

MN 111 ONE BY ONE AS THEY OCCURRED – ANUPADA SUTTA

Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi on 20 February 2007

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BV: Well, I thought I would give you a treat today and read to you my favourite sutta. I don't know if it's a treat for you or a treat for me because I really like this sutta, because it is so precise and exact, and it lets you know that you're practicing vipassanā while you're in each one of the jhānas.

Ok. Now, every time you hear the word 'wisdom' while I'm reading this, translate that as 'dependent origination'. It's seeing and understanding how dependent origination actually works.

MN 111:

{skips to: ... the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...}
{restarts}

1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti 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; ...

BV: This is the one I like best:

MN:

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

3. "Here, monks, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by thinking and examining thought, with joy and happiness born of seclusion.

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

BV: Now, in Pali it's: vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, ekaggatā, and the reason I'm bringing this up is that the word 'ekaggatā' is always translated as 'one-pointed concentration' because 'eka' means one. So they naturally assume that you're just staying on one object only, but this definition that Bhikkhu Bodhi uses is the 'unification of mind'. 'Ekagga' means tranquil, 'ekaggatā' is the act of being tranquil.

BV: These are the five aggregates. Now, basically the five aggregates, they always start out with body, feeling, perception, volition, consciousness, but here we're using the word 'contact'. The reason he's using the word 'contact' is: in order to see, you have to have good working eye; there has to be colour and form; when the good working eye hits colour and form, eye-consciousness arises; the meeting of these three things is called 'eye-contact'. So what he's saying basically is, without any contact you don't have that consciousness arise. So when he's saying that there's 'contact', he's inferring that there is 'body' because each one of the six sense doors is what makes up body. Well, actually the first five are for the body and the last one is for mind.

Feeling: pleasant, unpleasant. In one of the suttas, it's sutta number fifty-nine, it talks about the many different kinds of feeling. And there was a carpenter that did a lot of work around the monastery, his name was Pañcakanga, and because he was always doing work around the monastery, he was taking breaks and listening to Dhamma talks all the time, so he was very learned person. He got into a discussion with a monk and said: "How many kinds of feelings are there?" And the monk said: "There's three. There's pleasant feeling, painful feeling, neither-painful-nor-pleasant." And Pañcakanga said: "No, actually the Buddha said that there was two kinds of feeling because the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling is a kind of pleasure, so it's either painful feeling or pleasant feeling." And they got into a big, heated discussion about this, and Ānanda heard about this, and he goes to the Buddha and reports what he had heard. And the Buddha said: "You know, actually it's true what Pañcakanga said. In one presentation, I said that there was two kinds of feeling. In another presentation, I said there was three kinds of feeling, so both of them were right. In another presentation, I said there was five kinds of feeling." Five kinds of feeling is, in Pali it's: dukkha, sukha, domanassa, somanassa, upekkhā. Dukkha is painful physical feeling; sukha is

pleasant physical feeling; domanassa is painful mental feeling, emotional upset; somanassa is pleasant mental feeling, happiness, joy, things like that; and upekkhā is equanimity. And then he said: "And in one presentation, I said that there was six kinds of feeling." And that's the feeling that arises with each sense door. I won't go any further than that, but he goes all the way up to a hundred and eight. So we have 'feeling'.

We have 'perception'. Perception is the mind that names things. It puts a name on this is a pillow, this is a glass. It's that part of the mind that recognizes and names. That has memory mixed in with that also.

And then we have 'volition'. Quite often, I translate 'volition' to be 'thoughts' because that's what happens at first, but volition also means your choice. You have a choice of what you do with the thoughts when they arise. You have the choice either to apply the 6Rs and let them go, or to get involved with them. If you get involved with the thoughts, then you can look forward to suffering arising. If you let the thoughts go, and relax, and smile, and come back to your object of meditation, then that is the road to the cessation of suffering, and that's what the Buddha taught us. He taught us that there was suffering and there is the cessation of suffering.

One time I was at a talk that the Zen monk was giving, and he said: "The Buddha taught suffering." And then he stopped, and he wasn't going to say anything else. And, oh my, you know, somebody just coming and learning about meditation, they're finding out that they have to suffer. That's not a real good thing. So I act up and said: "Yes, and he taught the cessation of suffering, and I'm more interested in that than the suffering."

And we have 'mind'. Then he said he saw...

MN:

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

BV: As you start to begin to understand how mind's attention moves from one thing to another, and that you can let go of that and relax into that, you start developing a little bit of enthusiasm. When you start to see: "Oh, I can let go of the suffering. I don't have to hold on to it anymore." And the suffering that arises actually is part of an impersonal process: "It's not even my suffering." So when you start to see that, you start to become a little bit enthused by it.

The 'decision': again, the decision to either hold on to something or to let it go, let it be, without keeping your attention on it.

The 'energy': this is an interesting thing because the energy that you have while you're doing your meditation isn't always the same. You have to put different amounts of energy into your practice at different times. If your mind starts dulling out, you need to pick up your energy a little bit. If your energy is a little bit too strong, you start noticing that you're trying too hard, and then you have restlessness arising. Now, these are two of the hindrances, but the hindrances, they don't like to come one at a time, they kind of like to gang up on you. So there's the dull mind or sleepy mind, and the dislike or the like of it, and there's the restless mind with the dislike or the like. How can you have restlessness arise and like it? By being involved with planning.

