

MN 99 To Subha - Subha Sutta
Dhamma Talk by Bhante Vimalaramsi
19-Feb-07 JT2

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

2. Now on that occasion the brahmin student Subha, Todeyya's son, was staying at the residence of a certain house holder in Sāvatti for some business or other. Then the brahmin student Subha, Todeyya's son, asked the householder in whose residence he was staying: "Householder, I have heard that Sāvatti is not devoid of arahants. What recluse or brahmin may we go to today to pay our respects?"

BV: Subha, Todeyya's son, had talked to the Buddha on a few different occasions, and they were always real interesting discussions. Now he was only fifteen or sixteen years old the first time he had the discussions. And he was asking, questions like somebody that was quite old, and well versed, so it was real interesting. That's the kind of mind that he had.

MN: "Venerable sir, this Blessed One is living at Sāvatti in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. You may go to pay your respects to that Blessed One, venerable sir."

3. Then, having assented to the householder, the brahmin student Subha, Todeyya's son, went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and asked the Blessed One:

4. "Master Gotama, the brahmins say this: The householder is accomplishing the true way, the Dhamma that is wholesome. The one gone forth [into homelessness] is not accomplishing the true way, the Dhamma that is wholesome.' What does Master Gotama say about this?"

"Here, student, I am one who speaks after making an analysis; I do not speak one-sidedly. I do not praise the wrong way of practice on

the part either of a householder or one gone forth; for whether it be a householder or one gone forth, one who has entered on the wrong way of practice, by reason of his wrong way of practice, is not accomplishing the true way, the Dhamma that is wholesome. I praise the right way of practice on the part either of a householder or one gone forth; for whether be a householder or one gone forth, one who has entered on the right way of practice, by reason of his right way of practice, is accomplishing the true way, the Dhamma that is wholesome.”

5. “Master Gotama, the brahmins say this: ‘Since the work of the household life involves a great deal of activity, great functions, great engagements, and great undertakings, it is of great fruit. Since the work of those gone forth involves a small amount of activity, small functions, small engagements, and small undertakings, it is of small fruit.’ What does Master Gotama say about this?”

“Here too, student, I am one who speaks after making an analysis; I do not speak one-sidedly. There is work involving a great deal of activity, great functions, great engagements, and great undertakings, which, when it fails, is of small fruit. There is work involving a great deal of activity, great functions, great engagements, and great undertakings, which, when it succeeds, is of great fruit. There is work involving a small amount of activity, small functions, small engagements, and small undertakings, which, when it fails, is of small fruit. There is work involving a small amount of activity, small functions, small engagements, and small undertakings, which, when it succeeds, is of great fruit.

6. “What, student, is that work involving a great deal of activity...which, when it fails, is of small fruit? Agriculture is that work involving a great deal of activity...which, when it fails, is of small fruit. And what, student, is that work involving a great deal of activity...which, when it succeeds, is of great fruit? Agriculture again is that work involving a great deal of activity...which, when it succeeds, is of great fruit. And what, student, is that work involving a small amount of activity...which, when it fails, is of small fruit? Trade is that work involving a small amount of activity...which, when it fails,

is of small fruit. And what, student, is that work involving a small amount of activity...which, when it succeeds, is of great fruit? Trade again is that work involving a small amount of activity...which, when it succeeds, is of great fruit.

7. "Just as agriculture, student, is work that involves a great deal of activity...but is of small fruit when it fails, so the work of the household life involves a great deal of activity, great functions, great engagements, and great undertakings, but is of small fruit when it fails. Just as agriculture is work that involves a great deal of activity...and is of great fruit when it succeeds, so the work of the household life involves a great deal of activity, great functions, great engagements, and great undertakings, and is of great fruit when it succeeds. Just as trade is work that involves a small amount of activity...and is of small fruit when it fails, so the work of those gone forth involves a small amount of activity, small functions, small engagements, and small undertakings, and is of small fruit when it fails. Just as trade is work that involves a small amount of activity...but is of great fruit when it succeeds, so the work of those gone forth involves a small amount of activity, small functions, small engagements, and small undertakings, but is of great fruit when it succeeds."

8. "Master Gotama, the brahmins prescribe five things for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome."

"If it is not troublesome for you, student, please state to this assembly the five things that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome."

"It is not troublesome for me, Master Gotama, when such venerable ones as yourself and others are sitting [in the assembly]."

"Then state them, student."

9. "Master Gotama, truth is the first thing that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome. Asceticism is the second thing...Celibacy is the third thing...Study is the fourth thing...Generosity is the fifth thing that the brahmins

prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome. These are the five things that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome. What does Master Gotama say about this?"

"How then, student, among the brahmins is there even a single brahmin who says thus: 'I declare the result of these five things having realized it myself with direct knowledge'?"—"No, Master Gotama."

"How then, student, among the brahmins is there even a single teacher or teacher's teacher back to the seventh generation of teachers who says thus: 'I declare the result of these five things having realized it myself with direct knowledge'?"—"No, Master Gotama."

"How then, student, the ancient brahmin seers, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns, whose ancient hymns that were formerly chanted, uttered, and compiled the brahmins nowadays still chant and repeat, repeating what was spoken, reciting what was recited—that is,

BV: And I'm not going to go into all of these names.

MN {...} did even these ancient brahmin seers say thus: 'We declare the result of these five things having realized it ourselves with direct knowledge'?"—"No, Master Gotama."

BV: So, what are we talking about here? We're talking about having the direct experience, or, getting into philosophy. Philosophy is the talk, without any action behind it. This is something that happens a lot, with the different sects of Buddhism. They get into the philosophy, and they start talking about the differences, and how you're wrong and I'm right because it says here... But they're not talking directly about the practice. They're not talking directly, from their own experience, what they see. They're only saying ideas that other people have come up with, and they don't have the direct

experience of the practice, behind it. So philosophy is words and ideas with no action, and you have to be really careful of this.

MN: "So, student, it seems that among the brahmins there is not even a single brahmin who says thus: 'I declare the result of these five things having realized it myself with direct knowledge.' And among the brahmins there is not even a single teacher or a single teacher's teacher back to the seventh generation of teachers, who says thus: 'I declare the result of these five things having realized it myself with direct knowledge.' And the ancient brahmin seers, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns even these ancient brahmin seers did not say thus: 'We declare the result of these five things having realized it ourselves with direct knowledge.' Suppose there were a file of blind men each in touch with the next: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. So too, student, in regard to their statement the brahmins seem to be like a file of blind men: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see."

10. When this was said, the brahmin student Subha, Todeyya's son, was angry and displeased with the simile of the file of blind men, and he reviled, disparaged, and censured the Blessed One, saying: "The recluse Gotama will be worsted." Then he said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, the brahmin Pokkharasāti of the Upamañña clan, lord of the Subhaga Grove, says thus: 'Some recluses and brahmins here claim superhuman states, distinctions in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones. But what they say turns out to be ridiculous; it turns out to be mere words, empty and hollow. For how could a human being know or see or realise a superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones? That is impossible.'"

11. "How then, student, does the brahmin Pokkharasāti understand the minds of all recluses and brahmins, having encompassed them with his own mind?"

"Master Gotama, the brahmin Pokkharasāti does not even understand the mind of his slavewoman Puṇṇikā, having encompassed it with his

own mind, so how could he understand thus the minds of all recluses and brahmins?"

