

MN111 One by One As They Occurred - Anupada Sutta

Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi on 2 March 2009
at Dhamma Dena Vipassanā Center, Joshua Tree, California

BV: Now, because everybody is doing so well with the retreat, I thought that I would give you my favourite sutta because it explains what each stage of the meditation is, and what you can experience in it.

Now, this is a narrative by the Buddha about the venerable Sāriputta's practice in meditation. So this will give you an idea of what he went through and give you a good idea of what you will get to go through.

MN: 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; ...

BV: Now, any time you hear the word 'wise' or 'wisdom', it's referring to dependent origination. How do you develop your... how do you develop your wisdom? You go to a lot of different retreats and they talk about: "You have to be wise. You have to develop your wisdom." What does that mean? It means you develop seeing the links of dependent origination.

So...

MN: ... {repeats: Sāriputta is wise;} Sāriputta has great wisdom; Sāriputta has wide wisdom; Sāriputta has joyous wisdom; ...

BV: Now, how many times have you heard something like that?

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

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

BV: What is it mean to be secluded from sensual pleasures?

ST: Go on a retreat?

BV: Being secluded from sensual pleasures means that while you're sitting in meditation, you close your eyes. You don't have the sensual pleasure of seeing. A sound occurs, and you don't go to that sound and pay attention to that sound. A sound is just a sound. So you allow the sound to be. If it distracts you enough: let it be, relax, smile, come back to your object of meditation. So you're secluded from the sensual pleasure of hearing. You're secluded from the sensual pleasure of taste and touch and smell, and that's what it means by being secluded from sensual pleasures.

Now, being...

MN: ... secluded from unwholesome states, ...

BV: That means being secluded from distractions. You're staying on your object of meditation.

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

BV: There's five kinds of joy. Three kinds of joy are experienced by anyone at anytime. It doesn't matter whether they are developing their mind or not, you experience it in your daily life. The first kind of joy is like: you feel joyful and you get goose bumps. Then the next kind is like: it's like a flash of lightning, it's very strong, it only lasts for a moment and then it fades away. The next kind of joy is like standing in the ocean and just having a wave of joy come over you, and then another wave of joy. Now, these three kinds of joy can be experienced by anyone at any time.

The next two kinds of joy only arise through mental development. Now, most of you here have experienced this kind of joy. The next one is called 'uplifting joy'. You feel very light in your mind and you feel very light in your body. You will smile. It's a real pleasant feeling. Now, joy has some excitement in it. It's not just a level kind of thing, it has excitement in it. And you start thinking to yourself: "This is why I'm meditating. That's why I wanted to do this stuff. This is great!" Now, it'll last for a little while, and always it will fade away. When joy arises, you try to grab onto it when you're first doing it, and hold onto it and make it last a long time because it's such a pleasant feeling, and that's the fastest way to make it go away.

Now, you have joy on one side, and you have... or pleasant feeling on one side, and you have unpleasant feeling on the other side; same coin. The unpleasant feeling you try to push away: "I don't want that. I don't like that. I want it to stop." But you treat both joy... or the pleasant feeling and the unpleasant feeling in the same way: you allow it to be there, you relax, you smile, you come back to your object of meditation, and stay with your object of meditation. That's the way to make the joy last longer, by not getting attached to it, by not trying to control it, allow it to be.

Always when joy fades away, right after that you will feel very, very strong tranquillity, and you'll feel extremely comfortable in your mind and in your body. This is what the Buddha called happiness. And your mind becomes unified, it just stays on your object of meditation very easily. Now, in the first jhāna, you will still have a little bit of thoughts that are distracting. Not a lot, but you'll be able to see it very easily, and you'll be able to let go of it very quickly, and then smile... relax and smile, and come back to your object of meditation. This is the experience that you'll have 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; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: This is the five aggregates. Ok? Now, generally when you hear the five aggregates, you hear body, feeling, perception... when you hear me talk about it I say 'thoughts' instead of 'volition' because that's the first part of the meditation. There are thoughts, and consciousness. Now, when these five things, when they arise, they happen one at a time. Now, when you're sitting in meditation, and you feel a sensation arise, either that sensation is pleasant or painful or neither-painful- nor- pleasant. Doesn't have anything to do with emotion, this just has to do with feeling.

What our natural habit is, is when a feeling that's unpleasant arises, is we try to think the feeling away, but feeling is one kind of aggregate and thinking is another aggregate, and the two don't mix. When you try to think a feeling away, it makes that feeling bigger and more intense. You're identifying with the feeling, you're taking it personally, and you're trying to control the feeling with your thoughts. This is how depression arises; this is how frustration arises; this is how sadness arises; this is how anger arises; whatever your catch of the day happens to be. When that feeling arises, your habitual tendency is to try to think the feeling away, suppress the feeling with your thoughts, and that only puts a force against that feeling, and makes it bigger and more intense. That's how all of the hindrances work. You're identifying with that feeling, you're not

liking that feeling, the craving is there, and then the clinging arises, and your habitual tendency arises of trying to control the feeling with the thought.

What I'm trying to show you, is that feelings are one thing and thoughts are something else. When you're sitting in meditation and a pain arises, the first thing you'll notice is your mind starts to think about it. It goes to that sensation: that pain in your knee, that pain in your back, the pain in your head, whatever. The first thing you try to do is think about it: "Geez I wish it would stop. Why does it have to bother me now? Why doesn't it just go away and leave me alone? I'm supposed to be meditating?" But what you need to do now, is notice that you're thinking about the feeling, and let go of the thoughts, don't feed the thinking mind. When you let go of the thoughts, that means you don't keep your attention on your thought. You allow it to be, you relax, you smile, and you come back to your object of meditation.

Next, you'll notice that there is a tight mental fist wrapped around that sensation. That tight mental fist is aversion: "I don't like it. I don't want it to be there." Now the truth is, when a sensation arises, it's there; that's the truth. Any time you try to fight with the truth, any time you try to control the truth, any time you try to make the truth anything other than it is, you're fighting with the Dhamma, and it causes a lot of pain and suffering. It takes a normal pain and it turns it into an emergency, and then you can't stand it, and then you have to move around, you can't: "Ah, this is too painful!"

