

Four Noble Truths and Fo Guang Entrepreneur

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ABSTRACT: The Four Noble Truths (Pali: cattāri ariyasaccāni), namely: (1) the “Noble Truth of Suffering”, (2) the “Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering”, (3) the “Noble Truth of the Ending of Suffering” and (4) the “Noble Truth of the Way to Ending Suffering” are the fundamental Dharma of Siddhartha Gautama. Mr. Jason Chou was the founder of Taiwan Shinshun Corporation (TWSS). He experienced to do volunteer works at Sudan Temple and received karmic reward of making profits extensively. However, a fire devoured the TPU factory of the TWSS Company in 2012. It is the first time he epiphanies the Noble Truth of Suffering. Mr. Chou sold all the TWSS Company's shares to BASF in 2015, hoping to concentrate on cultivation compassion, and promoting the Dharma in the future.

KEYWORDS: Siddhartha Gautama, Dukkha, Suffering, Sacca, Entrepreneur, Hsing Yu

I. FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

Around 2,500 years ago, Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment under the Bodhedrum in Buddha-gayā. He presented the Four Noble Truths of the Dharma for the five sramana: Koṇḍañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji in Sarnath (Sanskrit: saraṅga-nāthā). The five sramana disciples understood the Dharma and became ordained as five bhikṣu (Pali: bhikkhu). This is the first turning the Dharma Wheel by Siddhartha Gautama. He said: "Koṇḍañña! Do you know why the way to ending suffering? Because we desire to be free from suffering. You know it is full of suffering around the world. There are hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes that have harmed us in the world. There are various intolerable and undesired things in our society that make us uncomfortable and painful. There are physical and mental attacks from ageing, illness and death. You can see our world is filling with suffering.

"You should know that all these sufferings are based on “ego”, because sentient beings are attached to “ego”, and following with greed, hatred, and delusion. This is the cause of suffering. If you want to get rid of these sufferings, you must practice the way to ending suffering, and you can enter the Nirvana!" These five bhikṣu felt that they had never heard it before, when they heard the Dharma of Siddhartha Gautama. They deeply admire that Siddhartha Gautama is definitely the authority of truths. Siddhartha Gautama keeps saying: This “suffering”, “the cause of suffering”, “the ending of suffering”, and “the way to ending suffering” are called the “Four Noble Truths”. No true liberation if you do not understand the Four Noble Truths. Can you understand my Dharma (Hsing Yun, 2018)?

The Four Noble Truths (Pali: cattāri ariyasaccāni), namely the “Noble Truth of Suffering”, the “Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering”, the “Noble Truth of the Ending of Suffering” and “Noble Truth of the Way to Ending Suffering” are the fundamental Dharma of Siddhartha Gautama (FGS Foundation, 2012).

The “Truth” (Pali: Sacca), is translated as reality in Southern Buddhism, representing the absolute truth, the truth, the reality and unchanging things. It is an important philosophical thought in various religions in India. Buddhism uses “Sacca” (Pali) to represent truth. The original meanings of “kǔ dì” (Chinese word) are to understand the inner meaning or meaning of things, so it was used to translate this noun of “Sacca” in ancient China (Fo Guang Shan, 1988). First, the Noble Truth of Suffering: The truth that makes one realizes that life is suffering. The Truth of Suffering (Sanskrit: Duhkha; pali: Dukkha) clarifies that all sentient beings are in suffering. However, Dukkha is a combination of the prefix “du” and the noun “kha”. “du” means bad, difficult, not good, uncomfortable. “kha” refers to the meaning of void, space or sky. The combined “Dukkha” means difficulty, discomfort, or restrained (Buswell and Lopez, 2017).

The word suffering (Pali: Dukkha; Sanskrit: Duhkha), has the meanings of “physical or mental pain that a person is feeling” in common usage. On the other hand, the word of pleasure (Pali: Sukha; Sanskrit: Sukha) has opposite meanings. When we use the word of “suffering” to represent the “Dukkha” in English article may lose deeper meaning for Buddha’s Dharma because it

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contains deeper thoughts, such as "impermanence", "emptiness", and so on. Hence, we should bear in mind, it is impossible to use "suffering" to represent the whole concept of the "Dukkha" in this article. Our body, and indeed everything, is impermanence and causes suffering. Suffering and pleasure are happening in our life, but what makes it unbearable is impermanence. Birth, ageing, sickness, and death are all human beings must go through. From the perspective of Dharma, "ego" is composed by five aggregates (Sanskrit: Skandhas; Pali: Khandhas), which are only short-lived without permanent existing in the world.