I'll give you a story that happened to me. I was in Burma, I'd been there for eight months. There was a lot of social unrest that was happening. The government was shooting people and things like that, and we could hear the gunfire and all of that. And the government said: "As soon as the end of the rain's retreat comes, all of the foreign monks have to leave." They have to get out of Dodge, go someplace else. So for about a week I started planning, and I started thinking about this monk in Thailand - he's a real helpful monk. He and I had some really good conversations before, and I started thinking about how we were going to do a project together. And one of the things that I wanted to do at that time - because I was interested in dying and what happens to your body after it dies - what I wanted to do was take a time exposure of a body dying, and a body rotting and decaying, and what happens with that. So I had this all figured out in my head: "He can get the camera, and we can go do this, and it's just going to be great." Because you can use that as part of your meditation, so that you don't get attached to your body so much.

So I was really planning a lot, and I did this for one solid week. Then we had to leave the country. I go back to Thailand, I go to where he is, and he had disrobed and run off and gotten married with somebody. I spent a whole week planning this out! I knew what he was going to say, and what I was going to say, and what he was going to say back, and I was playing this number in my mind the whole time. I was really planning this, and when I ran across the fact that he wasn't around anymore, I started reflecting on how I had wasted a whole week planning something.

And then I started thinking about how odd this whole thing is because everybody plans something: "I'm going to go see this person, and I'm going to say this to them, and they're going to say that." And you start talking to that person, and it's not even close to what you'd been spinning your wheels with. What a waste of time, but it was pleasurable, I really liked it, it was fun. It took me completely out of the present moment. I didn't even know where I was most of the time because I'd gotten so involved in the thinking and the planning, and that was actually a great insight for me because I saw what a waste of time it is to plan things like that.

Now, you have to plan your day. Ok? "I got to get up. I got to do this. I got to do that." You know what you have to do, you don't have to think about it anymore, all you have to do is go do it. You don't have to think it over, and over, and over, and over again. You already know what you: "I'm going to get up. I'm going to brush my teeth. I'm going to go to the bathroom. I'm going to wash my face. I'm going to eat." You don't have to think about those things. You already know that that's what's going to happen.

That's how sneaky the hindrances can be. You can have ideas of the way you want things to be, and then when they're not going to happen the way you projected, that is a cause of suffering. That's one of the definitions of what suffering is: not having things be the way you want them to be; or having unpleasant things instead of pleasant things happen - that's the cause of suffering. And it's real easy to get caught in trying to finagle and force the present moment to kind of be the way you want it to be, and if you're working with someone else, that can be the cause of immeasurable suffering, not only for you because they don't agree with the way you're doing it, and that makes you unhappy, and it makes them unhappy.

So what are we really doing here? When you start noticing the amount of energy you're putting into things, you have to be careful and stay in the present moment. Don't get caught up in the dream world, in the imaginations, in the wannabies, because the more we do that, the more we suffer. So wow, what do we do to solve that problem? Anybody? See that your mind is doing it. Practice the 6Rs. The 6Rs sound like it's some kind of cliché, but the 6Rs are just: recognizing what you're doing, releasing it, relaxing into that, smiling, returning, repeating the whole process whenever there's a distraction. As you use the 6Rs, you start to see more and more how you cause your own suffering, and when you suffer, it's real easy to blame someone else for your suffering: "Well, you're not doing it the way I want you to." And then you cause somebody else suffering, and it's real easy to

blame them because: "They aren't doing it right." But as you practice the 6Rs and see the disturbance that it causes in your own mind, then you start letting go, and as you let go, you start to see that there's a lot more creativity out there than just your own, and life starts to become fun.

Why do we want to practice meditation? So we can learn how to do this. You sit in meditation so you can really watch your mind more closely, but the proof of the pudding, so to speak, is when you get up off your cushion and go out into life, and see how your mind acts and reacts, or responds according to your old habits. This all comes back to the amount of energy you're putting into something. If you're putting your energy into the dissatisfaction of the present moment, that dissatisfaction is going to get bigger and bigger until finally there has to be some venting happen, or not, and it's your choice. That's what the decision is all about. It's your choice how much energy you put into something, and how much suffering you cause yourself or don't cause yourself. The whole point of the meditation is to learn how mind's attention moves from one thing to another, and how you can allow things to be without getting involved with them, and that is the cessation of suffering.

Next is 'mindfulness': and we've talked about that more than enough, I think: being able to watch how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. It's not how you can control things from one moment to the next, it's just being able to observe how your mind grabs onto these things and causes you suffering. And when you're able to recognize that, then it's reasonably easy to practice your 6Rs because you can say: "This hurts. I don't want to hurt. I want to have fun." And as you relax more and more into the present moment, you're letting go of your opinions; you're letting go of your ideas; you're letting go of your concepts; you're letting go of the thinking about. And that's when you become most creative, that's when you get into your intuition, and when you start to learn how to trust your intuition, everything gets easy and then everything starts to get fun.

The 'equanimity': now, I have no idea how many discussions I've had with monks, and I tell them that there is equanimity in the first jhāna, and they will tell me flat out I don't know what I'm talking about. You couldn't have gotten into the first jhāna if you didn't have balance of mind, and the balance of mind is: letting go of the hindrance, letting the hindrance be without giving it any more attention, letting it fade away by itself without getting involved in it. It takes real balance of mind to be able to do that, and when you're able to laugh at how crazy your mind is, that's the fastest way that I've ever found to gain that equanimity.