So what you do next is notice that tight mental fist, and you have to realize the truth that that pain is there, and you're tightening around it. So you allow the space for that pain to be. You're not trying to control it, you're not trying to make it anything other than it is. All you're doing is taking that craving, that dislike of that feeling, and you're letting it go, you relax. Now, you gently smile, come back to your object of meditation, stay with your object of meditation as long as you can. Now, the thing with pain is that it's not going to go away right away, whether you like that idea or not, and it's going to come back, and your mind is going to do the same thing again. It's going to think about: "Why doesn't it just stop? Why doesn't it go away?" Or if it's an itch: "Why don't I just scratch it?" But the whole point of the meditation is to learn how mind's attention works, not how to control anything.

Loving kindness is loving acceptance of the present moment. That means allowing the present moment to be, even though it's extremely painful. Allow that feeling to be, relax the tension and tightness wrapped around it, smile: "But it hurts!" I don't care, smile, come back to your object of meditation. Now, one of two things will happen: either the pain will go away, or it won't. So if it doesn't go away, what happens with your mind is that it starts to gain

equanimity, and before long that sensation can be there, and it doesn't even pull your attention to it, then you don't pay attention to it anymore. Most often it does go away, eventually. It depends on your attachment to it.

But trying to think our pain and control our pain, our frustrations, our anger, our dissatisfactions whenever they arise, trying to control those with your thoughts or trying to ignore the fact that it's there, is the cause of more and more suffering. So we really have to learn to let go of our thinking about the pain, and allow the space for that pain to be there without tightening around it. It's like you take a red-hot coal and you put it in your hand, and you go: "Oh, that's hot!" And your natural inclination is to squeeze it, and the tighter you squeeze, the more you burn yourself. So the Buddha said: "Well, don't do that. Let it go." That's what we have to learn to do with everything. Allow it to be, relax into it. It's only sensation.

Now, I've said this many times, I have a silver tooth here, and I was in Burma, and the dentist decided he was going to do me a favour, and he was going to clean my teeth. And he did it very roughly, and he broke my tooth, and he said: "We have to do a root canal." Now in Burma, they're not as sanitary as they could be when it comes to working on teeth. I had a monk friend that allowed some dentist to work on his teeth, and he got all kinds of infections because they didn't clean their tools from one person to the next. So I'm not going to allow them to put a needle in me. Maybe it's been in three or four other people before me, I don't know. So I said: "Fine, you're going to do a root canal. I don't want any painkiller." You know what a root canal feels like? It's painful, it hurts. And I was sitting in the dentist chair with my mouth open, and my knuckles were white, and my back was tense and tight. And I started looking at that, and I started relaxing: relax my hands, relax the tightness in my back, relax everything about me. And then I had time to send loving and kind thoughts to the person that was causing me the pain, and after about four hours, which was only about fifteen minutes, he stopped: "Ok, I'm done with that part." I had immediate relief. The pain had gone, but the relief I had was from letting go of all of that tension and dislike, and dissatisfaction and thoughts about, and I actually got into one of the stages of meditation very deeply. So he finished the rest of the things he had to do with my tooth, while I was completely happy, alert like I couldn't believe. My mind was really bright. And I got up out of the dentist chair, and I went back to the monastery, and I was happy for the rest of the day.

Now, you can do this with pain, and if you don't do it with the pain when it arises, you can look forward to it turning into an emergency, and pushing away and say: "No I can't stand this. I'm not going to do it." So what we have to do is learn how to recognize the process of what's happening in the present

moment without identifying with it, without taking it personally. I don't care if it's anger, or frustration, or sadness, or depression; it doesn't matter. Anxiety, all of these things, they all work in the same way. They all have a feeling arise, right after the feeling there's craving; tension and tightness. It's the: "I like it. I don't like it." mind, and it happens fast, and you're not really in control of it. A pleasant feeling, your mind grabs onto it and says: "I like that. That's good!" An unpleasant feeling, your mind says "Oh no! I don't like that." Right after the craving arises, then your concepts, your opinions, your thoughts, your story about why you like or dislike that feeling. And you start really identifying with all of those thoughts and all of those concepts. You're taking all of this personally, and then you slip right into the next step, which is your habitual tendency. Every time this happens: "I always act that way."

Now, what you're trying to do is, you're trying to recognize when a feeling arises, it's ok for the feeling to be there. It has to be because that's the truth, and then relax any tension and tightness. When you relax the tension and tightness, you let go of the craving. When you let go of the craving: no clinging arises; no habitual tendency arises; no birth of action arises; no pain, sorrow, lamentation or grief arises. It takes practice, and it doesn't happen immediately. It's just a momentary relief from the suffering. That's the third noble truth.

So now we've already experienced: there's pain, there's suffering, there's a cause of the suffering, that craving that makes this whole process really get carried away, and you get lost in your thoughts, and your dissatisfaction, and your dislike, and your concepts, and opinions, and ideas of how the world is supposed to be. When you let go of the craving, that clinging will not arise. When you let go of that craving, that tension and tightness especially, not only in your body, in this part of your body from the neck down, but in your head, in your brain. That membrane that goes around your brain contracts every time there is any kind of disturbance that pulls your mind away from your object of meditation. When you let go of that craving: your mind is bright, your mind is alert, there's no thinking, there's only pure observation. Your mind is clean at that time because there's no craving. Now, you bring that mind back to your object of meditation. This is why your object of meditation is considered to be wholesome. Any distraction that pulls your mind away has that craving in it, is considered to be unwholesome.

So as you progress with your meditation, you're starting to see more and more clearly how this process works, and it gets to be real fun, and it gets to be incredibly interesting. So we'll get back to the sutta here.

Ok, we have the five aggregates. Then we have...

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

BV: All of these things happen one thing at a time. When you let go of a hindrance: you've been working with it for a while, you see the distraction, you let it go, you relax, you smile, you come back to your object of meditation, stay there until the next one pulls you away. When you finally let go of that, let's call it restlessness because that's the biggest one, when you finally let it go and it's so weak it won't even come up anymore, what happens? You feel immediate relief. Right after that, you get a lot of joy coming: "Alright!" Your mind's very pure, your mind's very alert. After the joy, you feel very tranquil, you feel at ease in your mind and your body, and your mind just stays with your object of meditation without any effort. That's the first jhāna. When you get to the first jhāna, you start getting a little bit enthused: "Ah, this stuff works. Not bad. This is good!" And you feel like you're progressing: "Oh, alright!"

