

## MN 111 ONE BY ONE AS THEY OCCURRED – ANUPADA SUTTA

Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi on 20 February 2006

At Dhamma Dena Vipassanā Center, Joshua Tree, California

BV: This particular sutta is really interesting because the Buddha is describing Sāriputta's practice in meditation, and the states that he went through and what he saw while he was in each one of the meditation states.

So...

MN 111:

1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvathī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the monks thus: "Monks." - "Venerable, sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Monks, Sāriputta is wise; Sāriputta has great wisdom; Sāriputta has wide wisdom; Sāriputta has joyous wisdom; ...

BV: I like that one.

MN:

... Sāriputta has quick wisdom; Sāriputta has keen wisdom; Sāriputta has penetrative wisdom. During half a month, monks, Sāriputta gained insight into the states one by one as they occurred. Now Sāriputta's insight into states one by one as they occurred was this:

BV: Before we get going too far: the word 'wisdom' is one of those words that everybody is supposed to know what the definition is, but nobody really has a clear idea of what that word means. In Buddhism, any time the word 'wisdom' is used, it is referring directly to seeing dependent origination. When you see dependent origination and how it works, you're developing your wisdom, you're developing insight into the true nature of everything that arises. So anytime you see the word 'wisdom', it's actually referring to dependent origination.

MN:

3. "Here, monks, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, ...

BV: How do you become secluded from sensual pleasures? You guys can't answer that, these guys have to work with it. How do you become secluded from sensual pleasures?

ST: ~~~

BV: Actually, while you're sitting in your meditation, you're sitting with your eyes closed. The sensual pleasure of seeing is not there; it's secluded. If you hear a sound, the directions are: as soon as your mind goes to that distraction, let it go, relax, and come back to your object of meditation. You don't get involved in the content of what that sound is about. If someone is talking, you don't get involved in the conversation. You just hear it as sound, let it be, relax, and come back; and taste, and smell, and touch. So when you're secluded from sensual pleasures, it means not getting involved with whatever sensual pleasure it is that arises. Not get caught about how much you like this sight, or this sound, or this touch, or taste, or smell, but seeing it for what it is. It is just *this*, and it's alright for it to be there, but you allow it to be, relax, and come back to your object of meditation.

Now, 'secluded from unwholesome states', what does that mean, being secluded from unwholesome states? Being secluded from unwholesome states means letting go of all hindrances. As your mind begins to become more calm, more at ease, hindrances will not have a tendency to arise at that time.

MN:

... Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by thinking and examining thought, with joy and pleasure born of seclusion.

BV: The way jhāna occurs is: you're working with a distraction, a hindrance of one kind or another, whatever it happens to be, and as you let it go, and relax, and come back to your object of meditation, it begins to get weaker, and weaker, until finally it doesn't arise anymore. When it doesn't arise anymore, you have a real sense of relief, and right after that relief, you feel joy arising.

Now, there's five different kinds of joy. The first kind of joy is like goose bumps; it's there for just a brief moment and then it goes away. The next kind of joy is, it's like a flash of lightening; it's real intense for a very short period of time, and then that fades away. The next kind of joy is like you're standing in the ocean, and you have these waves of joy come over you; it's just wave after wave. Now, these three kinds of joy can happen to anyone for any reason. When the conditions are right, these kind of joy will arise. The last two kinds of joy only arise through mental development. The next kind of joy is called uplifting joy. You feel very light in your mind and light in your body. You feel very happy and

there's excitement in it. The last kind of joy is called all pervading joy, and it just kind of comes out of everywhere, it just kind of bubbles over and just kind of comes through your whole body.

Now, when you're looking at Buddha images, quite often you'll look at a Buddha image and you'll see that their eyes are partially open. The artist is showing the all pervading joy, and it happens when the joy is very deep. You be sitting in meditation, this joy arises, it feels very good, doesn't have near as much excitement in it, but it's very... your mind is very alert and very calm, but there's a happiness about whatever you're seeing. When you're sitting, all of a sudden this joy arises, and your eyes open up, and you think: "Well, that was strange." So you close your eyes, and your eyes open up; so you close your eyes, and your eyes open up, then you say: "Well ok, you want to be open, stay open." But this is what the artist is trying to show with the eyes partially open in the Buddha images.

Now, in the first jhāna... and if you'll remember what I was saying about jhāna, the word 'jhāna' quite often, in this country, is translated as 'concentration'. Actually, the word 'jhāna' means a stage of your meditation. It's just a level of your understanding about dependent origination; it's just a level. The joy arises, right after that when it fades away, you feel very comfortable in your mind and in your body. This feeling is what the Buddha called 'sukha' in Pāli, that is happiness, and your mind doesn't wander very much in your meditation. Your mind doesn't wander away, it stays with your meditation. You feel very peaceful and very calm. In Pāli, the word for that is 'ekaggatā', and if you look up the word in the dictionary, 'ekagga', it means tranquillity, it means peacefulness, it means stillness of mind. Ekaggatā means the act of this stillness.

So these are the things that Sāriputta experienced in the first jhāna.

MN:

4. "And the states in the first jhāna - the thinking and examining thought, the joy, the happiness, the unification of mind; ...

BV: Those are the five factors right there.

Then he says...

MN: ... the contact, feeling, perception, volition and mind; ...

BV: The five aggregates are present in that jhāna.

Then it says...

MN:

... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. ...

BV: What are we talking about right here? We're talking about impermanence. You're seeing impermanence while you are in the jhāna. You're seeing these things arise and pass away one by one as they occur. They don't necessarily follow the order that they're given here, they kind of come up whenever they're going to come up.

MN:

... He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' ...

BV: Impermanence again.

MN:

... Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, ...

BV: He didn't grab onto it, try to hold on to them.

MN:

... unrepelled, ...