MN:

... {repeats: 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: So he saw each one of these different things arise and pass away while he was in the jhāna. That means that he's seeing the three characteristics of all existence while he is in the jhāna.

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 wasn't trying to grab onto this good feeling of being in a jhāna and hold onto it. He wasn't trying to push it away.

The next word is ...

MN:

... unrepelled, ...

BV: He wasn't trying to push it away. He wasn't trying to hold onto it. He was just observing.

This is what happens with each one of these states as they arise and pass away.

MN:

... independent, detached, free, dissociated, ...

BV: All of these words are talking about how you are not identifying: "I am that." What is the cause of: "I am that?" Craving and clinging. As you become independent, your mind is more open and free. You let go of ideas of the way things quote "should be", and you see the way things actually are.

MN:

... with a mind rid of barriers. ...

BV: Whenever your mindfulness is sharp and you happen to get into a jhāna, your mind doesn't have any hindrances arise in it at that time. When your mindfulness wavers a little bit for whatever reason, then the hindrance is right there. It doesn't waste any time in coming back, but this is part of the learning process, seeing how this process works, and this is how you start to recognize more and more quickly when your mind becomes distracted. How you can recognize it, release, relax, re-smile, return, repeat.

MN:

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

BV: So even though he got into the first jhāna, still he knew there's still more to do.

So he continues on...

MN:

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

BV: When you get into the second jhāna, the joy you experience is much stronger. Now, when I was talking about joy yesterday, I was telling you that this is the uplifting joy. This is the joy that has excitement in it: "This is really a great feeling. I love it! I feel so happy." And this becomes quite strong, and you feel light in your body, and you feel light in your mind. You feel so light in your body, you feel like you're floating, and in fact it does happen, not very often. Probably up to now, I've had two thousand people that I've taught meditation to, and it's happened with one person, so that gives you an idea, but they can actually float up into the air a little bit, maybe a foot, foot-and-a-half, and then they go back down, and then they rise up again, and then they'll go back down. And I wouldn't have believed it if I didn't see it, but it does happen.

When I first went to Burma, there was a lot of talk about one monk that got into his joy and he actually - you know the ceiling fans - he couldn't sit underneath one

of those, but he indulged in his joy a lot. His meditation practice really wasn't very good, but it was real showy, and there was a lot of talk about it.

But when you get into the second jhāna, you're able to gain confidence that you know what you're doing. You start to see and you're starting to understand more and more about the hindrances, and how they arise, and how you can let them go, and it gives you good confidence. Now, this confidence also starts to come out in your daily life, that you're starting to see these processes happen, and you're able to let them go. You don't identify quite so heavily with them. You don't get caught so deeply.

Ok, you have stillness of mind, you have joy, you have pleasure... happiness. The happiness you experience is what happens when the joy fades away, and it will. Now, when joy arises, that is a happy feeling. What do you do when feeling arises? You allow the feeling to be there, you relax, you come back to your object of meditation. It doesn't matter whether it's a painful feeling or a happy feeling; it's only a feeling.

Again, when I was in Burma, I finally got to a place where there was a lot of joy, and this was right before the interview, so I got something to talk about now: "This is all right." So I go in to the teacher and I say: "You know, I got this joy, and it's just great. Now I know why I'm meditating. This joy is good stuff!" And the first thing he said was: "Don't be attached!" And geez, I didn't want to be attached, so I started stuffing that joy away, I stopped having it at all, I was pushing it hard so it wouldn't be there. That's a wrong idea. The way you become unattached to joy is by allowing it to be there, relaxing, and coming back to your object of meditation. When the joy finally does fade away - and it fades away by itself after a period of time, everybody's a little bit different - then you feel more comfortable in your mind and your body than you've felt before. I mean you feel really good, really at ease, there's no pains in your body, everything is just nice.

Now, the difference between the joy and the happiness, when it arises is - it talks about this in one of the commentaries - it's like you're in the desert and you don't have any water, and off in the distance you see some green trees, and you see that there's some water there, and your mind starts to get real excited: "I'm going to get a drink. All right!" That's what joy is like, this kind of joy. And then you get to that body of water and you jump in the water, and the water is exactly the perfect temperature, and your mind goes: "Ah!" And your body goes: "Ah!" That's what happiness is. You're very comfortable, very much at ease. Your mind starts to become very tranquil, very easy to stay on your object of meditation. Any kind

of disturbance that happens: your mind might start to go to it, but your awareness is quicker. So you see it, you let it be, you relax, you come back. Very easy, very nice.

This is different than the one-pointed concentration. One-pointed concentration is: your mind stays on one object only, it doesn't waver from that object, and when that happens, you start to lose sense of your body at all. You don't feel anything in your body. As a matter of fact I can come up and take a stick and hit you, and you wouldn't know that I'd done that. I can make real loud noise right beside your ear. You wouldn't hear it because your mind is so overly focused on just this one point, that the force of the concentration pushes away everything else. So right here, we're finding out that there are a lot of states that you still do see while you're in the jhānas, and that says that this is a tranquillity jhāna, not a one-pointed kind of jhāna.

MN:

6. "And the states in the second jhāna— ...

