

MN 53

The Disciple in Higher Training

Sekha Sutta

Dhamma Talk presented by

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Seattle Area, 26-Mar-07

BV: I always liked this sutta, because "higher training" in Pali, the word is abhidhamma. (Laughs) But this is not talking about the philosophy of abhidhamma, this is talking about the training, the higher training; the training that leads to nibbāna. So

MN: 1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Sakyans country at Kapilavatthu in Nigrodha's Park.

2. Now on that occasion a new assembly hall had recently been built for the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu and it had not yet been inhabited by any recluse or brahmin or human being at all. Then the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to him, they sat down at one side and said to him:

"Venerable sir, a new assembly hall has recently been built here for the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu and it has not yet been inhabited by any recluse or brahmin or human being at all.

BV: I want to stop here to let you know that they used to build assembly halls, and any time a group of ascetics came in to town, they would let them sleep in the assembly hall. Now this particular assembly hall, they hadn't started that yet, so this is completely brand new. What it boils down to is the roof is generally made of palm fronds, and it creates shade, and sometimes they put walls on

them, and sometimes they don't. That's just the way they did things back then. This was one of the fancier ones actually, and they did put walls on it, so you could stay out of the wind and that sort of thing. OK-

MN: Venerable sir, let the Blessed One be the first to use it. When the Blessed One has used it first, then the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu will use it afterwards. That will lead to their welfare and happiness for a long time. The Blessed One consented in silence.

BV: In other words, he shook his head: "Yes, OK".

MN: Then, when they saw that he had consented, they got up from their seats, and after paying homage to him, keeping him on their right, they went to the assembly hall. They covered it completely with coverings and prepared seats, and they put out a large water jug and hung up an oil-lamp. Then they went to the Blessed One, and after paying homage to him, they stood at one side and said:

"Venerable sir, the assembly hall has been covered completely with coverings and seats have been prepared, a large water jug has been put out and an oil-lamp hung up. Let the Blessed One come at his own convenience."

4. Then the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, he went with the Sangha of bhikkhus to the assembly hall.

BV: Why did he travel with his bowl and his robe? Because if he left it behind, somebody would take it. They didn't have any locks on their doors, so that's why he was always taking his bowl and robe with him.

MN: When he arrived, he washed his feet and then entered the hall and sat down by the central pillar facing the east. And the bhikkhus washed their feet and then entered the hall and sat down by the western wall facing the east, with the Blessed One before them. And the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu washed their feet and entered the hall and sat down by the eastern wall facing the west, with the Blessed One before them.

BV: They did some studies on the different directions, and when you're facing the East, and you're giving a Dhamma talk, you generally have a lot more energy. If you face the North, you don't have very much energy. If you sleep with your head towards the North, you generally have more sound sleep. If you have restlessness, if you start facing the North, then the restlessness won't be near as strong. If you have sloth and torpor, it's best to face the East, because that picks up your energy. There was a book by Patrick Flannigan, on the pyramids, actually, and he had devices that he could measure the flow of energies, and try to figure out why they put the pyramids the way they did, and in the position that they did. So that's where I got that information. But it does work, actually. I used to always travel with a compass, because I'm really lousy with directions, and if I was getting sleepy, then I would start facing the East, and my energy would pick up, or very restless, then I would face the North, then my mind would settle down. Don't believe anything I say, try it and see if it works for you. If it does, use it; if it doesn't, don't.

MN: 5. Then, when the Blessed One had instructed, urged, roused, and gladdened the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu with talk on the Dhamma for much of the night, he said to the venerable Ānanda: "Ānanda, speak to the Sakyans of Kapilavatthu about the disciple in higher training who has entered upon the way. My back is uncomfortable. I will rest it." "Yes, venerable sir," the venerable Ānanda replied. Then the Blessed One prepared his patchwork cloak folded in four and lay down on his right side in the lion's pose, with one foot overlapping the other, mindful and fully aware, after noting in his mind the time for rising.

BV: Now, this implies that he went to sleep, but actually, he didn't, you'll find out later. Now the information that you're getting here about, he is talking to Ānanda, says: "You start talking because my back is hurt." What this says is this is during the later part of the Buddha's life, because he started getting a lot of back pain, and he had to relieve the pain. It didn't make his mind shake. He didn't have any aversion to the pain, but this was real pain. I'll let you do with

meditation pain. How do you tell the difference between meditation pain and real pain? Meditation pain is pain that arises while you're sitting; it can be very intense. But, when you get up and start doing your walking, the pain disappears in five or ten seconds, so that you forget about it, very quickly. If it is real pain, then that pain will not go away, so you don't sit like that any more. You don't need to hurt your body while you're doing the meditation. So you find a posture that brings relief, if there is real pain, and that's what the Buddha did, because he didn't want to cripple himself. So this kind of paying attention to what your body is doing in the present moment, is an important aspect of the meditation.