BV: He didn't try to push them away, stop them from happening.

MN:

... independent, ...

BV: He saw the true nature of all of these states as being impersonal; anatta - impersonal. I don't like the definition of 'anatta' being 'not-self' because so many people misunderstand that. When you say 'impersonal', you see it as part of a process, when you see 'not-self', you get confused.

MN:

... detached, ...

BV: Again, impersonal.

MN:

... free, ...

BV: Again, impersonal.

MN:

... dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: So he got into the first jhāna, he knew there's still more work to be done, but while he was in the jhāna, he was seeing impermanence. Anyone that sees impermanence sees a form of unsatisfactoriness because we want things to be permanent, and when it's not, there's this little dissatisfaction that arises, and we're seeing the impersonal nature of all of these different states as they arise and pass away. You don't have any control over these. They happen when the conditions are right for them to arise. There's no 'me', there's no 'my', there's no 'I'. So you're seeing anicca, dukkha, anatta, while you are in the jhāna. You're also seeing the five aggregates. This is very key. Seeing these things - and we'll get to see that Sāriputta saw these things all the way up to the realm of nothingness - seeing the five aggregates. In the Saṃyutta Nikāya, there's a section on the five aggregates, and it says that the five aggregates and the four foundations of mindfulness are the same thing. So when you're practicing and getting into the jhāna, by adding that extra step of relaxing, you're practicing the four foundations of mindfulness, while you're in the jhāna.

MN:

5. "Again, monks, with the stilling of thinking and examining thought, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the second jhāna, which has self-confidence and stillness of mind without thinking and examining thought, with joy and happiness born of collectedness.

BV: Now, here it says 'concentration', but I don't like to use the word 'concentration' because it's misunderstood. Just about everybody that practices concentration, they're practicing an absorption kind of concentration. When you're reading a book and you're really concentrated, and somebody comes up and you don't even know they're there because you're so absorbed in what you're reading, that's concentration. But what the Buddha was talking about - because you have these five aggregates - is a collected kind of mind. It's a mind that's peaceful, it's a mind that's still and tranquil, but it's alert to everything else around you.

You see, when we're talking about the five aggregates here, they use the word, instead of 'body', they use the word 'contact'. In order for there to be contact, you have to have a body, but you don't necessarily notice your body until there

is contact. When there's a touch, then you know that body is still around. And this is one of the things that happens in absorption concentration is, your mind becomes so absorbed in your object of meditation that you lose all feeling of the body.

I've been to meditation centres where people are practicing concentration, and the way we find out whether they're really concentrated or not, is come up and touch them; they don't know. Make loud noises right beside them; they don't know. They don't have full awareness. They have a deeply concentrated mind, but they don't have awareness around them. They can't feel the contact. The contact with the ear, the contact with the body, they can't feel that when they get to deep stages of concentration. But as you'll see here, even when you get into the arupa jhānas, you still have that contact, and if you're in an arupa jhāna, and I walk up to you and I say: "I need to talk to you right now", you will hear that, and then you make a decision of whether you're going to break your sitting or not. So this particular sutta is very important because it's showing that there is full awareness while you're in a jhāna. And what's the difference between absorption concentration and the samatha-vipassanā? The samatha-vipassanā has that one extra step of relaxing. When you put that in, that changes the entire meditation, and this is the thing that made the Buddha's teaching so unique from whatever was being taught by other teachers at that time.

MN:

6. "And the states in the second jhāna - the self-confidence, ...

BV: Now, why do you have self confidence when you're starting to develop your deeper stages of meditation? Because you're really starting to understand the process of dependent origination and you're starting to see it as being an impersonal process. You're starting to see. Now, yesterday I was telling everyone I want you to see how your mind movement works. What happens? How does it happen? As you start seeing that, you start seeing individual parts of dependent origination, and you see that there is a cause and effect: when this arises, then that arises. When you let go of the craving, when you let go of that tension and tightness caused by that mind's attention and its movement, there's no clinging, there's no habitual tendency arising. At that moment, you have a very clear mind. It's alert, there's no thoughts, and you bring that mind's attention back to your object of meditation. So you can see that Sāriputta's experience, while he was in each one of these jhānas, is a lot different than the ones that are being described as absorption concentration.

Now...

MN:

6. {repeats: "And the states in the second jhāna - the self-confidence,}

BV: You start actually seeing it and you start believing that this stuff is real, and you get a lot of confidence when you do that.

MN:

... the joy, ...

BV: The joy that arises in the second jhāna is stronger. You feel much lighter in your mind, you feel much lighter in your body. I've had students that they say they feel so light, when they come to give me an interview, they feel so light that they had to open up their eyes because they thought they were going to hit the ceiling. That's how light they felt.

MN:

... the happiness, ...

BV: The happiness you experience: more comfort, very, very nice, peaceful, calm feeling in your mind and in your body. You don't have a lot of... you don't have pains arising because of this comfort.

MN:

... the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind;  
...

BV: Five aggregates again.

MN:

... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. ...

BV: He's seeing anicca, dukkha, anatta, in every one of the jhānas.

Now, the 'enthusiasm': as you begin to see how the dependent origination works; how, when craving arises it always manifests as a tension and tightness, and that you can let go of that, and relax, and come back to your object of meditation, you start to get a little bit of enthusiasm about that. This stuff works! And I don't want you to believe me, and I don't want you to believe the Buddha. See it for yourself, see whether it works or not.

The...

MN:

... {repeats: decision} ...

BV: Now, this is always an interesting aspect of the meditation. You have a choice, while you're meditating, you can either get caught by thoughts or feelings, sensations, emotions, or not; it's up to you. What arises in the present moment dictates what happens in the future. Your choice is what will happen in the future. If you decide to stay with that emotion, that sadness, dissatisfaction, or whatever, you grab onto it, you can look forward to that happening over and over again; you can look forward to suffering. Or you can see it for what it really is, and you let it go, and relax, and come back to your object of meditation. When you do that, you can look forward to the release from the suffering. That's the third noble truth.

