there is nothing.

‘Uninclined’ refers to the elimination of, not inclined to, craving for sense objects and becoming.

8.3 Parinibbāna (3) (Tatiya-parinibbāna Sutta)

There is, bhikkhus, a not-born, a not-brought-to-being, a not-made, a not-conditioned. If, bhikkhus, there were no not-born, not-brought-to-being, not-made, not-conditioned, no escape would be discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned. But since there is a not-born, a not-brought-to-being, a not-made, a not-conditioned, therefore an escape is discerned from what is born, brought-to-being, made, conditioned.

8.4 Parinibbāna (4) (Catutthaparinibbāna Sutta)

For the supported there is instability, for the unsupported there is no instability; when there is no instability there is serenity; when there is serenity there is no inclination: when there is no inclination there is no coming-and-going; when there is no coming-and-going there is no decease-and-uprising; when there is no decease-and-uprising there is neither “here” nor “beyond” nor “in between the two.” Just this is the end of suffering.

‘Supported’ and ‘inclination’ refers to individuals who are defiled by craving and views. ‘Coming-and-going’ and ‘decease-and-uprising’ refers to rebirth into mundane existence.

The mind that is detached or dispassionate realizes nibbāna.

Itivuttaka: The Buddha’s Sayings translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland

90. Foremost Faith

“Whatever states there are, whether conditioned or unconditioned, of these detachment is reckoned foremost, that is, the subduing of vanity, the elimination of thirst, the removal of reliance, the termination of the round (of rebirths), the destruction of craving, detachment, cessation, Nibbāna. Those who have faith in the Dhamma of detachment have faith in the foremost, and for those with faith in the foremost the result will be foremost.

The Five Aggregates are suffering and their stilling is nibbāna.

The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

64 Mahāmālukya Sutta: The Greater Discourse to Mālunkya-putta

“Whatever exists therein of material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness, he sees those states as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as disintegrating, as void, as not self. He turns his mind away from those states and directs it towards the deathless element thus: ‘This is the peaceful, this is the sublime, that is, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all attachments, the destruction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna.’

The causes and conditions for the destruction of the taints: sensual desire, attachment to existence, wrong views, and ignorance.

The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

12.23 (3) Proximate Cause

At Śvatthī. “Bhikkhus, I say that the destruction of the taints is for one who knows and sees, not for one who does not know and does not see. For one who knows what, for one who sees what, does the destruction of the taints come about? ‘Such is form, such its origin, such its passing away; such is feeling ... such is perception ... such are volitional formations ... such is consciousness, such its origin, such its passing away’: it is for one who knows thus, for one who sees thus, that the destruction of the taints comes about.

“I say, bhikkhus, that the knowledge of destruction in regard to destruction has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for the knowledge of destruction? It should be said: liberation.

“I say, bhikkhus, that liberation too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for liberation? It should be said: dispassion.

“I say, bhikkhus, that dispassion too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for dispassion? It should be said: revulsion.

“I say, bhikkhus, that revulsion too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for revulsion? It should be said: the knowledge and vision of things as they really are.

“I say, bhikkhus, that the knowledge and vision of things as they really are too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for the knowledge and vision of things as they really are? It should be said: concentration.

“I say, bhikkhus, that concentration too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for concentration? It should be said: happiness.

“I say, bhikkhus, that happiness too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for happiness? It should be said: tranquillity.

“I say, bhikkhus, that tranquillity too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for tranquillity? It should be said: rapture.

“I say, bhikkhus, that rapture too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for rapture? It should be said: gladness.

“I say, bhikkhus, that gladness too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for gladness? It should be said: faith.

“I say, bhikkhus, that faith too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for faith? It should be said: suffering.

“I say, bhikkhus, that suffering too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for suffering? It should be said: birth.

“I say, bhikkhus, that birth too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for birth? It should be said: existence.

“I say, bhikkhus, that existence too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for existence? It should be said: clinging.

“I say, bhikkhus, that clinging too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for clinging? It should be said: craving.

“I say, bhikkhus, that craving too has a proximate cause; it does not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for craving? It should be said: feeling.

“For feeling, it should be said: contact. For contact: the six sense bases. For the six sense bases: name-and-form. For name-and-form: consciousness. For consciousness: volitional formations.

“I say, bhikkhus, that volitional formations too have a proximate cause; they do not lack a proximate cause. And what is the proximate cause for volitional formations? It should be said: ignorance.