BV: Now, jhāna is a Pali word, and there's some definitions that are currently going around that are saying jhāna is concentration, it's the state of concentration, it's a state of one-pointedness. Actually the word jhāna means a state of understanding, it's a level of understanding. As you go from the first jhāna, this kind of understanding of how the hindrances arise and how they knock you out of the jhāna, and that sort of thing, and you go to a different kind of understanding when you get to the second jhāna, it's a deeper understanding. That's why we call going into the jhānas, deeper and deeper levels, and these are levels of your understanding of how mind's attention actually works. You're teaching yourself, with the jhānas arising, how to let them go, but you're also teaching yourself how dependent origination actually works.

At the second jhāna, you're not seeing the feeling arise quite as easily as you will later, but you can still see a feeling arise; and then you can see tension and tightness; and then you see thoughts; and then you see your habitual tendency; and you see these over and over again as you practice the 6Rs ... and let them go and relax ... and then your mind goes back to it again ... and you let it go and relax ... and then you start seeing what happened right before you got caught by that hindrance. And when you start recognizing that, you can let that go a little bit quicker, a little bit easier. When you do that, you're not stuck with a mind that's distracted for any long period of time, and your mind starts to stay on your object

of meditation for longer periods of time without any effort. So when we're talking about the jhānas, we're talking about the stage of your understanding.

MN:

... the self-confidence, the joy, the happiness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: See, we still have the five aggregates here. Now, here's another interesting thing about the five aggregates: it talks about it in a lot of suttas as the 'aggregate affected by clinging'. Clinging is 'think the thoughts' basically, and that's kind of an iffy thing to say. In another translation, they say the 'clinging aggregates', and that's kind of misleading because the aggregate may or may not be affected by clinging, depending on your mindfulness at the time. An aggregate can arise, a feeling can arise, and as soon as it arises it doesn't have to be affected by thoughts. It can be, depending on your mindfulness. If you see that first arise and you let it be, and relax, and come back, then it's not affected by clinging. If you don't see that, and this process continues on, then it is affected by clinging. That's just a little point, and depending on the translator, can be incredibly confusing or it can be incredibly enlightening, depending on the words that they use to describe the aggregates.

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: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' 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 as he sat in the second jhāna. This is where 'noble silence' actually is. Now, let me explain that. When you start practicing loving kindness meditation, I tell you I want you to make a wish, and then feel the wish: "May I be peaceful and calm." And then feel that peace and calm, put that feeling in your heart, and surround your friend with that feeling. Ok, we're using the words to bring up the feeling. Right? You bring up: "May you be happy" and "May you be peaceful and calm", whatever. When you get to the second jhāna, your mind doesn't need that verbalization any more, and in fact, if you do verbalize, it will cause tension and tightness to arise in your mind. You're smiling, you know that's true. So what to

do? You let go of the verbalization, you know the feeling you want to bring in, so you bring it in and you surround your friend and radiate the loving kindness. That is why this is called 'noble silence' because we're letting go of that verbalization.

MN:

7. "Again, monks, with the fading away of joy, Sāriputta abided in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, 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.'

BV: Now, by the time you get into the second jhāna, you start really liking the joy, and it's there, and it's dependable. You know it's really going to be there. And then you start going deeper into your practice, and the joy doesn't arise anymore. And this is always kind of a comical time for me because some people will come in and I say: "How's your practice going?" They say: "Good, good, but I don't have any joy." And I say: "Is that bad?" "Well no, but I don't have any joy." And I say: "Well, do you feel comfortable in your body, in your mind?" "Oh, yeah, I feel really comfortable. Great stuff! Starting to lose feeling. Don't feel the hands, don't feel the legs. It's great, but I don't have any joy." "Well, do you start to feel a real sense of balance in your mind?" "Yeah, but I don't have any joy!" And I said: "Oh, ok. Everything's going along fine. Continue. You don't have to have joy. That's just one of the stages that you go through." I always get a big chuckle out of that.

MN:

8. "And the states in the third jhāna—the equanimity, the happiness, the mindfulness, the full awareness, and the unification of mind; ...

BV: Now here, Sāriputta's awareness extends a little bit to say that there is very strong mindfulness, and there is full awareness. Now, the full awareness happens at each one of the sense doors. Now, you can be sitting and you cannot feel anything, and then an ant starts walking across; there's contact and because there's contact feeling arises, and because of that all this other stuff happens. You're aware of that even though you don't feel your body when you get into the third jhāna, after a period of time when you get deep enough.

Now, the third jhāna is where there's some real interesting things that happen in your meditation. One, your mind becomes so pure that it doesn't have any tension and tightness in it. If there's no tension and tightness in your mind, there's no tension and tightness in your body. So you don't feel your body unless you direct your attention to feel your body. Again, this is quite different from being in the

one-pointed jhāna where you don't even know you have a body. Also, because of the purity of mind that you have gained by doing this practice, your blood starts to purify, and by purify I mean all of the organs. Because you don't have any tension in your body, they start to function more easily and properly. The blood starts to purify because there's no tension and tightness squeezing the blood off from one spot or another. And the oxygen starts coming into the blood, and the blood starts going from, and - I have done this in Malaysia. I haven't done it in this country yet. I guess I ought to try it one of these times. – drawing some blood from somebody before they started meditating, and waiting until they got in the third jhāna, and then drawing a little bit more out, and then comparing the blood from before meditating and after getting into the third jhāna. It's amazing! The platelets that you see before you started meditating, they have this brown sickly ring around each one of the platelets, and there's a black spot in the middle. But when you get to the third jhāna, it's like really cherry red, and there's no blackness in the blood at all. Now, this is one of the advantages of having no tension in your mind. You become more healthy, you become more happy.