Now, the 'decision': you make a conscious decision to relax that tension and tightness, and that decision is very important. That's why the 6Rs are so incredibly important because when you practice the 6Rs, you are letting go of that craving, and you're developing an uplifted mind that stays on your object of meditation for longer periods of time.

Now, the next one is 'energy': energy is kind of a thing that you're going to have to learn how to adjust. When your energy is low, what happens to your meditation? Sloth and torpor comes, your mind gets contracted. Now, a lot of people have told me in the past that when they get sloth and torpor they don't... they're already relaxed, they don't want to relax, but the truth is their mind is not relaxed, neither is their body. So you have to have that relax step, then come back to your object of meditation. Sloth and torpor is kind of an interesting hindrance, and it almost always has your lust or greed that goes along with it because a lot of people like that sleepy feeling and just indulge in it. When you have sloth and torpor while you're sitting, sit a little bit straighter than is comfortable. Not so rigid that you're hurting yourself, but a little bit straighter. And when that arises, there are certain things that happen until you are nodding. First, your mind loses your object of meditation, and then you start ho-humming around a little bit, just kind of lightly thinking this and lightly thinking that, and then you start to dull out, and you start to get dreamy, and right after that you start slumping with your body. And after that?

ST: Snoring.

BV: Yes snoring, as some people can attest. So when you have sloth and torpor, sit a little bit straighter, and when your body first starts to slump a little

bit, then catch it there, and the sloth and torpor will not last for near as long. A lot of people, they'll be bobbing up and down. There's some lizards in Asia that do that, so we started calling that the 'lizard mind'.

Now, there are other things that will work for sloth and torpor. The Buddha, he named four or five different things that you can do, that they kind of work, but they're not great at it. One of the things he says is to get up and go outside and wash your face, and rub your face and your ears really strongly, and the last thing he said is to take your earlobe and pinch it as hard as you can, and that'll wake you up. The Zen practice is when you get a little bit sleepy, they come around and smack you on the back with a piece of wood. "Oh, and there's one here!" But what I found that works really well is to get up, go outside, walk in a straight line for oh, forty, fifty feet, stop, don't turn around, and walk backwards. When you walk backwards, you have to pick up your energy a little bit or you fall over. This picking up your energy will help you when you get done with your walking, come back in and sit, and your energy is picked up enough that you won't get caught by it, unless your mindfulness slips more. It always occurs because your mindfulness, your enthusiasm, is not as strong as it could be. Your interest in sending the loving kindness to your spiritual friend is not as strong as it could be, and your mind gets a little bit lazy.

Now, while you're sitting, if you sit a little bit straighter, and as soon as you notice that slumping, you straighten up, and relax, and come back to your object of meditation, and stay with your object of meditation. The sloth and torpor will last for a little while, but it will go away fairly quickly. So there's some things that will help you. This is one of the ways that you work with your energy. You have to pick your energy up when you have sloth and torpor, and when you have restlessness, your mind is distracted, and it's going out and you're thinking this and thinking that, and just caught up in planning and all of these different kinds of things. When you have restlessness, you want to focus your mind on tranquillity, on calmness, on peace. You remember when I was giving you instructions, one of the wishes that I said was to feel peaceful and calm, and bring that feeling into your heart, and then surround your friend with that feeling, and then radiate that feeling to your friend. When you focus on peace and calm, and not move your body even though you feel like jumping out of your skin, the restlessness will go away after a period of time.

Now, this is learning how to adjust your energy. When your energy is low, you have to pick your energy up. When it's too high, you have to calm the energy down. Now, this is something that you're going to learn to do with each sitting and walking, and you'll start recognizing in your daily life when you have a lot of restlessness. You feel like you have twenty-five things to do and you've got

ten minutes to do it, and you're scattered and you do this "Oh, I've got to do that" and you start doing that and "Oh, I forgot" and you don't get anything done. So when you're restless in your daily life, that's when you sit down for five or six minutes and focus on being calm, being tranquil, and when you get done, then you become efficient with what you're doing because you're not thinking of the next thing while you're doing this, and the meditation will actually make you a lot more efficient at whatever you do. You don't have that scattered energy, you're able to take care of it without that pressure. What's the favourite word? Stress. That's how you let go of the stress because stress is nothing more than restlessness. That's what stress is, and it's a painful feeling, it really hurts. And you'll notice as you start sitting in meditation without moving your body, that there can be pains that arise in your body and you feel like moving. What's the cause of those pains arising? Restlessness. As you go through them, then you'll be able to sit without moving much more easily, and you don't have a lot of wasted energy.

One time, I went to an airport, there was a lot of people that were sitting in chairs, and I just got done doing a meditation, and I had to go upstairs for some reason, and I turned around and I started watching the crowd, and nobody could sit still. Everybody was moving, and they were shaking their leg, and always changing their posture, and it dawned on me very strongly how I'm not doing that anymore, and it was so much so. In Asia I was going to, people liked to take me, to the museum and I'd stand and I'd look at something, and then I was "Ok, I've seen that" and I start moving and people beside me would jump because they thought I was a mannequin because I wasn't moving!

SK: That upsets people in malls you know.

BV: Oh yeah! Anyway, we have to learn to adjust our energy, and this is going to be at a finer and finer level as you go deeper into your meditation. You're going to have to learn how to tweak little bits so that you can stay balanced.

Ok, the...

MN: {repeats: ... mindfulness, equanimity, and attention ...}

BV: Mindfulness and attention are one and the same actually, and the equanimity is the balance. Your mind gets more and more balanced as you progress in your meditation, doesn't fly off the handle so easily.

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: Now, what are we talking about here? You see when they first arise, you see while it's there, and you see it fade away. You're seeing impermanence, you're seeing everything changing while you're in the jhāna. The definition of jhāna: almost everybody in this country that talks about jhāna, they have the idea that jhāna means concentration, absorption, and that's not the definition of jhāna. The definition of jhāna is a 'level of practice', it's a 'level of your understanding'. As you go through the jhānas, you start understanding more and more about how this process of distractions works, and it gets easier and easier to let go of these distractions because you're understanding more and more deeply.

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

BV: That means he didn't hold onto anything.

MN: ... unrepelled, ...