“Thus, bhikkhus, with ignorance as proximate cause, volitional formations [come to be]; with volitional formations as proximate cause, consciousness; with consciousness as proximate cause, name-and-form; with name-and-form as proximate cause, the six sense bases; with the six sense bases as proximate cause, contact; with contact as proximate cause, feeling; with feeling as proximate cause, craving; with craving as proximate cause, clinging; with clinging as proximate cause, existence; with existence as proximate cause, birth; with birth as proximate cause, suffering; with suffering as proximate cause, faith; with faith as proximate cause, gladness; with gladness as proximate cause, rapture; with rapture as proximate cause, tranquillity; with tranquillity as proximate cause, happiness; with happiness as proximate cause, concentration; with concentration as proximate cause, the knowledge and vision of things as they really are; [32] with the knowledge and vision of things as they really are as proximate cause, revulsion; with revulsion as proximate cause, dispassion; with dispassion as proximate cause, liberation; with liberation as proximate cause, the knowledge of destruction.

Notes:

1. The First Discourse of the Buddha: Turning the Wheel of Dhamma by Dr. Rewata Dhamma; 1997; p. 64-65
2. Nibbana an essay by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Announcements

- Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center will be closed between March 30 and April 2, 2023 because Ajahn Kumāro will be visiting family.
- Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center has a presence on Meet-Up social media and we ask that you please sign-up for every event that you are planning to attend at www.MeetUp.com. Some people are intimidated by a small number of attendees and a larger number will be encouraging.
- Please help advertise Kalyāṇa-Mitta Meditation Center by providing a review at www.google.com/maps.

Activities of the Meditation Center

- Sitting meditation is held everyday at 6:30AM and 5:30PM. After meditation, Ajahn Kumāro is available to answer questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com on the days and time you would like to participate.
- The days of the full moon, new moon and the two half moons are called in Pāli: The Uposatha, and is a Buddhist day of observance. A lunar calendar is available at <https://cal.forestsangha.org>. Ajahn Kumāro will perform the ceremony of giving the five precepts on the full and new moon days after the 5:30PM meditation. You may elect to keep the precepts as long as you see fit (one night, a week, a lifetime, etc).
- Meditation Workshop is held on the first Sunday of each month between 11:00AM and 1:00PM. The workshop will provide instruction and practice for sitting and walking meditation. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and discuss the Dhamma. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com if you are planning to participate.
- A recording of a Dhamma Talk from an experienced Thai Forest Teacher will be played on the third Sunday of each month. Sitting meditation starts at 4:30PM and the Dhamma Talk will be played afterwards. Please sign up on Meet-Up or send an email mittameditation@gmail.com if you are planning to participate.
- Every Saturday at 4:15PM the Meditation Center will be cleaned. Please join us in maintaining a clean space for practicing and discussing the Dhamma.
- There is a Library at the Meditation Center. You may browse for books to borrow at 5:00PM and check out the books for three weeks.
- Everyday at 8:40AM Ajahn Kumāro leaves for alms-round in order to give residents of Asheville the opportunity to earn merit by practicing generosity of giving food and placing it into the alms bowl. Ajahn does not accept or handle money. Ajahn usually arrives at the Whole Foods Market, 70 Merrimon Ave. just before 9:00AM and stands in front of the store for alms.
- Ajahn is available at other times during the day to meet with individuals or groups when requested.
- For more additional information please send an email to mittameditation@gmail.com. We also have a presence on Facebook and Meet-Up social media.

Request for Support

The Meditation Center is in need of support in order to accomplish its' mission and vision. The support may take various forms. You will support the Meditation Center by:

- Being present at the Meditation Center for group meditation.
- Giving alms during alms-round.
- Bringing to the Meditation Center items that are listed on the support page of the website www.mittameditation.com.
- Volunteering your skills, energy and time at the Meditation Center.
- Informing your family and friends about the Meditation Center and encouraging them to participate in the activities.

- Donating financial contributions for the Meditation Center's expenses. Kalyana-Mitta Meditation Center is recognized as a tax-exempt organization by the IRS under section 501(c)(3). Donations are deductible in accordance with IRS regulations. Financial contributions may be made on the support page of the website www.mittameditation.com and additional means for making financial donations may be discussed with Elisha Buhler at (910) 922-1549.