12. "Student, suppose there were a man born blind who could not see dark and light forms, who could not see blue, yellow, red, or pink forms, who could not see what was even and uneven, who could not see the stars or the sun and moon. He might say thus: There are no dark and light forms, and no one who sees dark and light forms; there are no blue, yellow, red, or pink forms, and no one who sees blue, yellow, red, or pink forms; there is nothing even and uneven, and no one who sees anything even and uneven; there are no stars and no sun and moon, and no one who sees stars and the sun and moon. I do not know these, I do not see these, therefore these do not exist.' Speaking thus, student, would he be speaking rightly?"

"No, Master Gotama. There are dark and light forms, and those who see dark and light forms... there are the stars and the sun and moon, and those who see the stars and the sun and moon. Saying, 'I do not know these, I do not see these, therefore these do not exist,' he would not be speaking rightly."

13. "So too, student, the brahmin Pokkharasāti is blind and visionless. That he could know or see or realize a superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones—this is impossible. What do you think, student? What is better for those well-to-do brahmins of Kosala such as the brahmin Cankī,

BV: And he goes through a bunch of other names, I'm not going to go through.

MN {...} or your father, the brahmin Todeyya— that the statements they make accord with worldly convention or flaunt worldly convention?"—"That they accord with worldly convention, Master Gotama."

"What is better for them, that the statements they make be thoughtful or thoughtless?"—"Thoughtful, Master Gotama."— "What

is better for them, that they make their statements after reflecting or without reflecting?"—"After reflecting, Master Gotama."—"What is better for them, that the statements they make be beneficial or unbeneficial?"—"Beneficial, Master Gotama."

14. "What do you think, student? If that is so, did the statement made by the brahmin Pokkharasāti accord with worldly convention or flaunt worldly convention?"—"It flaunted worldly convention, Master Gotama."—"Was the statement made thoughtful or thoughtless?"—"Thoughtless, Master Gotama."—"Was the statement made after reflecting or without reflecting?"—"Without reflecting, Master Gotama."—"Was the statement made beneficial or unbeneficial?"—"Unbeneficial, Master Gotama."

15. "Now there are these five hindrances, student. What are the five? The hindrance of sensual desire, the hindrance of ill will, the hindrance of sloth and torpor, the hindrance of restlessness and remorse, and the hindrance of doubt. These are the five hindrances. The brahmin Pokkharasāti is obstructed, hindered, blocked, and enveloped by these five hindrances. That he could know or see or realize a superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones—this is impossible.

16. "Now there are these five cords of sensual pleasure, student. What are the five? Forms cognizable by the eye that are wished for, desired, agreeable, and likeable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust. Sounds cognizable by the ear...Odors cognizable by the nose...Flavors cognizable by the tongue...Tangibles cognizable by the body that are wished for, desired, agreeable, and likeable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust. These are the five cords of sensual pleasure. The brahmin Pokkharasāti is tied to these five cords of sensual pleasure, infatuated with them and utterly committed to them; he enjoys them without seeing the danger in them or understanding the escape from them. That he could know or see or realize a superhuman state, a distinction in knowledge and vision worthy of the noble ones—this is impossible.

17. "What do you think, student? Which of these two fires would have a [better] flame, color, and radiance—a fire that might burn in dependence on fuel, such as grass and wood, or a fire that might burn independent of fuel, such as grass and wood?"

"If it were possible, Master Gotama, for a fire to burn independent of fuel such as grass and wood, that fire would have a [better] flame, color, and radiance."

"It is impossible, student, it cannot happen that a fire could burn independent of fuel such as grass or wood except through [the exercise of] supernormal power. Like the fire that burns dependent on fuel such as grass and wood, I say, is the rapture that is dependent on the five cords of sensual pleasure. Like the fire that burns independent of fuel such as grass and wood, I say, is the rapture that is apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states. And what, student, is the rapture that is apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states? Here, quite secluded from sensual pleasures,

BV: Now. I'm reading a long time. Now we get to some talk.

What does it mean to be secluded from sensual pleasures? How do you become secluded from sensual pleasures? I just read to you what the sensual pleasures are. How do you become secluded from them? Well. when you close your eyes, you're secluded from the sensual pleasure of seeing. When a sound arises, you let the sound be, and relax, and don't get involved in listening to the sound; you are secluding yourself from the sensual pleasure of hearing. And taste. And smell. And touch. That's what it means always, when it's talking about... This is talking about getting into the jhānas. But, the only way you can get into the jhāna, is by being secluded from these sense pleasures.

Ok. Being

MN: secluded from unwholesome states,

BV: How do you become secluded from unwholesome states? It's by letting go of the hindrances. That's how you become secluded from unwholesome states, and you do that by the practice of six Rs. Allowing it to be without getting involved with it. It all comes back to Dependent Origination. Because right after that consciousness arises, then, that's called contact, then feeling arises, that is pleasant or unpleasant, or neither pleasant-nor-unpleasant, and then the craving. And the craving, there is a start, of the identification, the personal identification, occurs. And when you see that starting to happen, and you relax right then, with the six Rs, as I understand it, when the, relax and let go of, the feeling, as soon as the craving starts to arise we let it go right then. Then there's no, clinging that happens and no habitual tendency and that sort of thing. When you let go of the clinging, what happens is you have the pure mind, that observes, whatever is there without being involved in any way with it, without taking it personally. Observing how the process, occurs is what dependent Origination is all about. And the more quickly you can let go of the craving, which is the cause of suffering, then, the, rest of the identification, completely disappears at that time, for that, brief period of time. Your mind is very clear. And when you bring your, that clear attention back to your object of meditation. So, after the relaxation... Yeah?

S: ~

BV: Well it's the noticing that there is tightness. It does take practice to be able to do that. It's just like when you first start meditating. Your mind flip flops all over the place, and you don't really see what is happening very clearly because your mind is moving so much. As you begin to practice the six Rs and you begin to let go and try to relax, and that doesn't mean you're going to every time - it's a trial, you start to become familiar with the process and being able to recognize how the process works, and as you're able to do that more and more, your mind doesn't flip flop so much, and you start staying on your object of meditation for a longer period of time, without a distraction. The way that I teach, so that you can be, more aware of the tightness, because when you're smiling, and you're happy, and you laugh, you don't have any tension, and then when you're not

doing that you see that there is tension. And one of the things that, seems to always happen when you get on the spiritual path is you seem to get serious, and you don't need to be serious. So the more fun you have while you're doing, the easier everything becomes, because there's not the hindrances, coming up and stopping you. There's not the: "I want this to be the way I want it to be." There's more fluid motion to everything, and everything becomes easier, and you become, actually, much more efficient with what you are doing, when you're happy doing it.

When I was teaching in Malaysia, I had a lot of college students, and they only took, one test a year. For the whole year, they either made it or didn't make it, with one test, and they put a terrible amount of pressure on themselves about that. And they would come and a couple of weeks or three weeks before their test, they would come and do a one week retreat, where I was continually telling them that when anxiety arises, all of a sudden, you're not studying any more, you're thinking about something that's going to happen in the future. And you're worrying about that, and you get so distracted by this kind of hindrance. So I basically showed them how to let go of that hindrance, and relax into it, and then have fun while they were studying. And when I told them that I wanted them to laugh while they were studying, they thought I was crazy, until they took their tests and everybody did quite nicely, and they were real happy about that. So the more we can have fun with what we're doing in the present moment, the more alert and aware our mind is.