I've always been amazed at the use of the word 'enlightenment'. If I tell you something you don't know, then I've enlightened you. If you let go of craving and come back to your object of meditation with that clear mind, that moment is an enlightening moment because there's no craving, there's only this pure unadulterated mind that you're bringing back to your object of meditation. So they talk about the Buddha being enlightened. Well in a lot of ways he was truly enlightened, but the word 'Buddha' doesn't mean the enlightened one, it means the awakened one. When you let go of craving, and you do it enough so that a hindrance fades away, you become more and more awake as to how the process works. So when it comes to the word 'enlightenment', I kind of back away from that.

But the Buddha teaches us how to be more and more awake, more and more alert to how we cause our own suffering. There's not another person in this world that causes your suffering. You cause your own suffering by the decision of - when that feeling arises, and it's a painful feeling, and you don't like it - of grabbing on to that and trying to control it and fight with it, and then you wind up saying things and doing things that cause suffering for yourself and other people around you. But it's your choice, it's your decision. When you become more and more awake as to how this process works, you start seeing and becoming more aware of how you cause your own suffering, and you start letting that go, more, and more, and more. And then your mind starts to get into a state of equanimity, and with that there's no more reactions; act like you always act when this particular feeling arises. You start letting go of the old reactions and you start responding in a new way, in a way that has happiness and leads to happiness for yourself and everybody else around you.

Now, the next part of this - the 'energy' - is real interesting. Now, when people first start meditating -and they finally get in, they get some joy, and they get into the first jhāna - they get real enthusiastic, but it's time to break it for one reason or another, and then you come back, and you sit down and you say: "I'm going to have that one again." Well actually, you wind up putting too much energy into it and you wind up getting restless, and then you have to work with the restlessness. The energy is really interesting because it's not always the same every time. There's... you have to nudge it a little bit this way or a little bit that way. It's like being on a tightrope. If you have too much energy, you fall off one way, if you don't have enough, you fall off the other way, and it's a constant adjustment with your energy so that you can stay in balance. "Well, I had this mental state come up before. I'm going to put this much energy and make it go away." Sometimes, sometimes not. It depends on how you apply the energy and how you're able to adjust in the appropriate way. As you go deeper into the jhānas, it's a finer and finer adjustment with your energy.

Now, the next word in here is 'mindfulness'. Now, mindfulness is another one of those words. Everybody's supposed to know what mindfulness is, right? What's the definition of mindfulness?

ST: Seeing before the doing.

BV: Say it again?

ST: Seeing before the doing.

BV: Seeing before the doing? In a very general way, yes, that's right. But when you're sitting in meditation and you're getting into these deeper states, it's observing the mind's attention, the movement of mind's attention from one thing to another and seeing it impersonally, seeing it as a process.

Now, you're sitting in meditation, you have a pain arise in your knee. How do you handle the pain arising in your knee? When you're practicing the way that I'm showing you right now, you notice the first thing is that your mind begins to think about the sensation: "I wish it would stop. I wish it would go away. I hate it when it's there." All of those thoughts cause the sensation to get bigger and more intense. So the first thing we have to do is make the decision to let go of the thoughts about the pain, and relax because that has caused tension and tightness to arise. The next thing you'll notice is, there is a tight mental fist around that sensation. The truth is, when a sensation arises, it's there. That is the Dhamma, that's the truth. What you do with the truth - right here, right now - dictates what happens in the future. If you resist the truth, if you try to control the truth, if you try to make the truth be the way you want it to be, you

can look forward to a lot of suffering - continually, over, and over, and over again - until you learn that you have to accept the truth that it's there. Relax and allow that truth to do whatever it wants to do. If it wants to bounce around, it can bounce around, if it wants to go to another place in your body, it can go to another place in your body. It doesn't matter. Allow that feeling to be, relax, come back to your object of meditation.

Now, the sensation we call pain, and if you'll remember, I was telling you that pain is a concept. It's made up of a lot of tiny little things that arise and pass away. How does pain arise? When you look at dependent origination, you will see that there is a feeling that arises, and that feeling is unpleasant, it's painful. The next thing you'll see is that mind, it grabs onto that and says: "I don't like that." That is craving. And then you'll have thoughts, the story about how you don't like it and how you want it to disappear. That's clinging. And this process happens over, and over, and over again. So when you let go of the thoughts and relax, you let the feeling be and relax, you're letting go of the attachment to that sensation.

The nature of these kind of sensations is they don't go away right away. So it's going to be bouncing back and forth. You let it go, you relax, you come back to your object of meditation. You might get one wish in, you might not before it goes back, and then the same thing happens all over again. How did that happen? Right before that pain became so incredibly tense and tight, what happened right before that; and what happened right before that; what happened before that? As you start to see how this sensation arose, you will start to see, through very strong mindfulness, that this is part of a process, and as you let go of different parts of the process, there's balance in your mind and the emergency disappears. The one that says: "I have to get up and move. I can't stand this anymore." It will disappear. Now, sometimes the pain goes away, and sometimes it doesn't, but if it doesn't go away, there is very strong balance of mind, so that it doesn't even pull your attention to it. Then you don't pay attention to it.

So mindfulness is the observation power of the mind that sees mind's attention move from one thing, to another thing, to another thing. As your mindfulness gets deeper, you start to see more and more clearly all of the little parts of the distraction. As you start to understand and let go of that distraction, eventually the distraction doesn't pull your mind to it anymore. There's a sense of relief and you get into a jhāna. Now, I say that with pain, but it doesn't matter whether it's physical or mental. You treat all of these in the same way.