Siddhartha Gautama divided "the Noble Truth of Suffering" into 11 types of suffering: (1) birth, (2)aging, (3)death, (4)sorrow, (5)lamentation, (6)suffering, (7)grief, (8)vexation, (9)remorse, (10)separation from love, and (11)inability to seek. The Buddha finally said that "the Five Aggregates of grasping are suffering", the Five Skandhas bearing suffering, which means that these sufferings arise from the Skandhas of form, sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness. All kinds of suffering in life come from the sentient beings composed of these Five Skandhas.. Siddhartha Gautama said: "bhiksu! If any brahmacarin can not understand it is enjoyment as enjoying sensual pleasures with objective attitude; it is unsatisfactory as enjoying from sensual unsatisfactory with objective attitude; In attaining liberation from sensual pleasure, knowing objectively that it is liberation. It is impossible for them to know precisely and entirely the desire for sensual pleasures. However, bhiksu! Any brahmacarin who can objectively understand the enjoyment of sensual pleasures is enjoyment; their unpleasantness is unsatisfactory, and liberation from sensual pleasures is liberation. They may know precisely and entirely the desire for sensual pleasure (Hsing Yun, 2005).

Second, the Truth of the Cause of Suffering (Pali: Samudaya): The truth that enables one to understand the cause of suffering. Samudaya means accumulation, arising. The Truth of the Cause of Suffering is the analysis of the cause of suffering. Human suffering mainly comes from greed, hatred, and delusion. The original minds of all human beings are obstructed by ignorance, driven by ignorance, craving, hatred and other afflictions. Sentient beings accumulate all kinds of bad karma, and these karma lead to all kinds of suffering. Eventually, a thorough understanding of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, is the beginning of enlightenment (Rahula, 1959).

Third, The Truth of the ending suffering (Pali: Nirodha): To liberate one from suffering. When we cut off the cause of suffering, there will be no pain or distress, that is, from the "reincarnation" to liberation, this is the "Truth of the Ending Suffering", also known as Nirvana. In order to get rid of suffering, we must eliminate the causes of suffering (suffering) "greed, hatred, delusion". The Buddha also listed these sufferings, including the six inner senses, the outer six senses, the six senses, the six touches, the six feelings, the six thoughts, the six loves, the six searches, and the six attachments, and proposed the corresponding methods. The termination of these sufferings is also called Nirvana, which refers to the state of liberation attained by practitioners by cultivating "the way to ending suffering" after knowing suffering. "Ending suffering" means cessation, which is essentially a different name for "Nirvana". Nirvana can be obtained by eliminating all kinds of ignorance, such as troubles, pains, and obstacles and so on. Taken as a whole, the ending of suffering refers to the eradication of all afflictions such as greed, hatred, and delusion, and the state of pure and true nature is revealed: Nirvana.

Fourth, the "Truth of the Way to Ending Suffering" (Pali: Magga), it leads to the cessation of suffering and the achievement of Nirvana. Magga means the way of practice to ending suffering and achieving Nirvana. Its content is the Noble Eightfold Path, which enables people to get rid of evil and turn to good, and to cultivate right wisdom. If we can practice diligently, when our afflictions are completely eliminated, we can fully attain Nirvana. The Noble Eightfold Path is: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Concentration, and Right Mindfulness.

One day, Siddhartha Gautama came to the Jetavana Vihar in Sravasti country to deliver a blessing. At this time, a well-known arrogant brahmin lived in this country. Not only did his parents belong to brahmin nobles, but all seven generations were brahmin nobles, and his family background was prominent. He is not only handsome, intelligent and unimpeded, as a brahmin, but also has extensive knowledge. However, he relied on family background, appearance, intelligence, wealth to be superior to others, so impertinent to parents, elders and teachers.

He heard that Siddhartha Gautama was blessing near by, and he thought, "I should go to see Siddhartha Gautama, if there is dharma to present, I can argue with him; if there is nothing to say, I will come back quietly." The arrogant brahmin rode in a white carriage, followed by a group of young brahmins, with golden handle umbrellas or golden bottles. This group went to the Jetavana Vihar. The arrogant brahmin got out of the car and walked in as Siddhartha Gautama happened to be preaching to the public. At this time, the arrogant brahmin thought: "Sramana Gautama didn't notice me at all, let's go home." Siddhartha Gautama knew the brahmin's thought, and he said a gatha: "arrogant is here, badness will grow more arrogant; always been for dharma; increasing for dharma". As the brahmin hearing what Siddhartha Gautama said, he thought, "Sramana Gautama already knows my purpose." He wanted to bow down to Siddhartha Gautama. Siddhartha Gautama said to the arrogant brahmin, "Stop! There is no need to bow, as long as your mind is pure enough."