This is a key, that, all Buddhists, it doesn't matter whether you're Mahāyāna or Theravada or Vajrayāna, we all have this key, in the teachings, but we forget to use them, quite often. So, one of the things I started doing, is stressing more having joy arise, and that means smiling, and having fun, and laughing, and that sort of thing, because when your mind has this joy in it, your mind is uplifted, and you're very alert, and your awareness is very fast, and it's real easy to see when you start, getting heavy about something, and developing your sense of humor, about how crazy your mind is, about your old, habitual tendencies, and letting go of those and developing that smile, it changes your perspective completely, so that now you

become efficient with what you're doing in the present moment. You're not doing this and thinking that. You're being right with what you're doing. That's the importance of having the joy. So.

S: ~

BV: Laugh out loud? No, but he smiled a fair amount. If you read the Theravada Abhidhamma they... of course he never smiled. He only... he would sometimes show his teeth and most of the time, he didn't. In the Mahāyāna abhidhamma, they had him smiling all over the place. So, you know, it's kind of this. What do you do with that? But I know from my own practice, that...

S: ~

BV: Yeah. Yes. That's, actually, that was the Buddha's cousin. That wasn't the Buddha.

S: ~

BV: Yeah. Some students gave me one of those, he said it was a Buddha image, and I got excited, and then I saw this little fat guy there, and I told him that it was his cousin, and his cousin looked very close, to the Buddha, so he didn't want people coming up and saying: "Reverend sir." and calling him the Buddha, he, started eating, so he would look different. That's the story. I don't know how true that is, but... My student, when he found out it wasn't the Buddha, started calling him James. (Laughs)

S: ~

BV: The Buddha might not have laughed out loud, after he became the Buddha, but in all of the lifetimes before that, he did. This is a step. On of the things I've noticed, is, when, you start developing, spiritually, you sense of humor changes. You stop laughing at things, and you start laughing with things. And when somebody says something that's absolutely true, I mean there's no doubt about it, the first thing that happens to me is it makes me laugh. And that's

one of the signs that you can look for of whether you're progressing spiritually, is the change, in your sense of humor, and when I hear someone that says something that's very true, I laugh, but it's more like a chuckle. It's not a belly laugh, where I continue laughing, laughing, laughing. It's just a little laugh, and it comes from inside, and I've seen people, that heard me laugh, and they tried to imitate it, and they couldn't, because it was pure joy that was coming out.

Ok.

MN: a monk enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion.

BV: Now the pleasure born of seclusion is, in Pāli, it's sukha, and that is happiness. Since we're talking about pīti, why don't we explain a little bit about it. There's five different kinds of pīti according to Theravada, abhidhamma. The first kind, it's just there for a moment, and it's like gooseflesh - those little goose bumps that happen. And then it fades away. The next kind is like a flash of lightening. It's very intense joy for a short period of time, and then it fades away. Now, one of the things that happens, always, when joy arises, it doesn't matter which kind of joy it is, always right after the joy, there's a brief period of calmness and tranquility, where your mind is very, very peaceful for a period of time. It seems like that's where you can get very organized thinking, for a period of time. The next kind of joy is like you are standing in the ocean and you have these waves of joy come over you, keep coming. Now, these first three kinds of joy can happen for anyone, depending on conditions. It doesn't have to do with mental development at all. They can just arise because the conditions are right for them to arise. I've read some stories about some Christian ministers that had this kind of joy arise, like the flash of lightening, and they attributed that to God talking to them. So it's very clear that they made up their mind to let go of an attachment, and joy arose because of that. And then they became very tranquil and peaceful, and they had clear thinking right after that. The next two kinds of joy only arise through mental development. The next kind of joy is called uplifting joy. Now, this is the kind of joy that you

experience in the first jhāna, and the second jhāna. Their different degrees. But the uplifting joy, your mind feels very light, and your body feels very light. Now this kind of joy has excitement in it, and it really feels good, like that. The last kind of joy is called all pervading joy. Now, this is the kind of joy, that, when it arises, it is the enlightenment factor of joy. And the all pervading joy, it doesn't have the excitement in it anymore. It doesn't have the lightness of body, but it just kind of oozes out of everywhere. It just feels great. When this kind of joy arises, you see quite often Buddha images, they're sitting and their eyes are half open? The artist is trying to show that they are experiencing this kind of joy. What happens is, you can be sitting, and all of a sudden, your eyes open up. And you think: "Well, isn't that interesting?" And then you close your eyes, and your eyes open up. And you go: "Whoa, this is weird!" And you close your eyes, and your eyes open up. After the third time, then you say: "Well, if your eyes want to be open, ok, they can be open!" And it doesn't matter. You're not focusing on anything. But that's one of the things that can happen when you have the enlightenment factor of joy arise. And you know that little smile on the Buddha image? That is another thing that the artist is trying to show, of joy. It's not a great big toothy grin, it's just a little: "This is nice." Now, when the uplifting joy fades away, and it will, right after that, you have a very, very, strong feeling of comfort, in your mind and in your body. Where the uplifting joy had this excitement in it, the happiness when it arises, the comfortable feeling is like a placid lake that has no ripples in it at all. You just feel very comfortable, very peaceful, very calm, very tranquil.

Now, in Pāli, and especially in abhidhamma, they start talking about five different factors being in the first jhāna. You have a thinking mind. You have an examining mind. You have joy. You have happiness. The last word, they call it ekaggatā, in Pāli. And they always like to break this word up, because eka means one. So they say: "This is one-pointedness." But actually, this particular word, you can't break up like that. When you look up in the dictionary, ekagga, means tranquil. Ekaggatā is the act of tranquility. So, what we're talking about here, is the last factor; is having a mind that is still, and tranquil, and at ease. But it's not one pointed, on only one object.

While you're in the jhāna, you can still, see movement of mind's attention from one thing to another. You can still see these sort of things. So you're not practicing a one-pointed kind of concentration. When you're practicing the six Rs, because of that relaxed step, it changes the jhāna, from one-pointed concentration to, the tranquility insight, because you're practicing the tranquility and the insight, exactly that time. You can't get into the jhānas, unless you have insight. And the insights are how mind's attention moves. When the hindrance arises, how does it arise? What happens first? What happens after that? What happens after that? And when you start letting it go, you start letting it go backward. Your mind is distracted, and then you recognize it. And let it be, and relax, and come back to your object of meditation. Now, it gets distracted again, and right before your mind really gets caught, you see what happens right before that. So when you're able to recognize that, before you really get caught and pulled away for a long period of time, then, you start letting go at that time. And then you start recognizing what happens right before that. And that's how you wind up, learning the Dependent Origination.

Now, I just happened to bring another book in with me, and this is the Saṃyutta Nikāya, and this is a very, very, interesting book in a lot of different ways. And there's eighty-four different discourses on Dependent Origination, in this one section. And the last part is incredibly interesting, because the last three suttas, they tell you what to look for in a teacher, how to do the training, and how to exert yourself. This is real interesting stuff. And it says:

SN 12:82 A Teacher

(page 620)

At Sāvatti. "Monks, one who does not know and see as it really is aging-and-death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation, should search for a teacher in order to know this as it really is.