One of the things that I've noticed happening in this country is, when you start talking about the five aggregates - you say there's body, there's feelings,

there's perception, there's volition, there's consciousness. Feelings: they're trying to make it just a mental definition, and then they say: "Well, you have these feelings come up. We need to work with these feelings so that you can get rid of these feelings, and that's not what the Buddha was teaching at all. He was teaching that feeling is pleasant and painful. It doesn't matter if it's sadness, if it's anger, if it's fear, if it's anxiety, if it's depression. It doesn't matter what kind of feeling... mental feeling that is, you need to see it for what it truly is and how that process works. As you start letting go of the craving, the feeling loses a lot of its energy and stops pulling your attention to it. You start gaining more and more a sense of balance in your mind, which happens to be the next part of this, which is 'equanimity'.

Equanimity is always balance in your mind. It's not the mind that goes on the roller coaster of: "I like this. I don't like that. I like this. I don't like that." It's the mind that says: "Ok, this is here right now, so what." It's not indifference; indifference has... it has aversion in it. Equanimity is extreme clarity of being able to see things with this balance. The equanimity helps very much with being able to see everything as being part of an impersonal process. Why is that important? If you take whatever arises personally in your mind, you're saying: "This is me. This is who I am." And you're not seeing the four noble truths the way they truly are, and this is really important. If you don't see the four noble truths, that means you have ignorance. Now, what's the base word of 'ignorance'? To 'ignore'. That means you're ignoring the truth of how things arise and how they work. You're ignoring that there's suffering, there's a cause of suffering, there's a way to let go of that suffering - there is letting go of the suffering - and a way of letting go of the suffering. There is that, but you're ignoring that by taking this feeling and saying: "This is me. This is who I am." And because you ignore it, you cause yourself more and more suffering, more and more pain, more and more anxiety, depression, whatever it happens to be.

Ok, let's get back to this...

MN:

... He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being: having been they vanished.' Regarding those states he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this', and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: So you're in the second jhāna. You still have a feeling there's more work to do.

And...

MN:

7. "Again, monks, with the fading away as well of joy, Sāriputta abided in equanimity, and mindful, and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, still feeling happiness with the body, he entered upon and abided in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce: 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful'.

8. "And the states in the third jhāna - the equanimity, ...

BV: When you get into the third jhāna... well let's go back a little bit. When you're in the first jhāna, you can still have distracting thoughts and you still have some thinking mind. When you get into the second jhāna, this is where true noble silence begins to take hold. You can't make a wish when you're practicing loving kindness because it causes your head to get tightness in it. You let go of making the wish and you just feel the wish. If you try to verbalize when you're in the second jhāna, it causes a lot of tightness, so you let go of that. So now there's true noble silence.

When you get into the third jhāna, the joy doesn't arise anymore. Now, one of the... one of the things that I do when I teach is, I don't talk to you about which jhāna you're in. I let you figure that out for yourself. Doesn't matter because these are just stages, but certain things happen that they're like signposts for me, so I know how to talk to you about what your experience is. They help me to be able to help you. Now, when you get into the third jhāna, it's always kind of comical, especially when this is the first time you've ever experienced getting into the third jhāna, because you're so used to having this joy that all of a sudden it disappears, and you come into the interview and I started: "How's your meditation going?" "Well, it's ok, but I don't have any more joy." I say: "Yeah, ok." "But you don't understand. I don't have any more joy. It's always there!" And I say: "Yeah, yeah, ok. Do you feel more balance in your mind than you've ever felt before?" "Well yeah, but there's no joy!" "Ok, do you feel really, truly, happy? Do you feel comfortable in your mind and in your body like you've never felt before?" "Yes." And I say: "Good, continue. You don't have to have joy." So when you get into the third jhāna, the joy disappears, but there's other things that take its place. The highest feeling that you can experience is equanimity, that balance, and the balance starts to get real good.

When you get into the third jhāna, as you go deeper into that jhāna, you start losing body parts. You'll be sitting and all of a sudden: "I don't feel my hands", or "I don't feel my leg", or "my shoulder disappeared." When you get into the third jhāna, you let go of a lot of mental tension. When you let go of a lot of

mental tension, you start letting go of a lot of physical tension, and that's what you feel in your body. When you're sitting in meditation and you feel something in your body, it's because there's mental tension that caused that physical tension to arise. As you go deeper into your third jhāna, you're letting go of all of this. All of a sudden you start losing feeling, unless there's contact. Can come up and I can touch you, and you'll know that it happened, but you have a balanced mind, you have this equanimity. So it doesn't make your mind shake, it doesn't make your mind flutter, it just says: "Ok, there was a touch." Never mind, relax, come back to your object of meditation. There is this very strong balance that occurs, and you feel more comfortable than you've ever felt, very much at ease in your body. Your mind is very, very calm, like looking out on a pond that doesn't have any ripples in it. Very peaceful.

MN:

8. {repeats: ... "And the states in the third jhāna - the equanimity}, the happiness, the mindfulness, the full awareness, ...

BV: Now, you see you still have mindfulness, you're still able to see movements that arise, and you have full awareness at all of the sense doors. You still hear sounds, you open up your eyes, you will be able to see things, but you have this equanimity that doesn't run to them and grab onto them anymore.

MN:

... and the unification of mind; ...

BV: Your mind becomes very tranquil, very unified. It's not so one-pointed that it just stays on one object. That means there's not mindfulness there; that's absorption concentration. It's seeing with a very still mind, and you're able to watch when movements first start to arise, and you can let them go and relax. You'll start to see that mind starts to flutter a little bit, and then it flutters faster and faster, and then it can get distracted. You'll see how that process works, and when you start to see this fluttering - if you relax right then - then your mind stays on your object of meditation.