MN:

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

BV: Now, 'full awareness': when you're in the one-pointed jhāna, somebody can come right by the building with a motorcycle without a muffler on it, and you wouldn't hear it, but when your mindfulness is good and you're practicing with the 6Rs, that motorcycle can come beside the building and you would hear it, but it would be like the sound just goes through you. It's just sound, it's no big deal; let it be, relax, come back. So you are aware of things around you, and you have the unification of mind.

MN:

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

BV: There's the five aggregates again, still have them.

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: '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: Now, these first three jhānas are generally considered among the monks to be emotional jhānas because of the joy and the happiness. When you get into the fourth jhāna, you're considered at that time to... you've given up your rookie status, let's put it that way. You're not a beginner meditator anymore. You really start to understand deeply what the meditation is getting to be, and your equanimity is very strong, and you don't have these emotional states arising any more. In one commentary, when they start explaining about the jhānas, it's like a bee that is looking for honey, and he sees the flower, and he starts buzzing around the flower; that's like being in the first jhāna. The second jhāna, he lands on the outside petals and he starts looking around. And the third jhāna is when he goes in and he starts getting some of the nectar. And the fourth jhāna is when all of that is done, and he flies back to the hive. That's like being in the fourth jhāna. He's already done all of that work. Now he has the benefits of that work, and he's bringing it home.

MN:

9. "Again, monks, 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: When you get into the fourth jhāna, your mind has extreme balance in it. It's like you've seen kids when they have a pipe that's about this big (gesture) and they have a board across it, and they get on it and they start trying to balance. Ok? When they reach that perfect balance, that's what equanimity would be like.

MN:

10. "And the states in the fourth jhāna—the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, the mental unconcern due to tranquillity, the purity of mindfulness, and unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Now, yesterday I was also talking about how, when you can see the five aggregates, you are also seeing the four foundations of mindfulness. So when you're practicing in this way, even though you are in the jhāna, you are practicing

the four foundations of mindfulness, and that says that in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, and I didn't bring it along to read that part to you.

MN:

... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - ...

BV: Now, when we're getting to the energy part here, you're going to start noticing that during each sitting you have to apply a little bit different energies. It's not always going to be the same. You have to be able to... mindfulness has to be strong enough to recognize when the energy is going off a little bit, and then adjust, and this is where the meditation really starts to be fun. You really feel like you're starting to understand this stuff quite well, and you're starting to see how you can knock yourself off balance by not attending to your energy quite in the right way, and... so you have to learn to change your balance just a little bit, so you can have that perfect balance.

MN:

... 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: '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 even though you become an advanced meditator, you know that you still got more to go. You know that you haven't reached the end result yet.

MN:

11. "Again, monks, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, ...

BV: This statement right here, I haven't looked at it in Pali, but I really suspect that this is wrong because even when you're in the arūpa jhānas - in the immaterial realms - you still have the five aggregates. There can still be contact, and this says: "with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact," meaning that even if there is contact, you wouldn't know it. So I think that this is a mistake that's been cultivated for quite awhile in translations.

MN:

... with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite,' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite space.

BV: Now, when you're practicing loving kindness up to the third jhāna, you're going to be radiating from your heart. When you get to the fourth jhāna, you lose the feeling in your body, and you're not able to feel the radiation coming from your heart anymore. Now it comes from your head, and this gets to be real interesting. After you have 'broken down the barriers', like I was talking about last night, then I will come to you and say: "Ok, now I want you to radiate loving kindness in front of you - without any limits, without any boundaries - behind you, to the right, to the left, above, below, all around at the same time." At first, it will feel like you can barely radiate enough metta to fill up this room, and it will seem like: "Oh gee, this is hard." But as you become more familiar with doing it, then your realm of the loving kindness starts to grow; and then you can do this area of the desert; and then you can do the entire desert; and then you can do the entire state; and then you can do the entire country; and the entire world; and you can feel your loving kindness extend out like that, and eventually you don't have any boundaries at all.

And radiating the loving kindness is really nice when you get into the fourth jhāna to be able to do that. As you go deeper into your practice, the feeling of loving kindness changes. I'm not going to tell you how it changes. You have to tell me how it changes, so that way I know for sure that you've had that experience, but you'll also start to see that there's an expansion starting to happen. Infinite space is an expanding feeling, continually, without any boundaries or any limits, but there's no centre-point. It's just a feeling of expansion going out with this feeling of compassion. And eventually you can radiate that loving kindness in the same way, and you can radiate the compassion in the same way, and then you start doing it all directions at the same time, and it keeps going out, and out without stopping. That's what infinite space feels like.

MN:

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

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

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

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: Infinite consciousness is seeing all of the different consciousnesses at any of the sense doors arising and passing away. Now, (finger snap) that was a million arisings and passings away of consciousness. So that gives you the idea that now your mind is so calm and so alert, now you're seeing individual consciousnesses ... arise and pass away ... arise and pass away. It happens at the eyes, it happens at the ears, it happens with the touch, when you're walking. Now you really, really understand what impermanence is, and you understand there's nobody home directing this, nobody is controlling this. This happens because the conditions are right for it to arise, and it gets tiresome seeing these consciousnesses continually pop ... up, down ... up, down ... up, down ... up, down ... constantly happening, and you're seeing the suffering nature. So you're seeing impermanence, suffering, and not-self while you're in this jhāna, and you've been seeing it in all the other jhānas too, don't get me wrong, but now it really becomes very noticeable.