BV: That tells you the kind of teacher you want to be looking for. Now this is real interesting in itself, because what I just read to you was, the Four Noble Truths. Every link in Dependent Origination is

seen through the eyes of the Four Noble Truths. What is the link? That's the suffering. Its origin, that's the second Noble Truth. Its cessation, that's the third Noble Truth. And the way leading to the cessation, that's the fourth Noble Truth. So, I think you found a great teacher, and when you're out and you don't have this great teacher to come to, you start looking for the teacher that can show you the Four Noble Truths, and Dependent Origination. And if they don't really understand that, it's best to let them go, and go search for another one.

SN: "Monks, one who does not know and see as it really is birth ... habitual tendency ... clinging ... craving ... feeling ... contact ... the six sense bases ... name-and-form ... consciousness ... volitional formations, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation, should search for a teacher in order to know this as it really is."

SN 12:83 Training

"Monks, one who does not know and see as it really is aging-and-death ... volitional formations, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation, should practice the training in order to know this as it really is.

BV: That's how you train yourself. That's why you keep on hearing me talk about the six Rs, because that is the way you can train yourself to see, Dependent Origination.

SN 12:84-93 Exertion, Etc.

"Monks, one who does not know and see as it really is aging-and-death ... volitional formations, their origin, their cessation, and the way leading to their cessation, should make an exertion ... arouse a desire ... arouse enthusiasm ... be unremitting ... arouse ardor ... apply energy ... practice perseverance ... practice mindfulness ... practice clear comprehension ... practice diligence in order to know this as it really is."

BV: Now, there's one other sutta that's on the Dependent Origination that I wanted to read to you, and, this is incredibly interesting also,

and it's called the two ways.

SN: 12:3 The Two Ways (page 536)

At Sāvatti. "Monks, I will teach you the wrong way and the right way. Listen to that and attend closely, I will speak."

"Yes venerable sir." Those monks replied. The Blessed One said this:

"And what monks, is the wrong way? With ignorance as condition, volitional formations [come to be]; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness comes to be Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

BV: It goes through the whole thing. I'm not going to do that right now.

SN: This, Monks, is called the wrong way.

BV: Now, why do you suppose it's the wrong way? Because it's talking about, suffering. And this is how the suffering arises. It's just talking about the first two Noble Truths. Now:

SN: "And what monks is the right way? With the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations, cessation of consciousness....

BV: So what are we talking about here? We're talking about, the third Noble Truth, and the fourth Noble Truth. We're talking about, how these things cease. Not how they came up, or why they came up. We don't care. What we're talking about, is how, they fade away.

SN: Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering. This monks, is called the right way."

BV: So, when we're talking about Dependent Origination, we're talking about, the ceasing of the Dependent Origination. Now, how is this practically realized? I just got through telling you, when your mind gets distracted, and you see what happens, right before it gets

carried away, and you let go of that, you're starting to see the cessation of the Dependent Origination. You will start to recognize it after a while. You will start to see when a feeling arises, then the craving arises, after the craving there's the clinging and the habitual tendency, and you'll start to recognize that and be able to let it go more and more quickly and more and more easily. So this is, the real strong importance, of being able to recognize how, the process works, and when you start recognizing this as the process, it's not personal anymore. It's not me. It's not mine. It's only this craving. It's only the feeling. Did I ask the feeling to come up? No. It came up by itself. It's only this sense door. It doesn't really matter, because you're seeing it through the eyes, of, the impersonal nature of everything that arises. Now in Theravada Buddhism there is a big stress on seeing the three characteristics of existence, seeing impermanence, suffering, and not self nature. When you see Dependent Origination, you automatically see these three characteristics in everything. Learning how to smile, sharpens your awareness, so much, that you will be able to see and recognize this process, in a short period of time. As we see this over and over and over and over and over again, in everything, then, we finally start to understand, little bits at a time, that everything that arises is part of this impersonal process. It's there for a moment and disappears. Dependent Origination, all of the links of dependent origination are continually arising and passing away, arising and passing away, and you see this, and you see the suffering nature of this. And as you start to practice your six Rs and let go and relax, you're letting go of the suffering, and you're letting go of the, personality belief that these things are yours, and you have control over them. So this gets to be a real interesting process. And there's all kinds of different levels of the process. Any kind of practice that doesn't show, how the process works, will lead you away from the deep understanding that the Buddha was trying to give to us, with, this kind of understanding.

There's a real interesting idea that's been floating around, I know I had it when I practicing vipassanā for so long, that, the Buddha on his night of enlightenment, he sat underneath the bodhi tree and bang, he saw Dependent Origination and he understood it completely. But that was one of the things he was working on while

he was still a bodhisatta. He was figuring out Dependent Origination. And he saw all of these links and how they are interconnected and he saw, how the four Noble Truths actually work, with each one of the links of Dependent Origination, and as he kept watching that, over and over again, finally he realized it, then there was the big “Oh wow.”, and the experience of nibbāna. But that’s something that he’d been working on for a long time.

Ok, now what we’re talking about here, we were talking about the rapture and the sensual pleasures and that’s the cause for rapture, but the Buddha was talking about a different kind of rapture when he was talking about the, getting into the jhāna, and he said:

MN: This is a rapture apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states. Again, with the stilling of applied and sustained thought, a monk enters upon and abides in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence and singleness of mind without applied and sustained thought, with rapture and pleasure born of concentration. This too is a rapture apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states.

18. “Of those five things, student, that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome, which of the five do they prescribe as the most fruitful for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome?”

“Of those five things, Master Gotama, that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome, they prescribe generosity as the most fruitful for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome.”

BV: Now, just to give you an idea, you’re practicing Loving-Kindness meditation, and you’re sending this powerful loving feeling, and you’re giving it away. Now, in the Aṅguttara Nikāya¹, it talks about how you make the most amount of merit. He says that, giving to monks, you make a huge amount of merit. And you don’t give to monks individually; you give to the entire sangha, when you give to the monks, and he’s the representative. You make more merit, by

taking the refuge in the Buddha, Dhammma, and sangha. That's how powerful that is. You make more merit still by taking and keeping the precepts, without breaking them. You make more merit, by one thought moment of Loving-Kindness. How much is a thought moment? (Snap) That was a million or so. And you make the most amount of merit by developing your wisdom and seeing Dependent Origination, realizing Dependent Origination. So, you're practicing Loving-Kindness meditation every day, and you're sending these loving and kind thoughts, you are giving those kind thoughts and kind feelings away, to your spiritual friend. You're practicing your generosity. Mahasi Sayadaw, in one of his talks, and I have no idea how he figured this out, but he said that if you practice Loving-Kindness, without having a lot of interfering thoughts, for thirty minutes, that's the equivalent in merit of feeding, three-thousand people, three times a day. That's just thirty minutes a day of practicing Loving-Kindness. But again, I have no idea how he figured that out, but it sounds great. (Laughter) But that really is a philosophy; I don't think we can really depend on that, too much. But that gives you an idea of what you're doing with this retreat, and why I like to have people practice Loving-Kindness meditation. Because one, you're starting to see Dependent Origination, and two, you're practicing with metta, and both of those together is a huge block of merit, for, all kinds of wholesome things to arise, not only for you but for people around you.