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In Jetavana Vihar, all the people present praised in unison: "It's amazing, Buddha! You are indeed of great wisdom. This brahmin is usually arrogant, relying on his family background, appearance, intelligence, wealth is higher than others, and he disrespects his parents, elders, and teachers. However, he is humbled by the Buddha and wants to pay homage to the Buddha." The arrogant brahmin respectfully asked Siddhartha Gautama: "What is humbleness? What is admiration? What is good consolation? What is good offering?" Siddhartha Gautama replied with gatha: "Parents and elder, monks and teachers, and those who respect, should not be humbled. They should be respectful, humble and inquiries, serve enthusiastically, and make offerings. Free from greed and exhausted arahant. Righteous wisdom and good liberation can reduce arrogance. Wise people will be hands-together Ceremony.

Siddhartha Gautama taught the arrogant Brahmins all kinds of wonderful dharma afterwards, and consecutively explained the various ways of kindness, keeping the precepts, generating virtues, cravings, and avoiding afflictions, so as to purify your mind. The arrogant brahmin realizes the Four Noble Truths - "suffering", "the cause of suffering", "the ending of suffering", and "the way to ending suffering" and realizes the state of full attainment of arhatship (Pali: Arahant). The arrogant brahmin stood up and bowed to Siddhartha Gautama. He asked, "Siddhartha Gautama, can I become a Sramana and receive full ordination?" Siddhartha Gautama then genially agreed. After being a sramana, the brahmin thought: "A good man (Pali: kula-putta) shaves his hair and wears a cassock. He should become a sramana with virtuous faith and learn the right path..." Since this thought has been liberated from the repression of arrogant, he attains the state of full attainment of arhatship (Pali: Arahant) (FGS Foundation, 2012).

II. FO GUANG ENTREPRENEUR

Venerable Master Hsing Yun said that a person who wants to have a career will have the opportunity to start a business as long as he understands the needs of the public with his heart. Starting up a business must also get together four basic conditions: (1) utilizing capital, (2) connecting with people, (3) creating opportunities, and (4) having adequate conditions. Jason Chou expressed his view in a lecture of Entrepreneurship (Hsu, and Chiu, 2018). Mr. Luohan Chou, was the founder of the Kangshan branch of the Buddha's Light International Association (BLIA), and is also a Lay Dharma Lecturer of the BLIA. Mr. Luohan Chou had been relying on self-learning method during early years although only graduated from elementary school. He has been a lifelong supporter of BLIA and is the best role model for Jason Chou, the founder of Taiwan Sheen Soon Co. Ltd. (TWSS) (Man Mu, 2017).

Jason Chou studied MSc in chemical engineering at the University of Utah in the United States after BA graduation in Taiwan. He had been reading Buddhism books written by Master Hsing Yun before going to the United States in 1988. It had been a voice in his heart: "I am a Buddhist!" when someone invited him to church. After Jason obtained the master degree from the University of Utah, he went back to Taiwan and worked for a company for seven years. A friend invited him to establish a Thermoplastic Polyurethane (TPU) factory, Taiwan Shinshun Corporation (TWSS) and he became an entrepreneur. TWSS was established in July 1997 and officially produced in mid-1998. Thermoplastic Polyurethane (TPU) is an environmentally friendly material for polymer elastomers. TPU does not enclose plasticizers and can be used in a large range of applications, such as PU pneumatic tube, mechanical transmission belt and so on. However, the road to operate a company was bumpy, and the TWSS suffered serious losses for three following years.

His father, Luohan Chou, and mother accompanied him to Fushan Temple in Changhua County. His mother said to him, "The only thing you lack is karmic reward, and you have to go to the temple to cultivate karmic reward as soon as possible." His mother asked the Most Venerable of Fushan Temple to give Jason a chance to do volunteer works. Surprisingly, the company began to make a profit as Jason became a volunteer at Fushan Temple in the very first month. It was the first time that the company had profits although it was a small fortune. Jason's mother asked him to donate the whole profits to Fushan Temple in order to repay Buddha's grace. The TWSS Company has been making profits since the donation, and it's making more and more money. Jason is a scientist, and he could not figure it out from an experimental point of view. But it was a success after all, and Jason worked harder to be Buddhist volunteer (Pan, 2018).

Later, Jason supported a new building of Fushan Temple and cultivated karmic reward. In the ten years after year 2002, the revenues of the TWSS Company grew more than 20 times. In 2009, the TWSS Company won the Little Giant Award from the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Taiwan. In 2011, the TWSS Company won the honor of the Golden Merchant Award (Excellent Merchant Award) also from the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Taiwan (Chen, 2015). The TWSS Company had been growing 10 times in the following decade. Jason thanked his parents for cultivating merit and wisdom simultaneously to achieving a successful life. When encountering tricky customers, Jason would take the initiative to write disaster relief tablets for them, and chanted sutras in the morning and evening. Jason freely subscribed The Merit Times, a Buddhism newspaper, to all employees, in order to accomplish Three Acts of Goodness Campaign and share Dharma to encourage employees.