I've had some students come to me and complain about the tiresomeness of it: "When's this going to change? I don't want to see this anymore." Well, it changes when it's good and ready to change, but as you start to go deeper into your practice, you start to see that there's a gap in between each arising and passing away of consciousness, and as you start noticing that gap more and more, you start to focus on the gap instead of the changing, and we'll talk about that in a moment. Hold on to your seat.

MN:

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

BV: The 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. He understood thus: 'Indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanish.' 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: As you start seeing the space in between the consciousnesses, eventually that's all you see.

MN:

15. "Again, monks, 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 when mind does not look outside of itself anymore. This is when you still have things that are arising and passing away, but they're just factors arising and passing away of mind. This state of meditation to me is the most interesting state that you get in, in all of meditation. It's not the most fun, Nibbāna is the most fun, but this is really, really interesting because now you're seeing things arise and pass away, and now you get to play with your energy.

When you got into the space of infinite consciousness, the feeling changed again to joy. When you let go of that and you get into the base of nothingness, the feeling changes again to equanimity. Now, this equanimity is different than the fourth jhāna equanimity in that it's finer. And the slightest little blip that comes up into your mind's attention can knock you off balance. So this is like walking on a tight rope that's as thin as a spider web, just one strand of a spider web. You have to be able to walk with perfect balance, or if you have too much energy, start to get restless. If you don't have enough energy, start to get dull. So now what you're learning to do is to balance your energy so that it's perfect all of the time. Your mindfulness has to be exceptional. Your practice of the 6Rs, by now is becoming automatic, and it starts to happen real quick automatically, and that's how you start adjusting little-by-little, and it's just little tiny tweaks: "Whoops, it's

starting to go. Whoa, ok. No, not enough. A little more.” And it really gets to be fun.

MN:

16. “And the states in the base of nothingness—the perception of the base of nothingness and unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: He still has the five aggregates there. The four foundations of mindfulness are still present even though you’re in the realm of nothingness. You can still have contact. Now, with all of these different states that I’m talking about, these different jhānas, when you get into that jhāna and then you feel - while you’re sitting - and you feel like you want to get up and walk, keep that going. Get up, do your walking meditation. You can stay in that jhāna all the way up to the realm of nothingness, while you’re doing your walking meditation.

When you get up to the fourth jhāna, the walking meditation gets to be quite interesting because you don’t feel anything in your body unless there’s contact. So you feel the bottom of your feet when you put your foot down, and you feel your head. You don’t feel anything in between unless there’s contact. If the wind blows, you would feel it, but outside of that it’s like: “Wow, this is weird.” It’s real interesting. But you can keep your meditation going as long as you don’t talk or break your concentration in one way or another, and then, as you keep your meditation going, then you say: “Ok, I’ve walked long enough. It’s time to go sit.” And then you can go sit, and you can keep your meditation going while you’re sitting. Try to keep your meditation going all of the time.

MN:

{repeats: 16. “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: Oh, there’s another thing that when you get into the arūpa jhānas, your enlightenment factors start to become very important. Your enlightenment factors, there’s seven of them: you have mindfulness, investigation of your experience, energy, joy. This kind of joy is not the same kind of joy as in the lower jhānas. This joy doesn’t have the excitement in it, but it’s called ‘all pervading’. It just kind of bubbles out of everywhere. It’s a pleasant feeling. While you’re sitting, if you’re sitting and this kind of joy arises, one of the weird things that happens is, you can

be sitting and: "Oh, this is really good." And all of a sudden your eyes open up, and you say: "Wow, that was weird." So you close your eyes ... and your eyes open up ... so you close your eyes ... and your eyes open up ... and you say: "Ok, you want to stay open, you can stay open." This is what a lot of the Buddha images, what the artist is showing with the eyes half open, they're showing this all pervading joy. And that's why the Buddha images have the little smile on their face because it's pleasurable, and it's not unwholesome to have that pleasurable experience, you just don't attach to it.

Ok...

MN:

17. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, ...

BV: Now, this is as high as the Brahma Vihāras can take you. You can get to the realm of nothingness when you're practicing the Brahma Vihāras the way I'm teaching you. I'm telling you I'm teaching you loving kindness because that's what you're doing most of the time to start off with. As you go deeper into your meditation and get into arūpa jhānas, now you're beginning to experience the different feelings of the Brahma Vihāras in each one of those different states, and as high as you can get is the realm of nothingness. And that's fine because now when we get into the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, there's all kinds of interesting things that happen, and I'll tell you about that in a minute.

MN: {repeats: "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness,} Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

18. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he contemplated the states that had passed, ceased, and changed, ...

BV: Now, what happens when you get in the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is, mind is so fine that it's hard to tell whether it's there or not. And I've had some students that have come to me and they start complaining about: "You know, I was in this meditation and it felt like I was asleep, but it wasn't like sleep." And then I ask them to reflect on what happened while they were in that state, and then they start remembering: "Oh, there was this that happened, and that that happened, and that that happened."