So,

MN: 19. "What do you think, student? Here a brahmin might be holding a great sacrifice, and two other brahmins would go there thinking to take part in that great sacrifice. One brahmin among them would think: 'Oh, that only I might get the best seat, the best water, the best almsfood in the refectory; that no other brahmin might get the best seat, the best water, the best almsfood in the refectory!' And it is possible that the other brahmin, not that brahmin, gets the best seat, the best water, the best almsfood in the refectory. Thinking about this, the first brahmin might become angry and displeased. What kind of result do the brahmins describe for this?"

“Master Gotama, brahmins do not give gifts in such a way, thinking: ‘Let the others become angry and displeased because of this.’ Rather, brahmins give gifts motivated by compassion.”

“That being so, student, isn’t this the brahmins’ sixth basis for the performance of merit, that is, the motive of compassion?”

“That being so, Master Gotama, this is the brahmins’ sixth basis for the performance of merit, that is, the motive of compassion.”

20. “Those five things, student, that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome— where do you often see those five things, among householders or among those gone forth?”

“Those five things, Master Gotama, that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome, I often see among those gone forth, seldom among householders. For the householder has a great deal of activity, great functions, great engagements, and great undertakings: he does not constantly and invariably speak the truth, practice asceticism, observe celibacy, engage in study, or engage in generosity. But one gone forth has a small amount of activity, small functions, small engagements, and small undertakings: he constantly and invariably speaks the truth, practices asceticism, observes celibacy, engages in study, and engages in generosity. Thus those five things that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome, I often see among those gone forth, seldom among householders.”

21. “Those five things, student, that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome, I call equipment of the mind, that is, for developing a mind that is without hostility and without ill will. Here, student, a monk is a speaker of truth. Thinking, ‘I am a speaker of truth,’ he gains inspiration in the meaning, gains inspiration in the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma. It is that gladness connected with the wholesome

that I call an equipment of the mind. Here, student, a monk is an ascetic...one who is celibate...one who engages in study...one who engages in generosity. Thinking,

BV: One of the ways that monks can practice generosity, is kind of neat, for the end result, that they get from that, but it takes twelve years of practice, without a break. And that would be, I would go to a monastery, and I would arrange with the head monk, the abbot, I would tell him: "I want to practice this kind of generosity. I want to practice going out on alms round, and then sharing the alms round with everybody, in the monastery." And I would go out on alms round every day, and I would offer it to the head monk, and then the next senior, and the next senior, as much food as I have. When I ran out of food, I would go out on alms round again, and do it again. And then offer it to the head monk, and the next senior, and the next senior all the way down, until everybody in the monastery was fed. Only then would I take food for myself. Now, I have to do this every day, for twelve years. So it's best if it's a small monastery. (Laughter) But the trick is, I cannot entertain one thought of remorse. Now, in monasteries, there's monks that are coming and going. And sometimes there's monks that are, not so nice, and not so pleasant to be around, but, because of this practice, I practice giving them the food, and I cannot hold one thought of: "I wish I didn't have to give him food.", or "I wish he didn't take this food." I cannot hold any thought of remorse, for twelve years. After that, there is the benefit that anywhere I would go, say I go into the middle of the forest, and it's time to eat a meal, there will be food in my bowl, whether somebody put it there or not, there would be food in the bowl. It can be offered by devas and that sort of thing. So, there's this story about this one monk that practiced this during the time of the Buddha, and they went into a forest, right about, time to go on alms round, and Sāriputta said to the Buddha: "Do we really want to go in right now or do we want to go out on alms round?" And the Buddha said: "Never mind, there's this monk with us." And it got to be time to eat, and the Buddha said to this monk: "Walk in front of me." And he walked for a little ways, and then he stopped and he opened up his bowl, and there's all of this food, and he started giving, and of course there was five hundred arahants; there's always five hundred

arahats, no matter what. And he fed every one of them, and still had a lot of food left over in his bowl. So that's one of the advantages, but that's an extremely difficult practice to do for twelve years. To not hold one thought of remorse: "I wish I didn't have to do this for this person, or share with them because they said nasty things and whatever they did things that weren't very nice."

Yes?

S: ~

BV: Yes. In a way, you control yourself. You practice your six Rs, you see that dissatisfaction starting to come up, it's a, painful feeling, and there's craving and then there's the thoughts that come up right after that. So you, don't indulge in that kind of thinking. It helps you to develop your mindfulness, in very particular way. So, who wants to try this one? (Laughter) But when monks, we don't have a whole lot of stuff in the way of material things to share, but monks are continually sharing things, all the time. A monk can come to my center and one of his robes is missing or, not in good shape; I have lots of robes, so I give him a robe. We share food continually. We share our requisites, and the more you wind up sharing, the more happiness you have. And I had a practice, when I was first at a, meditation center when I first started, of, whenever I got a particularly good piece of fruit, I'd take a bite and go: "Whoa, that's really good!", I'd go around and share it with other people. "Taste this. This is great stuff." And some of the people that were there, they started to like the idea of seeing me come around with a piece of fruit in my hand, because they knew they were going to get a good taste for it. And that was just one of the fun little things, that anybody can practice. I remember when Munindra first came to this country, he was at the meditation center I was at, and we would sit down for a meal, and he was constantly taking food off of his plate and putting it on other people's plates. He was always sharing his food as much as he could. That was a great practice. That was real fun. So, practicing your generosity is not only practicing with material things. It's not only practicing with physical things. It's also sharing your kind thoughts with other people, saying things that you know

will make them happy; avoid saying that's that will make them angry – that's part of generosity, too. And the more you hold these uplifting kind thoughts, in your mind, that's part of generosity.

One of the things that I just got through reading, it was by Buddhaghosa, and his observation was, when people start getting off of the spiritual path, they start becoming more, selfish; they're not so willing to share so much. And during the time of the Buddha, there were people that, they measured their wealth not by how much they had, but by how much they gave, and there were some people that were incredibly wealthy, and they would set up what they called alms houses, that you would place for anybody could come and get food or any of the requisites. And they had four gates to their towns and their cities, and they would set one up at each gate, and then, if they were really wealthy, they would set one up in the middle of the town, and set one up right beside their house, the family would feed anybody that came, and, if they needed to spend the night, they could spend the night after they cleaned up, in the little house. If they needed any medicine, they would make sure they got medicine. If they needed any clothing, there was always clothing around. And they were continually sharing like that, and that's how people, measured their wealth. But what's happening today? You measure your wealth by how much, material things you have, how much land you have, how much money you have in the bank. And that's saying right there that the spiritual qualities in this country, are not very strong, because there isn't that sharing. There's more of a: "Me first" attitude. And you're starting to notice that more and more with the people coming out of college, and that's kind of sad. The more you can practice your generosity, the happier your mind becomes. And the happier your mind becomes, it makes you want to do more; it makes you want to extend out to other people and help them. And extending out to other people, with your voice is incredibly important – saying things that make other people happy, even when you don't feel like saying things that would make them happy, doing that anyway – a very necessary part, of your meditation. And this is a way that you develop a general kind of mindfulness, of what you're going to say, and what you're going to do, before you do it. So this helps your awareness, a lot, so that you can have a more uplifted, tranquil,

peaceful, mind. Practicing your generosity, one of the reasons I like the smile so much is because you can give it away real easily. All you have to do is smile to somebody else, and then they start smiling. It's shocking to see, sometimes. If you're in a place where there's hustle and bustle, and you see somebody and you start smiling, it's like they don't even know that you're there, and then all of a sudden, it's like: "Oh!", and they look at you smiling, and they smile back. It's great stuff. The more you can practice that, the more uplifted your mind becomes. The more uplifted your mind becomes, the more alert your mind becomes. This is part of right effort. So, we need to continually practice. Practice makes perfect, eventually, if there's such a thing as perfect, I'm not sure. (Laughs) But, as we can develop this uplifted mind that's giving, we become much more alert, to what your mind is doing in the present moment. We become much more alert to how mind's attention moves from one thing to another.