BV: He didn't try to push anything away.

MN: ... independent, ...

BV: He saw that this is part of an impersonal process.

MN: ... detached, ...

BV: Impersonal process.

MN: ... free, ...

BV: Impersonal process.

MN: ... dissociated, ...

BV: Impersonal process.

MN: ... with a mind rid of barriers. ...

BV: No hindrances arise while your mindfulness is strong and you're in a jhāna. What will happen is, you'll be able to sit in this state for a period of time and then your mindfulness will get weak, and when it weakens, guess who comes

to visit? The hindrances come to visit. So you get to do it again. Now, the hindrances are valuable, they're teaching you how this process works. How you go deeper into your practice is by letting go of this hindrance, and relaxing, and then you'll go into the next jhāna, and you'll sit in that one for a while, and then your mindfulness gets distracted for whatever reason. Now you have another hindrance to work with, but you start taking and recognizing that the hindrances are actually your teacher. They're teaching you the most valuable lesson possible, and they're your best friend, and that's hard for people to really grasp. The hindrances are a good thing because of what they're teaching you and where your attachment is. It's hard to be pals with the hindrance, I do understand, but still it is your best friend and you should cherish the hindrance while it's there because of the lessons that it's teaching you.

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

BV: So you get into the first jhāna, you understand there's still more to go, and you start gaining your enthusiasm a little bit, and you start going: "Yeah, this is good stuff!" and you start realizing how well you're learning things.

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, what happens when you get into the second jhāna? Up until then you're making a verbal wish. Ok? "May my friend be peaceful and calm," and then you feel that and you bring it in your heart. When you get to the second jhāna, you're not able to verbalize anymore. If you try to, you start getting a headache. A headache is always the thing that's telling you you're putting in the wrong kind of effort, the wrong kind of energy. You have to back off. The way you back off when you get into the second jhāna is, you let go of the internal verbalization. Now, you know the feeling that you want, you bring it down, you put it in your heart, surround your friend with it, and radiate that feeling. This is where true 'noble silence' is. It doesn't mean that you won't have a thought occasionally, but you won't have thoughts about the past, you won't have thoughts about the future.

What... excuse me, no, no, please sit. Whenever I'm giving a Dhamma talk, please do not get up from your chair, do not move around, don't cross your hands, don't cross your legs. These are things that will stop me every time. I'll let you go this time, but be prepared to sit for the entire talk from now on. Ok? There are certain rules that I have to follow when giving a Dhamma talk and

this is one of them. Ok? I'll let it go this time because she didn't know, but in the future please don't move around.

Ok.

ST & BV: ~~~

What you're really learning to do now is to observe things more closely, and by observing, you start to get this confidence in the practice: "I really feel like I'm getting it. I feel like I'm understanding this." And that self-confidence will come through in your daily activities when you keep your 6Rs going. You feel like you know what you're doing now. Great stuff!

The joy that you experience is much stronger. Now, I've had a lot of students that when the joy comes with this, it's so strong that they'll have a lot of tears coming down, and they'll feel like they're floating in the air. And I'll talk to them and I say: "Well, it's a real light feeling. You're light in your body. You're light in your mind." "Oh, I felt so light that I thought I had to open up my eyes because I thought I was going to hit the ceiling." That's how light you feel. When that fades away, the tranquillity is much stronger, the feeling of comfort is much stronger.

Now, the difference between the joy... I didn't tell you about the last kind of joy yet. I will. The difference between joy and happiness is described in one of the books this way: suppose you're in the desert and you're really thirsty, and in the distance you see an oasis. As you start going towards the oasis, your mind starts to get real happy, you really start to feel good, and there's that excitement in it. Now, you get to this oasis, and it's a little pool of water, and you jump in the water, and the water is exactly the perfect temperature, and your mind goes: "Oh!" And your body goes "Oh!" That's happiness. Ok? Now, the happiness that you feel is very comfortable, very much at ease. You feel like you could sit forever without moving. No pains arise in your body, just feel great, and your mind becomes more and more composed, more collected, stays on your object of meditation. The thoughts that before that would come up, they just don't come up anymore. They just... everything is nice. It's easy to stay on your object of meditation.

MN: 6. "And the states in the second jhāna - the self-confidence, the joy, the happiness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: While you're in the jhāna, you are still experiencing the five aggregates; they are there. An interesting thing with the five aggregates and the four

foundations of mindfulness, they're the same thing. You have body, that's the first one of each one of those, right? You have feeling, same. With the five aggregates you have perception, and you have consciousness with the... or you have mind, I'll say it that way. With the third foundation of mindfulness, it's mind, so those two go into the mind category. The next one is, they call it in Pali 'saṅkhāra', which means 'formations', and the formations are the 'dhammas'. So the five aggregates and the four foundations of mindfulness are the same thing. So what we're seeing here is, that in each one of the jhānas we are experiencing the four foundations of mindfulness. That was a major revelation I had with one retreat.

Yes?

ST: Sorry, could you repeat what the four foundations of mindfulness are please?

BV: Body, feeling, mind, dhammas; and we'll go through these soon. It turns into a two-day talk any way I slice it. I can't help it.

Ok...

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. ... and with the cultivation of this attainment, he confirmed that there is still more.

BV: So there's still more and you know it, but your self confidence is starting to get nice, and you're starting to think: "Ah, I really do understand what I'm doing now."

MN: 7. "Again, with the fading away of joy, Sāriputta abided in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure 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: When you get to the third jhāna, the joy disappears. And this is always kind of fun for me because I get to play with people, because they come in and I they: "How's your meditation?" "Well, it's ok, but I don't have any joy." She can laugh (SK) because this happened exactly the way I'm saying it. And I said: "Well, that's ok. You feeling comfortable in your body, comfortable in your mind?" "Yeah." "You're feeling balance in your...?" "Yeah, but I don't have any joy!" "Ok, you don't have to have joy. Everything's going along fine." "But you

don't understand!" Well, your mind has become so peaceful and calm that the excitement of the joy is too coarse, and it says: "No, I don't want to do that anymore." You still feel your body, but you feel really comfortable, and as you go deeper into the third jhāna, you'll start losing parts of your body. You won't feel your hands, or you won't feel your legs, or you won't feel a shoulder, or these kind of things start disappearing a little bit. And what's happening is, as you let go of tension in your mind, you start letting go of tension in your body, and that's what you're feeling, is tension.