Now I had some teachers when I was in Burma, that decided that I needed to sit for long periods of time. And you've heard this story a few times, I think. I got there the first day of the retreat. I walked in and the teacher said: "How's your meditation going?" I said: "Good, everything is fine, no problem." – "How long are you sitting?" I said: "For an hour, I walk for an hour." That was the standard practice. So he said: "Why don't you sit longer?" I said: "Fine." Came in the next day, he said: "How long did you sit? I said: "I sat for two hours, walked for an hour." – "Oh, good. Why don't you sit longer?" – "Ennnn, ok." So I came in the next day, and he said: "How long did you sit?" I said: "Three hours, walked for an hour. It was a killer. A lot of pain coming up." And he said: "Good. Why don't you sit longer?" And I'm thinking: "Well, ok, I can do that." So I came in the next day, hobbling, and he said: "How long did you sit?" I said: "I sat four hours. I walked for an hour. It was really hard. A lot of pain coming up." He said: "Did you move?" I said: "Yeah! I was moving all over the place! It was painful!" He said: "Well don't move" – "Ahh, ok." So I came back the next day. "How long did you sit?" – "I sat for four hours, I walked for an hour. I have tears running down my cheeks, and I'm not crying, it's just like you whack your head real good and tears come out. That's what it was like." And, he said: "Did you move?" And I said: "No, and I never want to experience that again. It was really hard." And he kind of just looked at me and shook his head and said: "Hm, why don't you sit longer?" And I said: "No, I'm not going to sit any longer. Four hours is plenty hard enough; I don't need to add any more to it." But eventually, I started

sitting for longer periods of time. Now this kind of meditation, was a forceful kind of meditation, and I wound up hurting my body, and developing blood clots in my legs. This was in nineteen ninety, and that's seventeen years ago, and I still got them. Thank you very much. That was the wrong way to do the practice, and I really do not recommend that. But when you're sitting in meditation, and your meditation is good, sit as long as it's good. After a period of time, you'll start developing the ability to sit a little longer, and a little longer, and sometimes your mind will come up and say: "Well, it's time to get up!" Don't get up right away. Sit for another five or ten minutes to see whether that's just your restless mind coming up, or maybe it really is time to get up. You have to wait and see. So you can extend your sitting a little bit, five or ten minutes at a time, sometimes you go through that restlessness and you might sit for another hour, or an hour and a half. And it's very comfortable to sit for three or four hours, when your meditation is good, and you actually learn a lot when you do that. But don't forcefully do it. That's the key. And this particular teacher, is always encouraging people to sit longer and longer, and about half of the people that get done with the retreat with him wind up with some kind of problem, from their knees down. So it's really not a recommended practice to do that. So

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MN: 6. Then the venerable Ānanda addressed Mahānāma the Sakyan thus:

"Mahānāma, here a noble disciple is possessed of virtue, guards the doors of his sense faculties, is moderate in eating, and devoted to wakefulness; he possesses seven good qualities; and he is one who obtains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and provide a pleasant abiding here and now.

BV: And remember: "jhāna" means level of understanding. You have certain experiences that happen while you're in each one of these jhānas, and we'll talk about that in a bit.

MN: { ... }

8. "And how does a noble disciple guard the doors of his sense faculties? On seeing a form with the eye, a noble disciple does not grasp at its signs and features.

BV: What does that mean: "...grasp at its signs and features."?

S: Think about?

BV: Think about. Yeah.. It means that you grab onto it and: "I really like this sight! And I want this sight to always stay there." Now you hear a lot of "I" in that? And want to contro, in that? And when that sight changes, as it will, then you start longing for that sight – a beautiful sunset, whatever, it doesn't really matter. That's what it's talking about when it's talking about grabbing at its signs and features.

MN: Since, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness

BV: I like it

MN: and grief

BV: I don't like it.

MN: might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty.

BV: Now what are we really undertaking the restraint of? The eye faculty? Or mind?

S: He's trying not ~~ seeing craving ~~.

