

three, truth of end of suffering

the Buddha's...

realization of the end of suffering and his attainment of Nirvana at the age of thirty-five, crowned his search for Truth with success. For six years, the Bodhisattva had spared no effort to find a solution to the problems of suffering. He had tried the principal methods of ending suffering and had found them wanting. Eventually he found his own solution to the problems of life.

confidence in the Buddha's teaching

Having realized the Truth through his own efforts, the Buddha offered it to all who were ready to listen. There is an old story of a turtle and a fish. The turtle lived on land as well as in the water while the fish only lived in the water. One day, when the turtle had returned from a visit to the land, he told the fish of his experiences. He explained that creatures walked rather than swam. The fish refused to believe that dry land really existed because that was something beyond his own experience. In the same way, people may not have experienced the end of suffering, but it does not mean that the end of suffering is not possible.

A patient must have confidence in an experienced doctor, otherwise he will never take the medicine that the doctor has prescribed for him and will not be cured of his sickness. Similarly, people must have confidence in the Teaching of the Buddha, who has shown that end of suffering is really possible.

the end of suffering

The end of suffering is the final goal of the Buddha's Teaching. It can be experienced by anyone here and now. For example, when greed and anger arise in one's mind, unhappiness is the result and, when thoughts of greed and anger cease, one's mind becomes happy and peaceful. To end suffering completely, one must remove desire, ill will and ignorance. This is the Third Noble Truth of the End of Suffering.

happiness

The Buddha taught that the end of suffering is supreme happiness. Every step towards the end of suffering is accompanied by ever-increasing joy. Those who follow the Teaching of the Buddha live happily without greed among those who are overwhelmed by desire. They live happily without anger among those who harbor ill will. The more people free themselves from desire, ill will and ignorance, the greater will be their happiness. When they have completely overcome desire, ill will and ignorance, they will know the supreme happiness as experienced by the Buddha.

enlightenment

By putting the Buddha's Teaching into practice, people too can achieve supreme Enlightenment. Enlightenment has countless qualities, of which perfect wisdom and great compassion are the most important. Through perfect wisdom and great compassion, He is able to help countless beings to overcome their suffering.

experiencing nirvana for oneself

The end of suffering has been described as supreme happiness and Enlightenment. However, these terms do not fully express the real nature of the end of suffering, or Nirvana. Nirvana cannot be exactly put into words. Attempting to describe Nirvana is like saying that a mango is sweet, and that it is not like a banana or an apple. One has to eat a mango in order to know for oneself what the taste is really like. Similarly Nirvana has to be experienced for oneself. Therefore, if people have confidence in the Buddha's Teaching and put it into practice, they can achieve happiness peace and Enlightenment.

The Mangala Sutta

Triratna Buddhist Community

Sutta Nipata II.4

The Supreme Blessings

I have heard that at one time the Blessed One was staying in Savatthi at Jeta's Grove, Anathapindika's park. Then a certain deva, in the far extreme of the night, her extreme radiance lighting up the entirety of Jeta's Grove, approached the Blessed One. On approaching, having bowed down to the Blessed One, she stood to one side. As she stood to one side, she addressed him with a verse.

Many deities and humans,
yearning after good,
have pondered on Blessings.
Pray, tell me the Supreme Blessings.

[The Buddha:]

Not to follow or associate with the foolish,
to associate with the wise,
and honor those who are worthy of honor.
This is the Supreme Blessing.

To reside in a suitable locality,
to have done meritorious actions in the past,
and to have set oneself on the right course
This is the Supreme Blessing.

Vast-learning, perfect handicraft,
a highly trained discipline
and pleasant speech.
This is the Supreme Blessing.

The support of mother and father,
the cherishing of spouse and children
and peaceful occupations.
This is the Supreme Blessings.

Liberality, righteous conduct,
the helping of relatives
and blameless action.
This is the Supreme Blessing.

To cease and abstain from evil,
forbearance with respect to intoxicants
and steadfastness in virtue.
This is the Supreme Blessing.

Patience, obedience,
sight of the holy ones
and religious discussions at due season.
This is the Supreme Blessing.

Self-control, pure life,
perception of the Noble Truths
and the realization of Nibbana.
This is the Supreme Blessing.

He whose mind does not flutter,
by contact with worldly contingencies,
sorrowless, stainless and secure.
This is the Supreme Blessing.

To them, fulfilling matters such as these,
everywhere invincible, in every way moving
happily.