MN:

... the contact, feeling, perception, volition and mind; ...

BV: Still we have the five aggregates here.

MN:

... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: Again, one of the things that I noticed when I came to this country is, everybody that talked about jhāna, they had the idea that all of these different states in the jhāna all happened at the same time, but right here you can see these were defined by Sāriputta one by one as they occurred. They don't all happen at the same time. So that's another slight difference between the absorption concentration and the samatha-vipassanā that I'm talking about.

MN:

... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been they vanished'. ...

BV: Anicca.

MN:

... Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this', and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

9. "Again, monks, with the abandoning of pleasure ...

BV: Now, even the happiness gets to be too coarse a feeling.

MN:

... {repeats: with the abandoning of pleasure} and pain, with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

BV: It doesn't mean that there cannot be a pain arise or a pleasurable feeling arise, it means that it doesn't make your mind shake. You see it for what it is, and you have this balance towards it. Now, you don't really have any sensations arising in your body, but again, if an ant walks on you, you know it, but you have such equanimity that it doesn't bother you, or a mosquito comes around and he bites you. It's ok, so what, no big deal.

Now, one of the mistakes that an awful lot of people have when they are talking about jhāna is, they think that the jhāna only arises while you're doing your sitting meditation. And you can take any one of these jhānas and stay with the jhāna while you get up and do your walking meditation. You can have equanimity when you're washing the dishes, you can have equanimity while you're taking a bath or going to the bathroom, but it takes staying with your

object of meditation and really being focused on your object of meditation. In any one of the jhānas, you can have them during your daily activities. This is one of the reasons why I'm real adamant, I guess you might say, about keeping your meditation going all the time. I don't care what you're doing, it's part of the practice. Everything that you do is a part of the practice, if you practice that way, if you do that. Our habit is to kind of forget and get caught up in our daily stuff, and forget about the meditation, and then come back and sit, and then it takes a little while to get back into your meditation. That's our habit, but I want you to be very aware of what your mind is doing all the time. Stay in that meditation state as much as you possibly can remember to do it.

Now, one of the functions of mindfulness is to remember. To remember what? To remember to stay with watching mind's attention and how it moves from one thing to another. How to let things go, relax, and come back to your object of meditation. Very important!

Now, when you get in the fourth jhāna, because there is contact when you're walking, you will feel sensation on your feet. You don't feel anything in between your head and your feet, unless it happens to be windy, then you start feeling that, but that's because there is contact.

Try to develop the mind that is alert all the time. Takes practice, not easy, but it's definitely worthwhile. As you become more aware with your daily activities - how your mindfulness slips and the hindrance arises - then the hindrances will be let go of more quickly if you're alert to how the process works. And you can have happiness with you all of the time, and the happiness is not a giddy kind of happiness. This is a happiness of not having the suffering, not identifying with the thoughts and feelings that arise, seeing them for what they are. Just thoughts, just feelings, let them be, relax, come back.

Now, one of the interesting things that I ran across in the Saṃyutta Nikāya was, it was a section on loving kindness meditation that had to do with the factors of enlightenment. And this particular sutta was a real revelation to me because it starts talking about practicing loving kindness in the fourth jhāna. Now, the reason that it's a revelation to me was because I had always heard and definitely believed that loving kindness can only take you to the third jhāna, but there it is in the sutta talking about it being in the fourth jhāna, and it's talking about the Brahma Vihāras. Now, I was always told that the Brahma Vihāras - that is loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy or altruistic joy, and equanimity - the compassion only goes to the second (sic) jhāna, the joy goes to the third jhāna, equanimity goes to the fourth jhāna, but when I was reading this sutta, I was truly amazed because it says: loving kindness goes to the fourth jhāna; compassion (sic) goes to the realm of infinite space, the fifth

jhāna - the first arūpa jhāna; joy goes to the realm of infinite consciousness; and equanimity goes to the realm of nothingness. Now it goes... the practice that I'm actually teaching you when you're practicing loving kindness, is not just loving kindness, it is the practice of the Brahma Vihāras, and it's real interesting when these sort of things arise.

Anyway...

MN:

10. "And the states in the fourth jhāna - the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, the mental unconcern due to tranquillity, ...

BV: Isn't that an interesting statement?

MN:

... the purity of mindfulness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition and mind; ...

BV: The five aggregates are still here. Now, too many times I've run across an awful lot of teachers that are very adamant about: "If you're doing Mindfulness of Breathing, when you get to the fourth jhāna, you don't breath through your lungs anymore", and that's not necessarily true. You still have body, you still have contact, that means you're still breathing. It's not breathing through the skin, it's breathing. What they're talking about is, when you get to the fourth absorption jhāna, but that's not the same jhāna as we're talking about here.

MN:

... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: Still has his mindfulness, still has his full awareness of what's happening as it arises. Mind is not glued to one particular thing. There's still movements that need to be observed.

MN:

... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: ... and with the cultivation of that attainment he confirmed that there is still more.

BV: When the meditator gets to the fourth jhāna, they give up their rookie status, you're not a rookie anymore, now you've become an advanced meditator.

MN:

11. "Again, monks, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, with the non-attention to perceptions of diversity, ...

BV: That's kind of a bad translation. It's not non-attention, it's knowing that there is change, but not... mind isn't shaking, mind isn't going to that change.

MN:

... aware that 'space is infinite,' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite space.

BV: Now, what's that experience all about? You have very strong equanimity, and all of a sudden you start feeling an expansion that arises. If you're practicing loving kindness meditation, this is where the loving kindness turns into compassion, which is a very different kind of feeling. I won't describe it to you, you have to describe it to me, and I'll confirm whether that's really it or not. But it is a different kind of feeling, and with that feeling there is a continual expansion in all directions at the same time, but there's no centre-point. There's just an expansion feeling, and that's what infinite space is. It's a feeling of space being infinite; it just keeps going, and going, and going; very pleasant. And this is the state that so many people, when they talk about the Buddha's infinite compassion, this is the state that he was actually experiencing. He did this every morning, of getting into the realm of infinite space with the compassion as his object of meditation.