BV: So he's releasing the craving that arises because the eye faculty hits something, and eye feeling arose. When eye feeling arises, if right then you relax, you are letting go, of the craving. And when you let go of the craving, your mind is very clear; there is no clinging;

there are no thoughts at that time. And your mind is not only clear, but it's pure, because there is no craving, and there is no identification with that craving: "I like that, I don't like that." You've let go of that. When you let go of that, your mind is pure. And you bring your pure mind back to your object of meditation. Now does this mean that you're going to try to stop sights from occurring? No. It means you're going to let go of the craving that arises, and the clinging. Now what happens when you don't let go of the craving? Then you start thinking about that sight, and how you like that, and: "Oh I remember when I saw another thing just like that. A few years ago, I went to this thing..." and all of a sudden you're five miles away, and a hundred miles away, and a thousand miles away, thinking about this and that, and that's the danger of getting caught by the signs and features. As you look at something, and relax into it, you can continue looking at it, and you actually wind up seeing it. It's not a distraction in thoughts about it. In other words, you're letting go of all of the concepts and ideas, and stories, and now actually you see a very beautiful flower, when you let go of that craving, and craving always manifests as tension and tightness in your mind and in your body. When you let go and relax that tightness that happens in your mind and in your body, then you're seeing that flower, as it truly is. The colors are more ~1910. The shape is more noticeable, because you don't have the distraction of thinking about, so you see it more fully. And this is the same way with all of the sense doors.

Yes?

S: So, you're saying staying in the present moment ~~~, present moment, present moment, present moment, right? instead of moving along and thinking about how it was or...

BV: Yes.

S: or..

BV: or

S: or

BV: or how it will be.

S: or how it will be.

BV: Yeah. Cheshire sure listens to the Dhamma talk.

S: Um hun.

BV: Yeah

S: So, is this...

BV: The colors get more vivid. They get more bright. The beauty of it becomes more real, because you're not caught by the craving and the clinging, and your habitual tendency of thinking about.

S: Is this also the same as the gratification, the danger and the escape, since the other, that he just used, the danger and just kind of ~s the gratification, that you hear in the other suttas?

BV: Yes, of course.

BV: So, one of the things, that awful lot of people that are practicing meditation will talk about is I say something to the effect of: "I like cheesecake." and they will immediately say: "Oh, you're attached.", and I'm not attached. If I eat that cheesecake, without any craving or clinging, or habitual tendency if I'm right there with it. There's nothing wrong with liking certain kinds of food.

There was a time during the time of the Buddha, that this one woman, she listened to the Buddha give some Dhamma talks, and she started meditating and she became an anāgāmi, which is the third stage of awakening, and she developed the skill of reading minds, and the monks that were at the monastery, they would have a craving for a certain kind of food, and she would fix that food for them. And she would bring that food in, and she said: "Well this one for you, and oh, this one for you...", and it was different food but

that was what they wanted, and their progress in the meditation was very good.

Now after the rains retreat, they went to the Buddha, and they started talking about this lady, and saying how nice it was and this monk got this idea: "Ah, this is great stuff! I'm going to go visit where she is, because I get any kind of food I want that way." So, he did. And then, right in the morning he would have a craving for a certain kind of food and she would fix that food for him. And after a little while, he started realizing: "If she can read my mind about food, she's reading my mind about everything. I don't want to be here!" So he went to the Buddha and he said: "Venerable sir, I think it's time for me to move on to another place." And the Buddha said: "No. This is the place that you absolutely have to be." And why was that? Because when he went back, he started guarding his mind door, and being more careful with the thoughts that he was indulging in, and his progress in the meditation became very good, and he became an arahat, because of that.

Now when I went to Asia, and for the first three years, being in Asia, I ate rice every day. Now for a meat and potato guy, eating rice was a tough thing, and I really started to get tired of it and then I decided that I was going to go to a certain teacher that happened to be in Australia. And I wound up staying with this teacher and somebody decided that they were going to take us to a pizza hut. Now, I lived on pizza. I thought it was great stuff; it was one of my favorite foods. So we go to the pizza hut, and I'm shoveling it down; I mean I'm really eating a lot of pizza. And the monk started laughing, because I was eating so much pizza, and I said: "Look, I haven't been around pizza for more than three years, I've been eating rice, and I'm real tired of rice, and this is the kind of food I'm used to eating, so I'm going to eat a lot of it this time." And they laughed and they said: "Oh, you're so attached." And I said: "Ok, you come to my country, where we don't eat rice, and you live there for three years, without eating rice, and now I'm going to give you a bowl of rice. How much rice are you going to eat?", and all of a sudden they stopped laughing.