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In 2005, The TWSS Company expanded its factory with an area of 24,000 square meters and an annual production capacity of 8,000 metric tons in Taiwan. In 2009, the TWSS Company invested in Zhongshan Baoxuan Technology, a subsidiary of Pou Chen Group in China, and expanded its annual production capacity to 5,000 tons in China. Pou Chen Group is one of the largest shoe manufacturers in the world. It produced branded athletic and casual footwear and claims to be an OEM for major sports brands such as Nike, Adidas, New Balance, Puma, and so on. In 2011, the annual production capacity of the Taiwan factory was expanded to 20,000 tons as launching the film-blown TPU. In 2014, the TWSS Company was the largest TPU hot melt adhesive manufacturer in the Asia-Pacific region and top three independent TPU material suppliers in Asia.

However, a fire devoured the TPU factory of the TWSS Company in 2012. Many Foguang members of (BLIA) in Changhua County rushed to the scene to care as they saw the TV news. The 4,000-square-meter factory burned down for a whole day and night, and only the pillars at the entrance of the TWSS Company's fence were pasted with the Spring Festival couplets "Heavenly Blessings & Protection" written by Venerable Master Hsing Yun. A neighbor said "Did Heavenly Blessings & Protection work? The factory was burnt down." as he saw the Spring Festival couplets. Jason's wife replied, "Fortunately, there was Heavenly Blessings & Protection to protect the neighbors, so no one was injured." Jason and his wife were so calm, so others were surprised to see them accepting this disaster calmly. Jason cleaned up the mess among the rubble, and comforting the sympathetic masters and members of BLIA. It is the first time he epiphanies the Noble Truth of Suffering.

What Jason prayed sincerely at the fire scene was: don't let the neighbors suffer. He only thought about how to solve the problem under the devastating high temperature. At his heart, it was Venerable Master Hsing Yun's teaching: "If there is Dharma, there is a solution!" . Jason and his wife have been implemented the Dharma in their daily life, and our words and deeds are in line with the Noble Eightfold Path. We firmly believe that the whole family will never go hungry after the fire. Mr. Hong Wenzheng, a supervisor of BILA, helped the steel structure manufacturer to build the new factory as quickly as possible regardless of the cost. Moreover, Jason usually treat people with integrity, so the bank was not in a hurry to ask him to repay the loan. On the other hand, the machine manufacturer urgently changed the machines ordered to install new machines for the TWSS Company regardless of payment issue. Not only all upstream suppliers continued to supply raw materials, but also none of their customers stopped placing orders. All of the above, as long as any party does not support the TWSS Company, it will go bankrupt soon. I am really grateful for these many good causes and good fates! Fortunately, all the machines and purchase documents were fine. In addition, Jason has been developed broad and good affinity with others, and the fire insurance claims were settled quickly. The TWSS Company was able to restore the production line within six months. The fire did not knock Jason down, but let him made some fortunes. Finally, the employees understand the truth of "The family that accumulates goodness is sure to have superabundant happiness" (Chou, 2016).

III. CONCLUSIONS

Jason took the oath in front of the Buddha to be the chairman of the North Branch of BILA in Changhua County just few months after the fire. People were wondering why he took the chair. Jason expressed the main reason was "impermanence", and everything "there is a solution to the Buddha dharma". Surprisingly, profits of the TWSS Company were the best in 16 years after he taking over as chairman. The company continued to operate smoothly and the two years of 2013 and 2014 as the chairman of the North Branch of BILA in Changhua County were the best two years of profit in the TWSS Company's 17-year history.

BASF, a leading Chemical Company worldwide, acquired the TWSS Company for its operations and assets both in Taiwan and China in 2015. This acquisition of the TWSS Company will further strength dominant position of BASF in the field of TPU extrusion and injection molding, which are widely applied in the shoe industry. Mr Jason Chou, Chairman and General Manager of the TWSS Company will continue to manage its business as a BASF consultant to oversee the related business after the acquisition. BASF will do its best to ensure a smooth transition and unaffected customer supply after the TWSS Company's related assets, customers and employees will be incorporated into BASF's business.

A fire caused Jason and his wife to epiphany the "impermanence" in life. Jason Chou sold all the TWSS Company's shares to BASF, hoping to concentrate on cultivation compassion, and promoting the Dharma in the future.

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