MN:

12. "And the states in the base of infinite space - the perception of the base of infinite space and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition and mind; ...

BV: Still have the five aggregates even though you're in an arupa jhāna. This says that you're still practicing the four foundations of mindfulness even while you are in an arupa jhāna state.

MN:

... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus:..and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is still more.

13. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite', Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite consciousness.

BV: This is a real interesting state. For one thing, the compassionate feeling changes again to a feeling of altruistic joy, but that's not really a good definition. I haven't run across one yet, but it is a feeling that's very different from the compassion. Now what happens is, your awareness starts to be so good and so sharp that you start to see individual consciousnesses arise and pass away ... arise and pass away ... arise and pass away. You are seeing firsthand how truly impermanent everything is. There's no doubt in your mind anymore that everything really is impermanent. And after you sit with that for a little while, it's kind of comical because people will come to me and they'll say: "Well yeah, I'm seeing all these consciousnesses: the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, and mind." You're seeing all of these consciousnesses arise and pass away, and it's really tiresome. What you're seeing now is not only impermanence, but you're seeing suffering, and you're seeing there's nobody home, there's no control over this stuff, it happens all by itself. You're seeing up close and personal - anicca, dukkha, anatta - while you're in the arupa jhānas, and this is really an amazing state. It answers a lot of questions that you ever had before of - everybody talks about things happening so fast - now your awareness is so sharp you're seeing them, and it really is interesting, if not a little tiresome after awhile because they keep on arising and passing away. It doesn't matter whether you're doing your walking meditation, and you're eating, or anything, you're seeing all these consciousnesses continually.

MN:

14. "And the states in the base of infinite consciousness - the perception of the base of infinite consciousness and the unification of mind; contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Still have the five aggregates here.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus...and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is still more to see.

BV: As you go deeper into your meditation...

MN:

15. ... by completely surmounting the base of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing', Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of nothingness.

BV: This is an incredibly interesting thing. Where before you were seeing everything outside of the body, now you're not seeing anything, but you're seeing still... you're still seeing different movements of mind, but it's not outside of mind.

MN: 16. "And the states in the base of nothingness ...

BV: Oh, by the way, where you were feeling joy before, now you're feeling equanimity that is very, very strong, and you have this balance of mind. This particular state of mind is by far the most interesting state that you can experience in the meditation. You still have the energy things, and the energy becomes really, really subtle. If you don't put quite enough energy into watching that equanimity, your mind gets dull. You don't have sleepiness, but there's a dullness that occurs. If you put a little bit too much energy in, your mind gets restless, and because of the way the hindrances work, they don't just come one at a time. If you have restlessness arise, because you put in too much energy, you're not in that jhāna anymore, you're caught by the hindrance, but it's not just say the restlessness, but it's the restlessness and the dislike of the restlessness. So you have two hindrances that you get to work with, but it's quite easy to let that go and balance your energy by this time. But it's like walking the finest rope you've ever seen, you know, it's like walking on a spider web it's that fine. And the balance: it just takes a little twip, a little twerp, and pst, you're knocked off balance, and then you have to work with that, relax, and come back, and then, not quite enough. And this is where working with the energy is incredibly interesting.

Now, this is an interesting part of this particular sutta... or of this particular state of mind.

MN:

16. {repeats: "And the states in the base of nothingness} - the perception of the base of nothingness and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition and mind, ...

BV: Still have the five aggregates. Still practicing the four foundations of mindfulness.

MN:

... the zeal, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus... and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is still more.

BV: Now, this is the state that when he was a bodhisatta, he got to this state in absorption concentration, and went to the teacher and said: "Is there more?" And the teacher said: "No, that's it. You can teach right along beside me. Come, help." The Bodhisatta said: "No, not satisfied with that." He still saw that there's more, there's more to this.

Ok, and...

MN:

17. "Again, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

BV: Now, if you look at it this way, when you start meditating your mind has these kind of movements. As you get deeper in your meditation, the movements become less and less. When you get into the arupa jhānas, it starts turning into vibration. As you go higher into the jhānas, the vibration becomes faster and finer. When you get to the state of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, there's slight movement, but it's really hard to tell. Mind is there, but it's hard to perceive. When you're practicing the Brahma Vihāras, they will take you to the realm of nothingness, and that's as high as you can go with the Brahma Vihāras because...

MN:

18. "Sāriputta emerged mindful from that attainment. ...

BV: Mind is so subtle, it's hard to tell whether it's there or not, and the only way you know that you've experienced that experience is, when you come out you start reflecting on what you saw. Feeling is still there although it's subtle, and perception is kind of there and kind of not. So the only way you've known that you've experienced this is by reflecting on what you've done while you were sitting. Now, this is the time when I'll come to somebody and I'll say: "I really want you to make sure that you've developed that habit of relaxing, continually, all the time." So when you get into this state, you're doing this as an automatic. Now, what is the relaxing doing? When you relax, the movement becomes less and less, until you finally get to a state that you can't really see it, but it's still vibrating a bit.

MN:

... Having done so, he contemplated the states that had passed, ceased, and changed, ...

BV: So you still have that, even though you get into the neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

MN:

... 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanished. Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: So he still knows that there's some more work to do. As he keeps relaxing more and more, that vibration becomes so still that all of a sudden it stops.

MN:

19. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the cessation of perception and feeling. ...

BV: Just like somebody turned the lights off. Click! There's nothing there. There's no perception. There's no feeling.

MN:

... And his taints were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.