So once you get into the third jhāna, your mind has very, very nice balance of mind. Now, you hear things: You hear a motorcycle go along outside. Before it used to be a little disturbing to you, now the sound just kind of goes through you. You heard it, you know it was there, but it doesn't disturb you. That's the equanimity.

Ok...

MN: 8. "And the states in the third jhāna - the equanimity, the happiness, the mindfulness, the full awareness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by Sāriputta one by one as they occurred; ...

BV: So you hear about the jhānas, and you hear there's this many factors for this jhāna, and this many factors for this jhāna, but that's not all that's happening. From the first jhāna on, your equanimity is there and it's starting to get stronger until it becomes very apparent, but you're gaining more and more balance in your mind all of the time by doing this practice.

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

9. "Again, 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: Now, when you get into the fourth jhāna, while you're practicing loving kindness, you're not able to feel your body anywhere. You'll feel your head, that's about all. The radiation: you can't feel... you can't radiate from your heart anymore, and it will naturally come up to your head, and you'll start radiating from your head. Now, this says that you don't feel any pain or pleasure, but

you still have feeling, you still have the five aggregates, but it goes from gross feeling to subtle feeling. If I come up to you and I touch you, you would feel that even in the fourth jhāna. You still have a body, but it won't make your mind waver, it won't make your mind shake. Or I can come up to you and I can say something to you, you will hear what I said, but it doesn't make your mind shake anymore. Your mind is very, very balanced, very nice, pleasant feeling. When you get to the fourth jhāna is when you come and tell me about it, and I will tell you: "Now you have become an advanced meditator. Now, you give up your rookie status."

Now, some people have an idea that getting into the jhānas and getting to the fourth jhāna will take you years. It depends on the kind of meditation that you're doing whether it will take you years or not. If you are doing a meditation that doesn't have the relax step in it, then yes it will take you years. When you have the relax step in it... I had one student that came last summer, he just got off another meditation retreat, but he was thoroughly convinced that what I was showing him was good. He got into the fourth jhāna, first day. From never having experienced a jhāna before, he went through four jhānas in one day. He was so good I wanted to hit him. Nobody's supposed to be that good.

Quite often, people that come and do a one-week retreat, they can get up into the third and fourth jhāna in one week. You have the potential to do it. The trick is, follow the directions precisely, exactly. Don't add anything, don't subtract anything, just follow the directions.

So...

MN: 10. "And the states in the fourth jhāna - the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, ...

BV: That's the balance.

MN: ... the mental unconcern due to tranquillity, ...

BV: Your mind has extreme tranquillity at this state. Now, a lot of people have this belief that when you're practicing jhāna, the only time you can get into the jhāna is while you are sitting in meditation. I'm here to tell you that's not true. You can be sitting in meditation and you feel like you need to get up and do some walking meditation, you can keep your practice going while you're doing the walking meditation. It's a different kind of feeling than you've ever had before because you don't feel your body unless there is contact. And if it's not breezy, say if it's not windy, the only thing you feel when you're walking is the bottom of your feet and your head. There's nothing in between, and it's kind of

fun actually, it's kind of neat. But if a fly came and landed on you, you would feel that. Or if some ants got on you and they started walking around, you would feel that. It wouldn't make your mind shake, but you would know that that's what was happening. Ok, you still have the five aggregates: the contact, feeling, perception, and volition, and mind.

The 'enthusiasm': now you start to get really enthusiastic. And when you get into the fourth jhāna, is where you start really understanding about the energy that you have to put in to keep that balance, and you can feel your mind start to go off a little bit, and you need to pick up your energy, and you do it right then, right there, and it's just little increments that you improve the energy, and then you'll know where to do it. So energy is a thing that you're going to be working with all through the meditation, and learning how to adjust. And you might have to adjust ten or fifteen times in one sitting - or even more, or less - depending on the sitting and what's happening with you personally, but you get to judge on that.

Ok...

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.

...

BV: You see, in each one of the jhānas, you're seeing the impermanence. You're seeing change happening all the time with each distraction that pulls your mind away from the jhāna, and now you have to work with that one. You're seeing how this process works and how it's continually changing. So you're seeing impermanence all of the time, not just as a concept of impermanence, but you're seeing the whole thing. You're seeing it all of the time with each link as it arises and passes away.

Now, as you go deeper in your meditation, you start learning more and more clearly that everything that arises is a part of an impersonal process, and you're seeing this very clearly. And because of that, when you get out of your meditation, and you have to do something, and you forget, and your mindfulness goes away a little bit, and you go out of the jhāna, you still have that balance of mind. And you can call that jhāna back up when you notice that your mind has been distracted.

The importance of doing daily activities can't be under stressed because you have to learn how to carry your meditation with you with whatever you're doing in your life. So don't get into washing the dishes and throwing the dishes around: "Because I want to go back and hurry up and meditate." That is the

meditation. What are you watching? How your mind is working. Let go of those unwholesome states, bring up the wholesome states as much as you can with your daily life.

Ok...

MN: ... and with the cultivation of that attainment, he saw that there was still more to do.

11. "Again, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of gross form, with the disappearance of perceptions of ...

BV: I don't agree with this statement right here. There is no disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact. There is still sensory impact because you still have the aggregates.

SK: Of the subtle forms right?

BV: They're subtle forms.

SK: Right. That's them.

BV: So it's not a complete disappearance.

SK: Right. Yeah.

BV: It's a partial disappearance.

MN: ... with the non-attention to perceptions of diversity, ...

BV: In other words, you're not paying so much attention to the changes, the big changes.

MN: ... aware that 'space is infinite,' ...

BV: Now, when you got into the fourth jhāna, you were radiating loving kindness through your head. And I have a meditation that will start to take you through all of your spiritual friends, all of your family members and good friends, neutral persons, and enemies. When you get done with that, then I will tell you to start radiating loving kindness in six directions: in front of you, behind you, to the left, to the right, above, below, and then all directions at the same time. As you go deeper into the practice, you will get to a place where the feeling of loving kindness changes, and I will not tell you how it changes,

you have to tell me. But what also happens is, you have a feeling of expansion in all the directions at the same time. It's feeling of going out, but there's no centre-point, there's just the feeling of expansion. And that is what the Buddha called: "Space is infinite. This is infinite space." The feeling that you will feel is called 'compassion', but you have to describe that feeling to me, so I know that you're really experiencing it.