Now, the enlightenment factors, which I started to say a little while ago: mindfulness, investigation of your experience, energy, joy, tranquillity, collectedness, equanimity. When your mind starts to dull out a little bit in any of the jhānas, then you start investigating how it occurred. You start picking up your energy. When you've done that well enough, then joy arises. If your mind becomes restless, starting to think about this and starting to think about that, then you pull up the enlightenment factor of tranquillity. Now, the restlessness is a very unpleasant feeling, and it's so unpleasant that you feel like moving. You feel like you're about ready to jump out of your skin, but actually the way to overcome the restlessness is by not moving at all, and then focus on the feeling of tranquillity, focusing on a collected mind, focus on a mind that has true balance in it, and then that restlessness will start to fade away. That's how you use the enlightenment factors. There's always the element of mindfulness, no matter what because that's how you're observing and seeing how mind's attention moves - your investigation. Either putting more energy into it or less energy into it. Having that joy, tranquil, collected, very calm, peaceful, balance. So when all of these enlightenment factors are deep enough, and in perfect balance, then you will experience Nibbāna at that time, and we'll go on and show you how that happens.

MN:

19. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, ...

BV: By this time, when you get into the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, anything that arises in the mind, the 6Rs just automatically take care of it. Now, the relaxing is a very, very necessary and important aspect of the meditation because you've been doing the relaxing from the very beginning, and your mind went from flip-flopping back and forth, and as you relaxed more and more, it stopped moving quite so much. When you got into the fourth jhāna, instead of moving so much, it's vibrating. As you continue relaxing, the vibration becomes less, and less, and less, until you get to neither-perception-nor-non-perception. It's hard to tell whether there's any vibration at all, but there is some.

Then...

MN:

... {repeats: by completely overcoming the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception,} Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the cessation of perception and feeling. ...

BV: And this is when that vibration completely stops. There's no more movement of mind's attention at all.

MN:

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

BV: What does this say? This says that what happens when the perception and feeling arose again, there has to be the stopping, and then the starting up again. But your mindfulness is so sharp at this time, you're able to see exactly how the links of dependent origination arise and how they cease, and your understanding is so good that it destroys all of the taints. Then the experience of Nibbāna occurs. This is exactly how it happens. A lot of people that I've talked to have come to me and they said: "You know, I've had this experience and I think I'm enlightened. What do you think?" And I talk to them and then I start talking about dependent origination, and if they haven't seen dependent origination, then that's not the Nibbāna that the Buddha was talking about.

I have had one or two people come to me and they said: "You know, I had this experience. It was a closing off and then I saw some things. I didn't really recognize them. They were flashing very quickly, and then I had this experience that I think was Nibbāna. What do you think?" And then I start talking to them about dependent origination, and I go to the text and I read it, and then they start going: "Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right. I saw that. I saw that." I say: "Ok, you've had the experience. Good for you. And, there's still more to do." "Oh, you mean I got to go through this whole thing again?" "Well, you've had what is called 'path knowledge'."

The 'fruition knowledge' is where it happens again, and it can happen while you're doing just about anything. I had one student that it happened to. She had the experience at a retreat, she went home. Two days later, she's washing the dishes and she feels this deep, deep state coming up, and she goes and she sits down, and she sees the cessation of perception and feeling, and then she sees the dependent origination, and then she has this experience again. "Well, what just happened to me?" "You've just experienced the fruition." That's where the personality change really happens. That's where you don't ever again have any doubt as to whether your experience was real or not; you don't have any doubt as to whether dependent origination is real or not; you don't have any doubt as to whether the four noble truths are real or not; you don't have any belief that rites and rituals are going to show you to Nibbāna; you don't have any belief that whatever arises is personal; you see everything as being an impersonal process;

you don't have any lust arise in your mind ever again; you don't have any hatred arise in your mind ever again. Doesn't matter what happens, it just will not arise again. That's a person that has pretty good mindfulness, and they're real fun to be around whenever you can find them.

Now, what happens with the fruition, and you'll be able to tell what level of your fruition you are experiencing, is by the number of times you see the dependent origination arise and pass away. If you see it arise and pass away three times really quickly, and then you have the experience of Nibbāna again, that means that you are an anāgāmi. You're at the third stage of enlightenment and I just described that. If you see that happen four times, then you have become an arahat, and an arahat: they don't have any pride, they don't have any desire to be reborn anywhere, they don't have any restlessness arise, they don't have any dullness arise, they don't have any ignorance. They are the kind of person you really want to hang around, if you're going to hang around with somebody, because their mind is so clear and so bright, and so in the present moment, and they're so intuitive that you can ask them even the dumbest questions, and they will give you an answer that's really appropriate according to the Dhamma. That's the advantage of becoming an arahat. Can that happen in this lifetime? Yes! Haven't run across many people that have, but then again there's not a whole lot of people that have gone back to the original teachings of the Buddha and followed the directions the way he gave them without adding or subtracting things. You can't add or subtract anything in this practice. If you're really serious about getting off of the wheel of saṃsāra, you have to give up other disciplines and just do this discipline. If you start mixing disciplines, then you start developing some bad habits one way or another, and that slows down your progress and can actually stop your progress. So you have to be real careful with this.

MN:

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

BV: He knew that his work had been done.

Now, an interesting thing with Sāriputta, when you read in another sutta, he was fanning the Buddha, and he became an arahat while he was fanning the Buddha.