There are certain foods that we get used to eating, and we have preferences for those foods. That doesn't mean that we're attached. I wasn't thinking about eating pizza when I was eating rice, but when the pizza appeared, I ate quite a bit. And they thought that that was a great thing the people that were offering the food. So the next week they took us to the Shakes' Pizza Parlor again, and this time I only ate just the regular amount, I didn't over eat at all. And they said: "Well, don't you like it as much as you did last time?" And I said: "I like it just as much, but I satisfied that desire. I don't need so much anymore."

And that happens a lot. U Silinanda, the last time he went to Burma – now he had been in America for years and years, eating American food. He went to Burma, and the Burmese food is very oily, and they overcook the vegetables and he ~ munched vegetables, and they always pour oil on the vegetables and everything else, I mean when I say oily, I mean it's that thick in oil, everything. So he comes back from Asia, and the first meal that he comes back, he's chowing down, I mean he's really eating a lot, because that's the food that he was used to eating, and there's nothing wrong with that. It doesn't mean that he was attached, it just means that he was starving himself in Burma and he came back, and he got rid of some of that starvation.

But especially in Asia, if you say: "I like this.", or "I like that.", the first thing that people will say is: "Oh, you're attached to that." And quite often, it doesn't have anything to do with attachment, not real attachment. Their understanding of what attachment is, is not very strong. They think, that, when you have a sight, if it is a pleasing sight, then you're supposed to close your eyes and not look at it, or else somebody will accuse you of being attached. But the attachment comes from the craving and the clinging. And letting go of that tension and tightness in your head, in you mind, and when you do that, then you're not pulled away, thinking, this and that. You're not caught up in the story about what you're looking at, any more. So your mind is pure. And looking at something, and really intently looking at it, watching your mind to see if there's any tension or tightness, and relaxing into it, is not a bad thing. It's a good thing.

Now, what you have to be careful of, is, getting so caught up, in, looking at one thing, that you lose everything else around you. If you lose everything else around you, if you don't hear anything, if you don't notice anything but what your focus is on, that is a kind of concentration. There has to be the relaxing in there. There has to be the awareness of that tension and tightness when it first starts to arise. You have to notice that there is tension when you're holding on and keeping one thing, in front of you. And, when you, develop your concentration to, a certain depth, it will stop or suppress the hindrances from arising.

Any time you stop or suppress, distraction, from taking your mind('s attention) out of the present moment, you're not seeing how the process of mind actually works. And you need to practice relaxing more, so you can see how your mind('s attention) jumps from this point over to that point. It didn't all of a sudden, just appear. There is a process that happens. Mind('s attention's) movement is continually going to one thing to another, and you have to be able to recognize how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. This is not only during the sitting practice; this is during the entire day.

So, when you see that you're over focusing, two things that you can do: relax; and laugh. When you laugh, it changes your perspective a little bit, and that lightens up your mind, so that you can see that you are focusing a little bit too heavily, and, relax again, and lightly start looking at things. But watch how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. That's where the real lesson is, in meditation. That's what meditation is for. It's not to develop this mind that's so extremely concentrated, that you forget to see anything else that arises.

An awful lot of people are caught in one-pointed concentration, and they will tell you that they are extremely relaxed. They're very tranquil and blissful, and they stay on one object of meditation, and it's true. They are. But they're not learning how mind's attention moves from one thing to another, because the force of the concentration stops mind('s attention) from moving around.

And there's all kinds of weird things that can happen when you get into your one-pointed concentration. You can get ringing in your ears. The Brahmins, and some of the yoga people call it the whoo experience, where they have this sound that's always in and they think: "This is really neat." That's always happening in their ear, they lose their balance very easily, they can get over-concentrated when they're doing simple mundane things, like driving a car, and, not seeing what else is around them. This is dangerous. You don't want to be caught like that; you want to have full awareness, and that's one of the definitions of the Buddha's meditation, is having full awareness of everything around you. Anyway...

MN: On hearing a sound with the ear...On smelling an odour with the nose...On tasting a flavour with the tongue...On touching a tangible with the body...on cognizing a mind-object with the mind, a noble disciple does not grasp at its signs and features. Since, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil unwholesome states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he practises the way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, he undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty. That is how a noble disciple guards the doors of his sense faculties.

9. "And how is a noble disciple moderate in eating?"