Ok- thinking

MN: 'I am one who engages in generosity,' he gains inspiration in the meaning, gains inspiration in the Dhamma, gains gladness connected with the Dhamma. It is that gladness connected with the wholesome that I call an equipment of the mind. Thus those five things that the brahmins prescribe for the performance of merit, for accomplishing the wholesome, I call equipment of the mind, that is, for developing a mind that is without hostility and without ill will."

22. When this was said, the brahmin student Subha, Todeyya's son, said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, I have heard that the recluse Gotama knows the path to the company of Brahmā."

"What do you think, student? Is the village of Nalakara near here, not far from here?"

"Yes, sir, the village of Nalakara is near here, not far from here."

"What do you think, student? Suppose there was a man born and raised in the village of Naḷakāra, and as soon as he had left Naḷakāra

they asked him about the path to the village. Would that man be slow or hesitant in answering?"

"No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because that man has been born and raised in Naḷakāra, and is well acquainted with all the' paths to the village."

"Still, a man born and raised in the village of Naḷakāra might be slow or hesitant in answering when asked about the path to the village, but a Tathāgata, when asked about the Brahmā-world or the way leading to the Brahmā-world, would never be slow or hesitant in answering. I understand Brahmā, student, and I understand the Brahmā-world, and I understand the way leading to the Brahmā-world, and I understand how one should practise to reappear in the Brahmā-world."

23. "Master Gotama, I have heard that the recluse Gotama teaches the path to the company of Brahmā. It would be good if Master Gotama would teach me the path to the company of Brahmā."

"Then, student, listen and attend closely to what I shall say." "Yes, sir," he replied. The Blessed One said this:

24. "What, student, is the path to the company of Brahmā? Here a monk abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he abides pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, {...}

BV: Now, this kind of meditation is what I teach after you break down the barriers. What you're doing right now is called breaking down the barriers. You send Loving-Kindness to your spiritual friend, and you stay with that same spiritual friend until you get to a certain jhāna. And then I will tell you: "Ok, now go to another spiritual friend, and as soon as you see then smiling and happy in you mind,

then go to another spiritual friend." Now this can happen all in one sitting, because when you get to this certain level of the jhāna, you understand very well what you are doing, so it makes it real easy to do this. After you do three or four spiritual friends, then I tell you to go and bring up family members, people that you dearly love, close friends. And radiate Loving-Kindness to them, and every time you see one of them smiling and happy, go to another, and then another. After you do that, then I tell you: "Ok, now what I want you to do is go to a neutral person. A neutral person is where you ride the bus every day, you get on the bus every day, and there's the same people on the bus every day. You know them; you see them; you might talk to them occasionally, but you don't really know them very well. That would be a neutral person. Or you go to a store, and you go to the same checker every time. You know that person, but you don't really know them very well. That would be a neutral person. So you pick out three or four neutral persons to radiate Loving-Kindness to, and when you see them smiling and happy, you go to the next. Then the tough one comes. Any enemies that you have, you radiate Loving-Kindness to them, and that can be somewhat difficult because of your attachments. And you can start thinking about: "Yeah, I wish them well, kind of, not really, they're kind of a turkey because they did me wrong one way or another.", and you start thinking about them. Then you stop the meditation; go back to the neutral person. Get the feeling of Loving-Kindness going, and then go back to your enemy. And you do that until you see that enemy smiling and happy, and you don't feel any, ill will towards them. And you do that with as many, enemies as you have, that you can think of. When you get done with that, then I'll come along and say: "Ok, now you start sending Loving-Kindness in the directions." There's six directions: in front of you; behind you; to the right; to the left; above; below. And then all around, at the same time. This is a very interesting practice, because this is where you start really realizing the boundary-less nature of Loving-Kindness. There are no boundaries. You can start radiating Loving-Kindness, and you radiate to this room and you feel yourself fill this room with love, and then you extend it a little bit further, and then extend it a little bit further, and extend it through the state, and extend it through the country, and extend it through the world, and you can keep going, as far as you want. But there's

no boundaries on the limits of the Loving-Kindness, and it's really quite amazing. That's what we're talking about here.

MN: When the deliverance of mind by loving-kindness is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there. Just as a vigorous trumpeter could make himself heard without difficulty in the four quarters, so too, when the deliverance of mind by loving-kindness is developed in this way, no limiting action remains there, none persists there. This is the path to the company of Brahmā.

BV: When you get into the jhānas, when you're practicing the Loving-Kindness meditation, if you never get any higher, if you don't attain nibbāna, you will be reborn in a brahma loca. A brahma loca lasts for a long time. There's two kinds of heavenly realms, basically speaking. There's the deva loca, and that's people that practice their generosity and they're very good people during their life, but they really didn't develop their mind like they could have, and they will be reborn in a deva loca, and every day they need to eat food, to keep their body alive. Any time they get involved with something and they forget to eat, then their body will die and they'll be reborn in another realm, depending on their karma. Generally, what they eat is grapes, which is kind of odd; I'd think you'd get tired of eating the same thing. The heaven of the thirty-three, and this is philosophy, I don't know whether it's really true or not. But they say the heaven of the thirty-three, one day there is equivalent to one hundred years here, in time, and you live to be, up to a hundred or so. That's a long period of time. Now, when you start practicing and getting into the jhānas, then you'd be reborn in the brahma loca. The brahma loca, you don't need food for your sustenance, the thing that keeps your body alive is joy. Brahma locas last for an incredibly long period of time. There's a thing called an asaṅkheyya. An asaṅkheyya is supposed to be, and this is from commentaries, so I don't know whether it's true or not, but they say one asaṅkheyya is ten with one hundred and sixty zeros behind it. That's a long time. Ok, there's four asaṅkheyya, to a mahākappa. There's a time when there's the expansion of the universe. That's the time we're living in right now. Then it will stop for a asaṅkheyya. And then it will start contracting, and it will contract for an asaṅkheyya, and then it will stop for an