Now, this is something that has happened in Buddhism, and there's an awful lot of people that are teaching Buddhism from different sects, that they talk about the Buddha and his 'infinite compassion'. Actually, it's the Buddha sitting in infinite space, radiating compassion. And you're radiating it in all of the directions.

MN: ... Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite space.
12. "And the states in the base of infinite space - the perception of the base of infinite space and unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Still have the five aggregates. See, that's why you can't have no sensory impact because if there's contact you still will feel it.

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. ... and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is still more to do.

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: Now, what happens is the feeling of compassion changes to a feeling of joy. This kind of joy is the last kind of joy. This is called 'all pervading joy', where you feel joy come out of every cell in your body, and it doesn't have very much excitement in it at all. This is the enlightenment factor of joy. Ok? Now, when this joy arises: you feel really, really good; and you feel really, really happy; and you're sitting and you're seeing consciousnesses arise and pass away, individual consciousnesses. So if you have your eyes open, it would be like looking at a movie that's going too slow and it's flicking, and that's what happens at each one of the sense doors. It happens with hearing, it happens with taste, it happens with touch, it happens with seeing, it happens with smelling, and you're going to see these consciousnesses ... arise and pass away ... arise and pass away ... very quickly. (finger snap) That was a million thought

moments. You're seeing individual thought moments, you're seeing up close and personal that everything is impermanent, and you don't have one bit of control. There is no control, you can't make it stop, can't make it go away, it just keeps happening by itself when your mind gets to that deep state.

Now, when you're sitting in this and the joy comes up, you'll be sitting and seeing all these different consciousnesses, and all of the sudden your eyes open, and you go: "That's strange." So you close your eyes, and your eyes open up: "Why'd that happen?" So you close your eyes, and your eyes open up. When this happens then you go: "You want to be open, you can stay open. I don't care." Now, a lot of the Buddha images, you see him with his eyes halfway open. The artist is trying to show that he's sitting with this kind of joy, this all pervading joy. And I've heard an awful lot of people tell me that I was supposed to be sitting with my eyes half open all the time from the start because that's what the Buddha image was doing, but it's not quite like that.

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

BV: Well, you still have the five aggregates which means you still have the 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 this:... and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is still more to do.

BV: So you're sitting and you're seeing all of these different consciousnesses arise and pass away. Doesn't matter what you're doing, you're seeing the consciousnesses, and you come and you tell me this is what you're seeing. Well, what I'm going to tell you to do is: "I want you to look at the space in between those consciousnesses." And when you get good at that...

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

BV: When you get to the base of nothingness, the feeling of joy will change again, and you will feel extreme equanimity. Now, you have gone through the Brahma Vihāras step-by-step. This happens naturally as you go deeper with the loving kindness meditation. So when I tell you I'm teaching you loving kindness,

I'm not telling you the whole truth and nothing but the truth. I'm telling you that you're starting with the loving kindness, but as you go deeper you will go through all of the Brahma Vihāras.

Now, when you look in the suttas, and you start looking at how many times the mindfulness of breathing is talked about in the suttas, you'll find out that it's mentioned eight times. When you look at how many times the Brahma Vihāras are mentioned, you'll find out that it's over six hundred, and loving kindness is mentioned many, many. So what do you think he spent most of his time teaching? The Brahma Vihāras and the loving kindness.

This is one of the reasons why I like this meditation, and another reason I like this meditation is, your progress in meditation is faster with loving kindness meditation than it is with any other meditation that you can do. When people come and they say: "I only want to do mindfulness of breathing:" I say: "Ok I can teach that, but what you can do in one week with the Brahma Vihāras, you can do in a month with mindfulness of breathing. That's how much faster the Brahma Vihāras really work.

Now, when you get into this state of nothingness, what's happening now is that your mind is not looking outside of itself. Up until then you were still feeling and seeing things outside of mind. Now, you're just looking at what is in mind. And there is still the five aggregates, there's still the enlightenment factors, there's still some disturbances that can happen, and I won't talk about what they are, you have to tell me, again.

But this particular state of meditation is by far the most interesting state of meditation that you can experience. It's really, really something because the energy you have to put to keep that radiating the equanimity in all the directions, in a very balanced way, is really fine. And if you slip off with a little bit too much energy, you'll get restless, and now you're not in that state anymore, now you have to work with the restlessness. And you let go of that, and you let go a little bit too much, and you get into the dullness. You won't get into sleepiness now, but dullness. So you have to learn how to really balance that energy, and it gets to be fun, and you'll start developing deeper and deeper equanimity. So it's really fantastic, it's really nice. And like I said, you will start to see other things arise, but I'm not going to tell you about that, you have to tell me.

This is as far as the Brahma Vihāras will take you. They will take you to the realm of nothingness, and there's still more meditation stages to go through. So I'll talk about that in just a minute. We'll go through the nothingness...

MN: 16. "And ... the base of nothingness and unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: You see, the five aggregates are still there. That means the four foundations of mindfulness are still there.

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: ... with the cultivation of that attainment, there is still more to go.

BV: So you still know, but you're feeling really good because you're progressing nicely.

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: As I go deeper into the suttas and understand more, I started thinking about this space, neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and to be completely accurate, you can call it neither-perception-and-feeling-nor-non-perception-and-feeling. Feeling and perception are concomitant, they come up together, and I'll show you that in another sutta later on.

Now, the interesting thing is...

MN: 18. "He emerged from that attainment. Having done so, he contemplated the past states which had, ceased, and changed, ...

BV: So what happens when you get into this realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, it's kind of funny because people that do this, they'll come up to me and say: "Is it possible to be aware and asleep at the same time, because that's what it feels like?" It feels like you've been asleep, but you know that you haven't, it just... but you haven't been able to see what was there.

Now, when you come out of that state, you start reflecting on what you saw while you were in that state, and you 6R everything that's happening. And after you get to a certain place, your mind will get to a very, very extraordinary, peaceful, calm, a no-disturbance-at-all state. And if there's a disturbance that even attempts to come up, as soon as it just starts to arise, you can see it, and 6R it, and let it go. Your mind is very pure at this time, and you will go back into this kind of sleep-state for a little while, and then you'll come back out, and you'll see that there were things that were happening while you were in that

state, and you'll 6R those, and you'll go deeper still. This is an extraordinary state of mind to be in. It is attainable, believe me, it is attainable.