BV: You remember that word that I talked about at the start of this, 'wisdom'. So what is it saying? What happens is, the state of the cessation of perception and feeling occurs, and it's going to last as long as it's going to last. When perception and feeling return, you have a chance of seeing exactly, clearly, with very sharp mindfulness, every one of the steps of dependent origination, and you will see how: when this doesn't arise, that doesn't arise. You'll see the cessation, and with the final letting go of ignorance, of seeing the four noble truths and applying it to everything, that's when Nibbāna occurs, that's when all the taints are destroyed, that's how the end of this process works.

MN:

20. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he recalled the states that had passed, ceased, and changed, thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' ...

BV: He saw all of the states of dependent origination and how they cease to be.

MN:

... Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is no escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that that's it, there, it's not, can't go any further.'

BV: Now, when this happened, his mind became so incredibly clear, his understanding of dependent origination as a true process, his understanding was absolutely unshakable. And with that he let go of everything that would possibly cause his mind to become unwholesome. He only had wholesome thoughts arise.

MN:

21. "Monks, speaking rightly, were it to be said of anyone: 'Sāriputta has attained mastery and perfection in noble virtue, attained mastery and perfection in noble collectedness, attained mastery and perfection in noble wisdom, attained mastery and perfection in noble deliverance,' it is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

22. "Monks, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'He is the son of the Blessed One, born of his breast, born of his mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in the Dhamma, not an heir in material things,' it is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

23. "Monks, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma set rolling by the Tathāgata is kept rolling rightly by Sāriputta."

That is what the Blessed One said. The monks were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

BV: And now we'll hear from all the devas that are listening, the Hallelujah Chorus! I know that this has been a long talk again, sorry. But this particular sutta, it shows exactly that vipassanā and samatha, they're strung together, they're yoked together, just like two oxen that are pulling a cart. They're tied together and they will take the cart wherever you want it to go. And we need to practice them, not singly, but we need to practice them together, as Sāriputta showed in his experience of the meditation. What I'm showing you is that slight difference in the meditation about letting go of the distraction and relaxing. That one extra step put into your practice changes the entire practice, so you'll be able to see everything that Sāriputta saw. You can, it does happen, I promise! And one of the things that's real amazing is, I've run across too many

monks that have this idea that it's impossible to attain Nibbāna in this lifetime, so why even try? But I'm here to tell you, it is attainable. Simple instructions: let go of any distraction, relax, come back to your object of meditation. Too simple. We like things to be complicated.

See how mind's attention moves. I have students that have all of these things that they're talking about here. I won't claim that any of them are arahats, but they have seen dependent origination for real, and they understand it very deeply. So I know that these things are possible, and a lot of people have this idea that it takes a long time to be able to experience all of these things. I had one student that she was ready to meditate. She'd ask other people how to meditate. She was going to Thai temples and they only spoke Thai, but she was still trying to follow what they were saying. She came to an eight day retreat and in eight days she did experience the state of nothingness - in eight days. And that goes along with what the Buddha was talking about, of this Dhamma is immediately effective. You can see it right here, right now. Practice! Doesn't matter what you're doing, watch what mind is up to. If you start identifying with your dissatisfaction of this or your like of that, as soon as you're aware that mind is doing that, let it go, relax, come back to an object of meditation.

Now, most of you I'm teaching loving kindness. Why? There are certain advantages for practicing loving kindness meditation, and one of those advantages is that your progress in the meditation is faster with loving kindness than it is with any other kind of meditation. And because I'm teaching you that there is the four foundations of mindfulness in this, it is working towards that end goal. It really does work, I promise. The only thing is, don't add anything, don't subtract anything, just - when your mind becomes distracted - let go of the distraction, relax, and come back. It goes back to that distraction, pay attention to how did that happen. What happened first? What happened after that? What happened after that? When you start seeing that, you are starting to see dependent origination. You're starting to see how you cause your own pain by having an opinion or a concept that's contrary to what's happening right here, right now.

And you're causing your own pain. It's not someone else doing something that's causing your pain. It's your own attachments to the pain. What is the attachment? The attachment is: "This is my pain and this is who I am. It's me, and I don't like it, and I want it to be different." See how much pain you cause yourself. The hindrances are incredibly important because they're showing you where your attachments are. When you start seeing how the hindrance arises, how it gets... pulls your mind away and you start letting go little by little, then you will be able to experience the jhānas. And the jhānas again, they're not

some pie in the sky thing to talk about. Jhānas can happen very easily in a short period of time depending on your doing the practice in the correct way.

Now, I want to stress that this is not my practice. I am reading these things to you from the Buddha's teaching. I don't have anything to do with this stuff. I practice it, but it's not 'me', it's not quote 'my' method, it's the Buddha's method. So the more you can closely observe how the Buddha was teaching, the more you'll see for yourself that the Buddha was right. I don't have any doubt at all whether he was right or not. You might be able to tell by the way that I give Dhamma talks because I have a lot of confidence in the Buddha's teaching. I don't have any doubt in his teaching at all. I would like that for you, so that when you're practicing, you can actually see and confirm these things for yourself. You know, in the Kalama sutta, it talks very much about: "Don't believe what's written, and don't believe what's traditional, and don't believe anything." The Buddha said: "Don't even believe me." Go out and do it on your own, confirm it for yourself.

Ok. So I've been talking for a real long time. Does anybody have any questions?

Yes?

ST: I never understood a quotation that you quoted yesterday. That is: "He establishes mindfulness in front of him." What does that mean?

BV: It means that he's watching what arises in his mind. That's an English kind of expression, but establishing mindfulness in front of you means what's in front of you right now. What kind of thoughts are you experiencing right now? Observing what's in front of you right at that moment means seeing what's happening at that moment.

Yeah?