BV: Now, this sounds like kind of a weird thing, to be moderate in eating. During the time of the Buddha, they had famines and all kinds of nasty things, so when food was around, they would really pack it in, and eat a lot, afraid that, a famine might be coming. So, when you, overeat, what happens is, all that energy that you would normally be putting into watching how your mind's attention moves, goes to your stomach, and, that energy starts to zap your body energy and you feel, kind of lazy, after you eat a big meal. And this is because, of overfilling your stomach. Now when the Buddha talked about eating, there's a couple of things that I've noticed, is that people, that are overweight, they don't chew their food very much. They'll chew their food three or four times and swallow. When the Buddha ate, he chewed until everything in his mouth turned to liquid,

and then he would swallow. Now, what's the advantage of doing that? It helps your digestion immeasurably, because the saliva needs to get mixed up with your food. That's the first part of your digestion.

So, another thing that happens with people that are overweight, is they tend to eat very fast. In other words, in five or ten minutes they'll eat an entire plate of food. When you start slowing down, and chewing your food, then you're not going to eat a meal in five or ten minutes, it's going to take a half an hour or forty five minutes to eat your food. I had some friends that were doctors, and I was staying at a monastery and they said: "We would like to eat with you." And I said: "Fine, I'm going to eat with my bowl right here, you can eat over there." And, I had just started my second spoon of food, and they had cleaned their plates and were getting up and starting to walk away. And I couldn't believe that anybody could eat that fast. Now, doctors are supposed to be healers, right? They're not treating their own bodies very well, and this is one of the reasons why doctors don't live to be very old, because they spend their time, quote, healing other people, but they don't heal themselves. They don't take care of themselves.

So, when your stomach gets half full, then you stop eating, and you drink water, till your stomach is three quarters full. And then you're done. You leave the rest for air. When you do this, your body will stay very healthy, and you don't get the munchies so much, the cravings for this or that, because you're actually digesting the food more than you normally would when you eat quickly. So, this is one of the things that the Buddha noticed that was a real important aspect for people during his time, was to be moderate in eating, even till your stomach is half full, then drink water, and leave some room for air.

Now, a lot of people, they notice that I only eat one meal a day, and they think that that's really peculiar. How can you stay healthy when you eat one meal a day? I stay healthier eating one meal a day than I do when I have two meals a day.

When I was in Australia, I went there on the shortest day of the year. In Australia, it was June twenty first, or what ever it was. And we went out and we stayed at this place out in the forest, and it was cold. The frost would stay on the ground until, sometimes eleven o'clock in the morning. It was cold. I was eating one meal a day. Never caught a cold. Then it started warming up. I'd been there about five months or so, and I started going around and being around people that were eating breakfast, and before long, I was taking a little bit of this, or a little bite of that. And then I started eating a breakfast, and I immediately caught a cold. Then, I backed off and I went to one meal a day. The cold went away very quickly in one or two days, and I didn't catch a cold again.

So, I know that there's an awful lot of ideas about food out there, and how always: "Breakfast is your most important meal!" Well, one meal a day is fine. You don't need to eat more than that. But it does take getting used to. And you have to know how to eat. You have to know what is soft food, that digests very fast, and what is hard food, that kind of sticks to your ribs, so you don't wind up being hungry all the time. So, hard foods would be beans, sticky rice, things like that, some nuts, but if you're going to eat nuts, you want to soak your nuts in water at least twelve hours, before you eat them. Because of the enzymes that's in a lot of the nuts, aren't good for your body. OK
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MN: Here, reflecting wisely, a noble disciple takes food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for the sake of physical beauty and attractiveness, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for ending discomfort, and for assisting the holy life, considering: 'Thus I shall terminate old feelings without arousing new feelings and I shall be healthy and blameless and shall live in comfort.' That is how a noble disciple is moderate in eating.

BV: Some of the rules of the monks are kind of interesting, concerning food, because there were monks that, because you don't eat after twelve o'clock, they got this idea that they're going to eat their fill, and then throw up, and then eat more. And that turned into a not such a good idea, so that we were made rules not to eat that

way. And, one of the rules that I've always loved, is that you can't take a lump of rice bigger than a peacock egg, and put it in your mouth all at the same time, and chew it. That makes your cheeks bulge out when you're chewing. Peacock, you know the size of a peacock egg? Somebody told me, well, the size of a chicken egg is OK. Do you know how much food that is to put in your mouth? I mean, that's a huge amount of food.

SK: Maybe they were talking about a Bantam hen?

BV: I could be. But you know, and this is one of the sticking points with a lot of people. They say: "You know, we can't attain what people did during the time of the Buddha, because they were more 'pure' than we are today." And we have so many rules that are so disgusting with the things that the monks did at that time. They weren't any different than we are today.