MN: {repeats: ... Having done so, he contemplated the past stage which had ceased, and changed,} 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 he still knows that there's more to do.

Now, we'll let that go...

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: See, it mentions perception and feeling here, and I think it should in the state before that. The state of neither-perception-nor-non-perception is described like this in one of the texts: There's a monk that's walking in the forest and there's a younger monk that's following him, the senior monk always walks in front. And they pass this little trickle of a stream, and the senior monk walks on. The junior monk stops, and the senior monk said: "Why are you stopping?" And the junior monk said: "I wanted to get a drink of water." And the senior monk said: "Ah, there's water, then I want to take a bath. Go get my towel." And the junior monk said: "There's water, but there's not enough for that." That's the kind of perception that you have. It's there, but it's real hard to see.

Now, this whole time that you've been doing your meditation, from the day that you came here, your mind is doing this (gesture), flip-flopping around. As you go through the jhānas, it becomes less and less until you get to the fourth jhāna where it's vibrating. Now, as you go in through the arūpa jhānas, these other jhānas that I've been describing, the vibration becomes less and less and less until it's hard to perceive whether there's anything there or not. This is why we practice the relax step because it makes mind go from this (gesture) to this (gesture) until it gets to such a place that it stops. That's the cessation of perception and feeling. I can take you to neither-perception-nor-non-perception, the rest is yours. I can't take you any further. You have developed the habit of relaxing so much that it's become automatic, and now, eventually it will happen where it stops.

What happens after that? When your perception and feeling arise again, you will see the links of dependent origination. It's like a complete blank slate, and now you see each of these links come up by themselves, and you see the cause and effect relationship on how they arise, and you see how: when this one doesn't arise, that one won't arise. And you will go all the way down to the final ignorance, and then Nibbāna occurs. Now, everything up until then is concept. When you get to Nibbāna, it's the land of no concepts. How do you talk about something through concepts? How can you talk about Nibbāna? You can't. Everything that we talk about is mundane, it has to do with the mundane, and this is the state beyond that. The Buddha described it as a happy thing, and I have to agree with him, it's really a happy state. This is how Nibbāna occurs.

Now, according to the suttas, there are three ways of getting to this state: this way that Sāriputta did it, Sāriputta was very strong intellect, very, very intelligent man, but he was not very sensitive to feeling; there's the way that Moggallāna did it, he was an intelligent man, not as intelligent as Sāriputta, but he was very sensitive to feeling; and there's the way that the Buddha did it who had the perfect balance between intellect and feeling. Now, what happens is: you get to the fourth jhāna, you have a choice. Some people who are very sensitive to feeling, they have a lot of psychic things that happen: reading other people's minds, flying in the air, and all of that psychic kind of stuff.

RD: Is that real?

BV: Unfortunately, yes it is, and they're the hardest to teach by far because it's so much fun, they get lost in it, and it's hard to keep them on track. I've only had a couple that are like that in Asia, but it was way too much work. I would have had to be around them all the time for five or six years because of the attachments that come up for: "I can do this. You know, I'm pretty good." And who's identifying with it? So there's always the taking down of the personality belief, and it's extreme work, and it's not desirable for me to teach those kind of people because they're really frustrating.

Anyway, you can attain Nibbāna the way that I'm teaching you right now, the way that Sāriputta did it, and that's the way I actually prefer, but there are some people that they want to... they're sensitive with their feeling, they're intelligent, and I will give them the opportunity to start working with their past lifetimes. Now, this is called the *tivijjā*, the three knowledges, and from my experience this is the fastest way from the fourth jhāna to be able to experience Nibbāna, by going and seeing past lifetimes, working with forgiveness for doing things to other people in past lifetimes, letting go of your guilty feelings, and that sort of thing, and as they go deeper, the reality of karma is really strong. That's what you learn while you're doing this.

But you start seeing dependent origination arising and passing away in all of these beings, and then you'll go to a place where you are able to visit other beings in other realms. You can visit in the heavenly realms, you can visit in the hell realms, you can visit in the animal realms if you want, and you can communicate with them and ask them what they did to get where they are. You know, what kind of actions they did in their lifetimes and that sort of thing, and you can speak Dhamma with them.

But you still are seeing more and more closely how dependent origination works, and eventually your mind will just experience the cessation of perception of feeling, and then you will see dependent origination for yourself and realize it, and when you do that then Nibbāna occurs. So there are these three ways, one of which I prefer not to teach at all, and I try to recommend them to other people to teach.

Ok. Now, when we get to the...

MN: ... complete surmounting of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the cessation of perception and feeling. And his taints were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.

BV: What is wisdom? Seeing how the links of dependent origination work. Now, what are the taints? Well, we'll start with the fetters. The fetters are: you no longer have doubt arise; you will not break any precept for any reason, purposefully; you lose a belief in a personal self, you see everything as being impersonal; you let go of all rites and rituals, you don't believe that any rite and ritual that you can do will lead to Nibbāna, you'll let that go; you will let go of all lust; you will let go of all hatred - now think about that, never having hatred arise again in your mind, it won't come up, that's really amazing; and not having any lust arise in your mind ever again, the disturbance won't be there, that's peaceful and calm; you lose restlessness, you never again will have a mind that has restlessness in it; you lose sloth and torpor; you lose a desire to be reborn in a heavenly realm; you lose conceit; and all ignorance is gone. Now, that's ten things that will happen when you become an arahat.

RD: Is that what you talk about sudden awakening and gradual?

BV & RD: By listening to the dhamma, you can become a sotāpanna, and you can also become a sakadāgāmī without doing any practice. Ok. Now, you can also get there by doing practice. The only way you can become an anāgāmī or an arahat is through practice ... through practice ... doing practice. Now, you say: "Ok, I want to go through this, and I only want to be a sotāpanna." I don't

know what's going to happen after you see... attain Nibbāna. It depends on you and your past actions, and all of that sort of thing. I don't know.