ST: So, what is the difference between Day 4, where you have a super ~~~ all you're experiencing and the endings of phenomenon, and what you were discussing - I think was in the seventh arūpa - where you have very quick...

BV: Ah describing, I was, I was, yeah, no, no, there's, there's ... the difference is, one is a commentary and one is a sutta.

ST: But what about in the actual experience?

BV: The actual experience goes more with the sutta. The reason that what you're asking is, is because of not having that extra step.

ST: I thought you were going to say that.

BV: It changed everything because it is a form of absorption concentration that was developed, and these insight knowledges, the way that they have occurred. Now, Mahasi Sayadaw was really amazing because he took nine insight knowledges out of the Visuddhimagga and made it sixteen. But it doesn't...

ST: ~

BV: It's a kind of absorption, yes, because even moment-to-moment concentration... it's not the seeing how that process works, it's just seeing one part of the process and then putting a label on it.

ST: Or not.

BV: Or not. Yeah, yeah.

ST: Ok, so the point is that you, I have ~~~, the whole point is just that critical step then one can experience that in a very different way. That's what you're saying. ~~~ So what's the diff...

BV: Go ahead.

ST: So, and then we were talking about the cessation that comes out of this process, what's the difference between mega... that cessation and the cessation that you're talking about? ~~~ The first name...

BV: Yeah, I know, and I was hoping nobody was going to ask me that question because it's tough. You get to places where there is... it's kind of like a blackout. There's a stop, but it's not the same as the cessation of perception and feeling. There is still a slight feeling in the blackout, it's still there. Now, what's real different is what happens after that, and that is: when you're practicing insight knowledges, you have the reviewing of all of the insight knowledges. When you're practicing the way it said in the sutta, what you see after the cessation of perception and feeling is dependent origination. This is the core teaching of the Buddha, and that's where our wisdom is developed, by seeing that.

ST: What was he seeing?

BV: Well, another thing that they talk about is right before this blackout occurs, you see... the importance in the insight knowledges is seeing impermanence, suffering, and not self, and right before that occurs - according to Mahasi Sayadaw - you see the impermanence three or four times very quickly in a row; or you see the suffering three or four times quickly in a row; or you see the anatta three or four times quickly in a row; and then there's this blackout. That doesn't occur in the suttas ever, and I confirmed that with the Minguin Sayadaw, the monk that was so incredibly bright. He was telling me that there was a lot of differences between the commentaries and the suttas. And I asked him to confirm a lot of things that I had studied because I'd practiced straight vipassanā for twenty years. After I had this experience, I wanted some confirmation, so I was going to these monks that - while I was in Burma - that were very advanced in their understanding, and I wanted to find out. And when I go to someone like him and I say: "Is there such a thing as 'access concentration' or 'moment-to-moment concentration' in the suttas?", and he says: "No", it makes me wonder whether I'd been practicing the right practice after twenty years. What was that experience? So then I started going to the suttas, but because I was still taking the commentary as the main source, I couldn't understand the suttas until I had somebody tell me to take the commentaries, just leave them alone, and just delve into the suttas, and then it all became very clear.

ST: While ~~~ do you like the translation of 'anatta' as being 'uncontrollable'?

BV: No.

ST: What's your favourite translation of anatta?

BV: Impersonal.

ST: Impersonal ~~~ and what don't you like about uncontrollable?

BV: There's a lot of things that are uncontrollable. No, it's not a clear ... it's not a clear...

ST: I have never heard that before I went to Burma, and then all of a sudden... except they don't do it ~~~ uncontrollable.

BV: Yeah, yeah.

In a way, you could look at anatta and you could say: "Yes, it is uncontrollable", but impersonal is a much better translation because every time you take

something personally, that means there's: "I am there." There's that belief, and it's a false belief, but it's still there: "I am that." When you say: "Impersonal" it means there's just these things rolling along. They're not personal at all, they're impersonal. I worked a long time coming up with that word actually. One of my favourite books is going to a thesaurus, and I don't just go to one. I might go to three or four thesauruses with the same word to come up with a word that's easy to understand, and simple, but precise. And I even got a - somebody, a student of mine - got me a etymology of English. So now I can go up and look up all of the different things about the word to help me as to whether it's the right word to use or not.

Ok, does anybody else have a question?

Is everybody going to be happy? Is everybody going to smile? That's the important part too. I mean the absolutely most important part is: seeing, letting go, relaxing, coming back, but put a smile in with that. So you can do it lightly, so you can have fun with the meditation. For almost twenty years, I was way, way serious with my meditation, and then when I found out you can have fun and actually do better in your meditation, that was another revelation that was quite good.

Ok, let's share some merit then.

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 Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu

BV: Right before you go to sleep, please don't forget to make the determination that you wake up in the morning smiling and happy, and keep that going.

Now, there's one more determination that I want you to make, and that is a time determination. I want you to practice, and this takes a little while to get good at it: you make a determination that I'm going to wake up at five o'clock, but instead of five o'clock, make it 4:58, and if you have a second hand, make it 4:58:33, and try to wake up at that time, but change the time every day, so it's not the same time every day. So the next time, it's 5:01:03. Ok, and when you start being able to hit that, your determinations are starting to get strong, and that will be immeasurable help in the future once you start getting into the jhānas, making a determination for sitting for a certain length of time. And when you get good at your mastery of jhāna, you will be able to go in and out of a jhāna of your choice in the blink of an eye. So working with a determination is a very good practice. So just start by working with the time you're going to wake up, and smiling and happy when you wake up. Ok?

Ok, good.

Sutta translation (C) Bhikkhu Bodhi 1995, 2001. Reprinted from The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya with permission of Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144 U.S.A. [www.wisdompubs.org](http://www.wisdompubs.org)

Proofed by CF 22 April 2013  
Format ok by DJ