

The Truth of the Extinction of Suffering

What, now, is the Noble Truth of the Extinction of Suffering? It is the complete fading away and extinction of this craving, its forsaking and abandonment, liberation and detachment from it.

But where may this craving vanish, where may it be extinguished? Wherever in the world there are delightful and pleasurable things, there this craving may vanish, there it may be extinguished. (*Dîgha Nikaya*, 22)

Be it in the past, present, or future, whosoever of the monks or priests regards the delightful and pleasurable things in the world as impermanent (*anicca*), miserable (*dukkha*), and without a self (*anatta*), as diseases and cankers, it is he who overcomes craving. (*Samyutta-Nikaya*, XII. 66)

Dependent Extinction of all PHenomena

And through the total fading away and extinction of Craving (*tanha*), Clinging (*upadana*) is extinguished; through the extinction of clinging, the Process of Becoming (*bhava*) is extinguished; through the extinction of the (karmic) process of becoming, Rebirth (*jati*) is extinguished; and through the extinction of rebirth, Decay and Death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair are extinguished. Thus comes about the extinction of this whole mass of suffering. (*Samyutta-Nikaya*, XII. 43)

Hence the annihilation, cessation and overcoming of corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness: this is the extinction of suffering, the end of disease, the overcoming of old age and death. (*Samyutta-Nikaya*, XXII. 30)

The undulatory motion which we call a wave—and which in the ignorant spectator creates the illusion of one and the same mass of water moving over the surface of the lake—is produced and fed by the wind, and maintained by the stored-up energies. Now, after the wind has ceased, and if no fresh wind again whips up the water of the lake, the stored-up energies will gradually be consumed, and thus the whole undulatory motion will come to an end. Similarly, if fire does not get new fuel, it will, after consuming all the old fuel, become extinct.

Just in the same way this Five-Khandha-process—which in the ignorant worldling creates the illusion of an Ego-entity— is produced and fed by the life-affirming craving (tanha), and maintained for some time by means of the stored-up life energies.

Now, after the fuel (upadana), i.e. the craving and clinging to life, has ceased, and if no new craving impels again this Five-Khandha-process, life will continue as long as there are still life energies stored up, but at their destruction at death, the Five-Khandha -process will reach final extinction.

Thus, Nibbana, or 'Extinction' (Sanskrit: nirvana; from 'nir' + 'vana' to cease blowing, become extinct) may be considered under two aspects, namely as:

1. 'Extinction of Impurities' (kilesa-parinibbana), reached at the attainment of Arahatsip, or Holiness, which generally takes place during life-time; in the Suttas it is called 'saupadisesanibbana', i.e. 'Nibbana with the Groups of Existence still remaining'.

2. 'Extinction of the Five-Khandha-process' (khandhaparinibbana), which takes place at the death of the Arahats, called in the Suttas: 'an-upadisesa-nibbana' i.e. 'Nibbana without the Groups remaining'.

Nibbana

This, truly, is Peace, this is the Highest, namely the end of all Karma formations, the forsaking of every substratum of rebirth, the fading away of craving, detachment, extinction, *Nibbana*. (*Anguttara-Nikaya*, III. 32)

Enraptured with lust, enraged with anger, blinded by delusion, overwhelmed, with mind ensnared, man aims at his own ruin, at the ruin of others, at the ruin of both, and he experiences mental pain and grief. But, if lust, anger, and delusion are given up, man aims neither at his own ruin, nor at the ruin of others, nor at the ruin of both and he experiences no mental pain and grief. Thus is *Nibbana* immediate, visible in this life, inviting, attractive, and comprehensible to the wise. (*Anguttara-Nikaya*, III. 55)

The extinction of greed, the extinction of hate, the extinction of delusion: this, indeed, is called *Nibbana*. (*Samyutta-Nikaya*, XXXVIII.1)

The Arahats, or Holy One

And for a disciple thus freed, in whose heart dwells peace, there is nothing to be added to what has been done, and naught more remains for him to do.

Just as a rock of one solid mass remains unshaken by the wind, even so neither forms, nor sounds, nor odors, nor tastes, nor contacts of any kind, neither the desired nor the undesired, can cause such a one to waver. Steadfast is his mind, gained is deliverance. (*Anguttara-Nikaya*, VI. 55)

And he who has considered all the contrasts on this earth, and is no more disturbed by anything whatever in the world, the peaceful One, freed from rage, from sorrow, and from longing, he has passed beyond birth and decay. (*Sutta-Nipata*, 1048)

The Immutable

Truly, there is a realm, where there is neither the solid, nor the fluid, neither heat, nor motion, neither this world, nor any other world, neither sun nor moon.

This I call neither arising, nor passing away, neither standing still, nor being born, nor dying. There is neither foothold, nor development, nor any basis. This is the end of suffering. (*Udana*, VIII. 1)

There is an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed. If there were not this Unborn, this Unoriginated, this Uncreated, this Unformed, escape from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed, would not be possible.

But since there is an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed, therefore is escape possible from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed. (*Udana*, VIII. 3)

Source: Nyanatiloka (compiler, translator). *The Word of the Buddha: An Outline of the Teaching of the Buddha in the Words of the Pali Canon*. 14th edition. Kandy, Ceylon: Buddhist Publication Society, 1967. (Pages 24-26.) [This format has been produced by Alexander Peck.]