But one of the things that happened to Sāriputta, was right after he had this experience, he also had the fruition experience. Now, that doesn't always happen. Ok? For example, Ānanda had been a monk for twenty years, he was a sotāpanna, and then he started taking care of the Buddha. And one day he walked up to the Buddha, after he had his fruition experience, and he said: "Reverend sir, I don't know what's so difficult about understanding dependent origination. It's so easy, it's so plain." And the Buddha scolded him. He said: "No, this is not easy. It's not plain to see."

The only way you can learn about dependent origination is through hearing about it from somebody else. You can't learn it on your own, alone. That's why the Buddha was such an incredibly special being because he figured it out on his own. Part of the six years that he spent was sitting and watching how: "When this arises, that arises. Oh, when this doesn't arise, that doesn't arise." And he went through all twelve links that way, and he practiced it for a long period of time before he actually attained Nibbāna. So he practiced the meditation, he practiced relaxing, he practiced letting go of the craving, and letting go of the four noble truths in each of the links of dependent origination, he saw the four noble truths in each one.

RD: Seems he went kind of scientific way.

BV: Oh yes, definitely. He was the ultimate in deductive reasoning, and because of his understanding and his clarity, he was able to show other people the same thing. And that's why Buddhism became really popular, because it was the truth, it was exactly how everything occurred, and he broke the wheel, he showed how to get off of the wheel of saṃsāra by realizing this amazing process. There's a lot of other spiritual teachers around, and they teach a lot of really good things, but the Buddha is the only one that came up with seeing this process as the way it truly is.

RD: And he showed us the way.

BV: He definitely did, and the thing that's amazing is the dependent origination is not taught very much in Buddhism these days.

Now, I talked to somebody that had gone through an experience of seeing impermanence, suffering and not-self, and he was convinced that he was a sotāpanna, and I told him that if you have not seen dependent origination, you haven't gotten into that state yet. And there's eighty-four suttas just in one

section of the Saṃyutta Nikāya, and every one of those suttas is about dependent origination. And I showed him that, and I showed him the suttas that say: "If you don't understand these things as they actually are, then you have not attained Nibbāna," but if you have, then you have. And he looked at that and he said: "I don't care what those suttas say." I was shocked!

SK: Yeah, it's the state of the world right now though.

BV: I was absolutely shocked. What can I do... ok. I don't need to talk to him much anymore.

ST: Why do you think dependent origination isn't taught that much?

BV: Because it's not understood, and I'll tell you why it's not understood. Because of that, what I was just telling you, that the Buddha scolded Ānanda, saying this is difficult to understand, it's not so easy. All of the monks read that and they go: "Well, this is difficult to understand," so they explain it in a way that's difficult to understand!

SK: It didn't help much either because the main commentary, when he wrote about it, he stated something that they always like to repeat. They like to say that: "Start out with your class by telling you that dependent origination is so difficult to understand, you will feel the weight of the entire ocean upon your head trying to figure it out." And you're thinking: "Boy, I'm glad I'm in this class." But that's the opening line.

BV: But, you see the practicalness of the dependent origination I'm showing you, and how you teach yourself. And there's been a lot of different interpretations of: "There's three lives to this," and "Oh, it just gets more and more confusing as time goes by."

RD: Isn't there the law of karma in it to some extent?

BV: In the dependent origination?

RD: No, if this is that, and that is the result?

BV: Well, but that's the way everything works.

RD: That's true.

SK: The causal thing is like... if this exists, then that arises, and then if that is there, this arises. The karma is: if this happens, then there's a reaction to that.

It's different. Action-reaction is different than arising, causing co-arising. It's different.

RD: I can see that.

SK: I'll have to draw it out for you. I'll draw it out on a piece of paper for you.

RD: But action cannot be a result.

SK: But it doesn't always have to happen, you see. Because you have...

BV: The problem is, we have to get into Abhidhamma, and I did study Abhidhamma. My teacher was an Abhidhamma scholar, and I really don't like it. I don't like to get into it because it's so intellectual. It doesn't have anything to do with the practical aspects of being able to see it.

SK: In a way, the issue of teaching dependent origination is really no different than understanding any of the little groups that happen in Buddhism. Like in the thirty-seven requisites of enlightenment, in looking at studying something like faculties and powers or seven factors of enlightenment, we have the same issue to deal with. See, these things can be looked at in the minutest possible form, or in the middle size, or in the grandest scales.

BV: That's what Abhidhamma is, it takes everything down to the tiniest little fraction of a thing.

SK: So what Bhante does...

BV: But I'm more in the Middle Way kind of guy.

SK: We call that the Middle Way and sometimes they get upset that we call this the Middle Way, but it makes sense to look at something in a way that you can immediately grasp it and understand it in relationship to your own life because the idea of Buddhism is to say this is a practice that we're teaching that you can do all the time and integrate with your daily life. So by teaching you about dependent origination in relationship to individual events or interactions between two people, like somebody getting angry at somebody else, and showing you how that works out that way, is something that you can really understand. Then in your practice, you start to look at it in a smaller scale, but you're still not going to the minutest scale. You're not going to quantum physics to look at it, and you're not looking at it in the terminology of this lifetime structure, which can get misunderstood. Actually that lifetime layout, as Bhante pointed out to me one time and I started laughing is correct, if you understand

what it maybe meant in the beginning, but if we change it to meaning this lifetime and your next one, we have stepped outside of Buddhism, as Buddhadasa pointed out. You see? So but there are ways to look at it lifetime to lifetime, that aren't quite that way, that are correct.

ST: Well, with the rebirth link and that?

SK: That's correct.

BV: Birth, death ... birth, death.

SK: If you get involved... yeah.

ST: So that's the way I learned it, that it was both macro and micro.

SK: Right, it's micro-macro.

ST: You know, a million times a second, and a lifetime and the next lifetime.

SK: But if you go lifetime to lifetime, Scott, you stepped outside of Buddhism.

BV: Ok. now...

MN: ... {repeats: And his taints were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.}

20. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he recalled the past states which had ceased, and changed, 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 no escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is not.

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 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, 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 we'll get into more discussion, little bit later. We've been doing this for a long time.

Anyway...

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: So the reason that I gave you this discourse tonight is so that you can recognize where you are because I don't tell anybody where they are. Make up your own minds.

Ok.

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Prepared by Uma Sarason June 2009

Proofed by CF 30th April 2013

Format ok by DJ