asaṅkheyya, and then the whole thing starts out again. That's the expansion and contraction of the universe, it's called a mahākappa. Now that would mean that for one whole cycle to happen, it would be roughly four hundred and fifty zeros behind a ten, to the power of four hundred and fifty zeros. Who knows whether those numbers are real or not? It just, let's say it's just a real long time for the expansion and contraction of the universe. Now when you get up into the third jhāna, and you have reasonable control over getting into the third jhāna, if you never got any higher, you would die, you would be reborn in that realm, it would last somewhere around, I think it's fifteen or sixteen mahākappas, that's how long your life would last, in that realm, and it's a very pleasant, pleasurable realm. But eventually you would die from that realm and depending on your karma, you would be reborn somewhere else. Could be a hell realm, it could be a human realm, could be an animal realm, depending on your karma. When you go up into the fourth jhāna ... Now, when you're practicing Loving-Kindness, the Loving-Kindness will take you to the fourth jhāna. It's just a little bit different than what the commentaries say, but in the suttas, and I can show you exactly the sutta, it says that the Loving-Kindness takes you to the fourth jhāna. When you are practicing the Brahma Vihāras, as you go deeper into your practice, naturally, your practice will start to change after a while, as you go in the depths of the Loving-Kindness. The feeling will change, and then you'll start feeling an expansion, and you have reached, the realm of infinite space. And this is real interesting because the Mahāyāna people, they talk a lot about the Buddha having infinite compassion, and actually, I think what it is, is, because, the Loving-Kindness in the Brahma Vihāras it changes. The feeling of Loving-Kindness actually changes, and you have to tell me what the change is, I won't tell you, then there's this expansion of infinite space, and you have this feeling, that's going out with this expansion, and that would be, infinite compassion, so that's what they're actually talking about. The Buddha, every day he sat, in, meditation practicing the compassion, and he was sitting in the realm of infinite space when he did that. As your meditation goes deeper, the feeling of compassion will change, to a feeling of joy; I won't tell you what that feels like either; you have to tell me. And what you will start to notice is, there are a lot of different consciousnesses arising

and passing away, arising and passing away, at the eye, at the ear, at the nose, wherever. The consciousnesses are continually arising and passing away, and, this is called the realm of infinite consciousness. It's the sixth jhāna. As your meditation deepens, you'll start to notice that there's a little break in between the arising of one consciousness and another, and that break will start to get a little bit longer and a little bit longer as your mind settles down more. And eventually you'll get to a place, where the feeling of joy disappears and the feeling of equanimity becomes very strong, and this equanimity is the realm of nothingness, and this is where mind does not look outside of itself anymore. Now you just looking in the mind. Very interesting state. Very, very fun to learn how to adjust your energy, when you're watching, because if you put too much energy in, you get restless, if not enough, you get dull. So there's this balance that's happening all of the time in this jhāna, and it gets to be real fun to watch. As you go deeper into the practice, now this is far as the Brahma Vihāras will take you, to the realm of nothingness. What happens after that, is you'll get to a space where it's called neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and it's like you're, meditating along really nicely, and it's like you go asleep, but you know you're not asleep. But it seems like that. Then, after, you come out of that jhāna, and you start reflecting, and you start seeing things that happened in the jhāna. And this is very interesting things that will happen, and you'll have to describe that to me too. I won't give away a lot of stuff. Now, what happens by the time you've gotten to this realm is you started relaxing, and it's becoming, completely automatic. Anything that arises, there's a release, relax, release, relax. Eventually, your mind has been vibrating and becoming finer and finer until it's hard to tell if whether there's any vibration at all. That's the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Eventually, you'll get to a place and you'll relax so completely and totally, that, that is the cessation of perception and feeling. Somebody took the switch, turned it off. There's nothing there. When the perception and feeling arise again, your mindfulness is so sharp, that you will see all of the links of Dependent Origination. And when you see the cessation of ignorance, there is the experience of nibbāna. That's exactly how it happens. When you've had that experience, and you come out, you will feel a lot of joy, a lot of joy.

It's such a strong experience, the impersonal nature of the Dependent Origination, it's seeing and realizing it, it's such a strong experience, that it will change your perspective, completely. Now, there is another part of this, and that is called the fruition. According to Theravada abhidhamma, fruition happens in ... There's seventeen parts to a thought moment. Ok. And there's seven, parts of a thought moment, that are called the javana moments, and nibbāna happens in either the third, fourth, or fifth javana moment, and the next javana moment is where fruition occurs. That's what they say. It doesn't happen that way. That does not agree with the suttas. The fruition will occur for you at any time, and it is the experience of the cessation of perception and feeling and seeing Dependent Origination, again. Now the fruition, is where the complete personality development happens. You will never again, experience, lust, or hatred, or a belief in a personal self. You'll never have any doubt as to whether the practice is correct or not. You will never have the belief that rites and rituals lead to nibbāna. Now what I just described to you was the third stage of enlightenment. It can happen that, depending on your karma, you can either reach the third stage or the fourth stage of enlightenment, by doing this practice that we're doing right now. If you're very attentive and you truly do understand, listening to a Dhamma talk, you can become a sotāpanna; you can become enlightened in the first stage of enlightenment. That happened to venerable Sāriputta, when he went up to the venerable Assaji, who'd just become an arahat, and asked him who his teacher was and what the teaching was. Assaji says: "I don't know very much, but I can tell you this: the Tathāgata told us that everything that arises, passes away." Soon as he heard that, (Snap) he's a sotāpanna. And that happens with the second stage of enlightenment, too, depending on one's development. So the thing with listening to the Dhamma talk, it's incredibly important to be as attentive as you possibly can be. Because at any time, all of a sudden your understanding, it can just click, and this is a funny thing too, because a lot of these suttas that I read to you, many people have heard them many times, and they'll come to me after hearing it and they'll say: "You know, I've heard you give this three, four, five times, and (Click) now I understand it. And then they'll hear me give it another time, and they'll come back and go: "Wow, that was really

something. I heard it, but I didn't really get it before. Now I got it!" And it helps your level of understanding improve, as you hear these things, over and over. Now, one of the bad raps for Buddhism is that the Buddha always repeated everything three times, and I started taking the Middle Length Sayings, and putting that back in, and taking the dot, dot, dot, out, and I'll show you what it's like to hear that, in a couple of days. And what happens is, when you hear, all of that repetition, it really starts to sink in, and you really start to get it. And then when you go away and you start doing your practice, it comes back very easily, and it's one of the best ways I know of, so you don't have doubt, of what you're doing, because you've heard it. You hear everything three times, and quite often, more than that. It sinks in very, very nicely, and your practice improves a lot because of that. So how many times have you heard me mention the six Rs tonight? (Laughs) Three, at least? It may be three dozen, one of the two. (Laughs) Ok, does anybody have any questions? Comments? The last part was a preview of coming events. When you keep this practice going, these are the things that you can expect to see happen. and they do. I promise.

One of the things that happened when meditation first started happening in this country, was it happened through Zen, and the only time you meditated was when you were sitting, and that idea kind of carried on: "The only time I meditate is while I'm sitting. While I'm doing my daily activities, it doesn't matter what I'm doing; I can do anything I want. But I sit every day!" And if you can't take your meditation with you into your daily activities, then you haven't got much of a meditation, to my way of thinking. Now this is one of the true differences between the practice of one-pointed concentration and the tranquility vipassanā, that I'm teaching. The one-pointed concentration, will suppress a hindrance, when your concentration is deep enough. It will stop the hindrance from arising, temporarily, but when you lose that concentration, guess what comes back? And you haven't been aware of how the process works, of the hindrance, so, it's real easy to get overwhelmed. But when you're practicing the way that I'm showing you right now, the hindrance turns into your teacher, and you start seeing it as a process, and then when you get out into your daily life, you're continuing on, and

when a hindrance arises, you can start recognizing it more quickly. That leads to more happiness in your life all the time, or true contentment. And that's a very necessary part of the practice. To realize that: "Well I can do or say anything while I'm not sitting.", is only indulging in your own pain and suffering, then if you're a true seeker, you'll want to let that go. You'll want to stop causing yourself the pain. Develop that sense of humor about everything. Ok? Yes?