And a lot of people say: "Well no, this just says that he was doing a sitting practice." He did the sitting practice, but he was doing his practice all of the time. But he had one slight attachment that stopped him from attaining Nibbāna, and his attachment was to the Dhamma. Now, he's fanning the Buddha and the Buddha's giving a Dhamma talk, and Sāriputta realized: "He's not even attached to the Dhamma that he's giving." And with that, he let go of his attachment, and he experienced the path knowledge and the fruition knowledge in the blink of an eye. It can happen fast, doesn't always happen slow.

So this was his experience, this is how he became the first chief disciple of the Buddha. He was second only to the Buddha in wisdom. Now, what does this mean? In seeing and understanding how dependent origination works. This is the importance of dependent origination, and even though you might not be used to hearing these phrases and these different things, I will be giving more talks on dependent origination and it will become more clear, but the importance of this can't be understated. This is the experience of Nibbāna. There can't be any other experience of Nibbāna. That's one of the things that the Buddha says when he's talking about dependent origination. Either you see it or you don't. If you don't, you ain't got it.

So that was one of the reasons that I pulled the Saṃyutta Nikāya out yesterday, and said that this is what the Buddha says to look for in a teacher. You look for a teacher that knows and understands dependent origination and the four noble truths. And how do you do your practice? By practicing observing how mind's attention moves through the four noble truths and dependent origination. That's the practice. And it's kind of been set aside because there's commentaries that they try to divide dependent origination up into three lifetimes, and talk about dependent origination generally, or they try to do it through Abhidhamma, which is a real maze trying to get through to have any deep understanding. But the only way you're going to experience Nibbāna is through seeing dependent origination, and finding a teacher that talks about it constantly.

Yeah?

ST: You don't have a lot of hatred arise?

BV: I was talking just about the last two stages of the enlightenment that you get only through the practice of meditation. You can hear me give a talk on dependent origination, and if you truly, deeply understand it, you can have the realization of that and become a sotāpanna, ...

ST: Oh, my.

BV: ... and that's where you let go of doubt, you let go of rites and rituals, and you let go of the idea in any kind of a permanent self.

ST: Right.

BV: That's what happens with that. The next stage, it weakens lust and hatred, but it doesn't eradicate them.

ST: What's difference between them?

BV: Lust is always unwholesome. Desire can be either wholesome or unwholesome. A wholesome desire is pointing your mind in the direction you want to go, but not being attached to it. It's just pointing your mind in the direction towards the experience of Nibbāna and letting it be; that's a desire. I desire to get from here to New York. I can look on a map and say: "This is the fastest road, so this is the road I'm going to take." And then I let it go at that, and then I follow that map, but I don't think about the end result. I just say: "This is what I wanted to see happen", and then you start going that way. When you have lust or an unwholesome desire is: "I want." And you're identifying with it, and then there's all of the clinging and the concepts and the opinions, and all of this other stuff that can arise.

Yes?

ST: Hatred, anger can arise?

BV: Anger and hatred are pretty much the same thing and they're both unwholesome. I love this: you hear on the radio occasionally about righteous anger. Ain't no such a thing. Anger is anger, it comes from not liking and trying to force away, trying to stop, and identifying with it very heavily.

Ok?

MN:

21. "Monks, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'He 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 a 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: So this particular sutta explains about every one of the jhānas that you go through, and it shows you that these jhānas are samatha-vipassanā jhānas because you have the five aggregates always with it. You're always seeing impermanence, suffering, and not-self at different degrees. You are seeing dependent origination as you go deeper into your meditation, and that's why I like this particular sutta.

Ok, anybody else have a question?

ST: Investigation?

BV: Yes.

ST: When you're simply else, I mean is that ~~~

BV: It's a distraction.

ST: It's a distraction?

BV: Ok, so you treat it as if it was a hindrance. Ok? And you let it go, even if it's a need, you let it go, you relax, you smile, you come back, and if it comes up again, how did it arise? That's what the investigation is about. How did it happen? Now, sometimes you got to go to the bathroom, you got to go to the bathroom. So you can do this a few times. If it still comes up, if this has to be done, then you can get up and take care of that.

ST: Um ~~~

BV: Well, it's an interesting thing when it's talking about the fourth jhāna, in that it says that there is 'he experiences no pain or pleasure', but what he's really talking about? There can still be pain or pleasure arise, but it doesn't make his mind shake; imperturbable.

Ok, I want to read to you what it says in the Satipaṭṭhāna sutta right near the end.

MN 10:

46 ... "if anyone should develop these four foundations of mindfulness in such a way for seven years, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either final knowledge here and now, or if there is a trace of clinging left, non-return.

BV: That's saying that when you're practicing the four foundations, which is what Sāriputta did here, he would have had either of those two experiences. He was lucky in that he had already become a sotāpanna by hearing the Dhamma and understanding it. And this always brings up the point of: "Be as attentive as you can during a Dhamma talk", especially when the Dhamma's being read to you because if you're really attentive, you can have that understanding all of a sudden just bubble up and become a sotāpanna. You still have to have the fruition of that experience, and that's the cessation and seeing dependent origination, but just seeing it one time arising and passing away. Now, this is in agreement with a lot of suttas in the Saṃyutta Nikāya. And the idea that is happening in the Theravāda tradition with the Burmese, and the Cambodians, and not so much Laotian, but the Thai, and the Sri Lankans, is that it happens one seventeenth-part of a thought moment later. The fruition happens, but it really doesn't make sense. It can happen that way I suppose, but it certainly doesn't seem to hold up.

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

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