S: ~

BV: It's a different kind of jhāna. The vipassanā jhāna that they're talking about, has access concentration, upacāra samādhi in it, and upacāra samādhi is a kind of one-pointedness, that suppresses the hindrances; it pushes them down. If you try to have a hindrance arise, and you're just checking. You know, you say: " Well, let's see if I can make my mind hold a thought of lust, for a minute." As soon as you bring that lust up, when you have upacāra samādhi, your mind says: "No.", and just, will not allow it. But, you really don't get a chance to learn how the hindrance can arise that way, because the force of the concentration stops these things. So, it's a different kind of jhāna from the vipassanā jhāna. And I started coining it the tranquility jhāna. The samatha vipassanā jhāna. Because you're getting your insights, and your insights are of how that process works, and those insights are big sometimes; they're really: "Oh wow." s.

One of the things it says in the suttas, in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, it says that anyone that sees the five aggregates, they are practicing the four foundations of mindfulness. The five aggregates, body, feeling. Four foundations of mindfulness, body, feeling. Then the foundations, you have consciousness. The aggregates, you have perception, and the consciousness. So those two go together with that. And then you have the dhammas, which is the sankhāras, in Pāli, for, this, aggregates. Now, in this particular sutta, this is a description of Sāriputta' experience while he was in the jhāna, and I'm just going to take the first jhāna here, and it says:

MN # 111:

4. "And the states in the first jhāna— the thinking, the examining, the joy, the pleasure, and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind;

BV: That's the five aggregates. Now, it says:

MN # 111: the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention— these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred;

BV: They're saying that all of these different things that I just mentioned, you see while you are in the jhāna. When you're in the one-pointed jhāna, you can't see these things.

S: ~

BV: Yes, it's Middle Length Sayings, it's page eight nine nine. And this is one of my favorite suttas, because it is so incredibly precise about what you see while you're in the jhāna.

Ahhhhh-

MN # 111: known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared.

BV: He's seeing impermanence.

MN # 111: He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted; unrepelled,

BV: He wasn't holding on, he wasn't pushing away.

MN # 111: independent,

BV: He wasn't identifying with these things.

MN # 111: detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond,' and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is.

BV: So, when we're, doing our practice, if we're doing the samatha vipassanā, we will see all of those things, in each one of the jhānas. If you're doing one-pointed concentration, you will not, and the access concentration, is, the first part of one-pointed concentration. The concentration is just a little bit too deep and it pushes down the hindrance. And the hindrance is where our teachers are. And the hindrances need to come up by themselves, and they will always come up, when your mindfulness, gets a little weak, then the hindrance comes up. And you need to develop the mind that welcomes the hindrance, and everybody thinks I'm a little bit crazy for saying that. But this is your friend. This is showing you: "Hey, this is how it works." If you are practicing the six Rs, you have that relaxed, step, in it. If you don't have the relaxed step in it, then the kind of jhāna you will experience, is the kind of one-pointed jhāna. That extra step where you relax, is, when the tension and tightness arises that is, the second Noble Truth, that's craving. And when you relax, you're letting go of the craving. Now, what happens with a lot of people, is they don't put that relax step in, and they bring their attention, back to your object of meditation, and you still have the craving. And that's the part that helps mind go deeper. And I'm not saying that one-pointed concentration, there is no benefits from it. There are benefits from it, but they're not the same benefits as the Buddha was teaching. He was not teaching one-pointed, and I'll tell you the hint, of why I say that. Because while he was a bodhisatta, he went to the best teachers he could find, and he did practice one-pointed concentration and was not satisfied with them.

Every time Buddhism would go into another area, you had people that they already had their traditions. They had their ways of doing things, and they wanted to put the Buddha's in it. And at first, they might have been teaching it the correct way, but over a period of time, that got lost. And also the Burmese are very, very big on their commentaries, rather than, the suttas themselves. And that's a problem. that really is a problem, and I had twenty years of that

problem. Honest, I know. They changed the definition of samatha to one-pointedness, and actually, when you look it up in the Pāli-English dictionary, it will say that it's the super tranquil state that leads to jhāna. And the samatha has been changed to one-pointedness, which is a little bit different than the tranquil state. As I understand it, and I've never been able to read the Tibetan text without just going: "I have no idea of what you're saying.", so I put it down. But supposedly the Mahāmudrā is very close to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. But I've never been able to get through the stuff to be able to see that.

S: ~

BV: If you go to the Visudhimagga, it doesn't have sixteen insights, like the Burmese have, it has nine, and ...

S: ~

BV: I know,

S: ~

BV: Yes, and that's what happens when you go away from the original text, because every commentary is somebody else's idea about what they think the Buddha was talking about. And they practiced, this way or that way, and they say: "Well, this is what he was talking about, and this really works this way, and this is how it is.", but then, when you go back to the original suttas, and you go: "How in the world can they get that out of this?" It gets real confusing. See, right after the time that the Buddha died, the word, samādhi, it was a word that the Buddha made up. He made this word up, to describe this particular kind of samatha vipassanā practice, and the Brahmins, they started taking the word and using it in with their teaching, but they changed the definition of it, and that definition stuck for a really long period of time, and it gets incredibly confusing. So, with this, it's real tricky, studying the suttas if you don't have a practice that goes along with what the suttas are saying.

S: ~

BV: Well, I don't know. Some of the experiences before the attainment of nibbāna are described. But when you get to the experience of nibbāna, it's unconditioned; all we know is conditioned. How can you even talk about it? It gets so confusing that I kind of throw up my hands and say: "I'm just going to go back to the original stuff, and not worry about what everybody else says."

There's a story about the Zen teacher, what was his name, he was a big Korean Zen teacher, and a Tibetan teacher came to visit. Now, they're going to have this big discussion, right? So all the students are: "Yeah, let's go. Let's see what this is like!", and the Zen teacher holds up an orange, and he says: "What is this?", and he kept saying it. And the Tibetan says: "Don't you have oranges in your country?" He turned around and walked away. That was the big discussion.

And this is one of the things that's different about the way I run a retreat, and the way an awful lot of other people run a retreat, because I don't go around telling you: "Shh, don't talk. Don't talk." So that everybody whispers, but they're still, communicating with each other, and I don't see the need for that. Because the noble silence is when you get into the second jhāna, because you're not having that active mind, and you're starting to observe without having a lot of thoughts, and that's what the noble silence is about, to me. And I find it, when I was in Burma, I would talk with the other monks about their experience, even though we were supposed to be keeping noble silence, we taught each other a lot, with our own observations and that sort of thing, and I found it very useful; I am not going to stop you from talking with each other; I want you to talk about Dhamma. I don't want you to chit chat about this and that, because that's nonsense stuff, and that's a distraction. But talk on the Dhamma is a good thing, to me.

So why don't we share some merit now?

May suffering ones, be suffering free
And the fear struck, fearless be
May the grieving shed all grief
And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired
For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth
Devas and nagas of mighty power
Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Lord Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

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Footnote

1. AN 9-20