The whole thing comes down to following the directions precisely and exactly as the Buddha laid them out. And that means the importance of RELAXING can't be overstated. Every time you relax, you let go of craving. Every time you let go of craving, you are purifying your mind, and that is the cessation of suffering.

So, relaxing, noticing when there is tension and tightness, being able to recognize it, release it, relax, smile. Important part of the meditation. Then you return your mind back to your object of meditation and repeat. Keep going. Continue on. That's what we call the six Rs. And that's exactly how to meditate according to the Buddha's teaching.

People's success with practicing the 6R's is just one step short of phenomenal. I mean it's really good. Understanding how mind's attention moves becomes much easier, to see, and to notice how this process works of mind's attention moving from one thing to another. And that's the directive that the Buddha gave us. He gave us this directive to be able to watch how mind's attention moves from one thing to another; how it tightens down around some things; how emotions get carried away; and how you can let those unwholesome states go.

MN: 10. "And how is a noble disciple devoted to wakefulness? Here, during the day, while walking back and forth and sitting, a noble disciple purifies his mind of obstructive states. In the first watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, he purifies his mind of obstructive states. In the middle watch of the night he lies down on the right side in the lion's pose with one foot overlapping the other, mindful and fully aware, after noting in his mind the time for rising. After rising, in the third watch of the night, while walking back and forth and sitting, he purifies his mind of obstructive states. That is how a noble disciple is devoted to wakefulness.

BV: When I first became a monk, I was told flat out: "You don't need to meditate right now. You need to learn what being a monk is all about. Watch what happens with your mind while you're walking back and forth instead. Watch. And when somebody that's a layman for forty years, takes on the monk's robes, they still have forty years worth of old habitual tendencies with their mind, and you get a chance to watch that.

Now, the first watch of the night is from seven o'clock until eleven, in the evening. The second watch of the night, that you sleep is from eleven o'clock until three o'clock. And the third watch of the night is from three o'clock until seven o'clock in the morning. So they recommended that you only get four hours sleep, and that's difficult, at least, when you first take on the robes and you start doing that kind of practice. You walk around being tired for awhile, and I didn't feel that that was necessarily a good thing. But I did it anyway.

But being devoted to wakefulness means watching how your old habitual tendencies come up, your dislikes, your judgments, your ideas, how you make stories up about other people that you see, all of this kind of stuff comes up and you get a chance to watch how that happened.

So –

MN: 11. "And how does a noble disciple possess seven good qualities? Here a noble disciple has faith; he places his faith in the Tathāgata's enlightenment thus: 'The Blessed One is accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, blessed.'

12. "He has shame; he is ashamed of misconduct in body, speech, and mind, ashamed of engaging in evil unwholesome deeds.

13. "He has fear of wrongdoing; he is afraid of misconduct in body, speech, and mind, afraid of engaging in evil unwholesome deeds.

14. "He has learned much, remembers what he has learned, and consolidates what he has learned. Such teachings as are good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, With the right meaning and phrasing, and affirm a holy life that is utterly perfect and pure—such teachings as these he has learned much of, remembered, recited verbally, investigated with the mind and penetrated well by view.

BV: Now when, during the time of the Buddha, he was always talking about perfecting your body, speech, and mind as much as possible. And being ashamed of doing things that it's considered misconduct is a way of developing your mind, so you won't be that any more. Learning how to be aware. And when people first ordain, they have to learn all of these things. And it's not an easy task. When you ordain, it's like, before you were ordained, you had a lot of padding around you, and you didn't have a lot of real strong awareness. But when you were ordained, it's like all that padding is taken away and the slightest little touch or misconduct, causes pain. So, you become more and more aware of how that process works. So you have fear of wrongdoing. You don't want to make mistakes because you understand that the immediate karma will come back and pinch you a little bit and let you know that that was not a good thing to happen Now, as far as: "He has learned much, remembers what he has learned and consolidates what he has learned," that is for the meditators. And consolidating what we learned is taking the 6R's and

practicing the 6R's. That is following the Eight-Fold Path completely. But that's consolidating it. It's making it simple, so that you can do that. During the time of the Buddha, there were monks that didn't want to do anything like that. They just wanted to memorize all of the discourses that the Buddha gave. So they would sit around all day memorizing and reciting out loud. Now this is talking about both kinds of monks in this particular part of the sutta.

MN: 15. "He is energetic in abandoning unwholesome states and in undertaking wholesome states; he is steadfast, firm in striving, not remiss in developing wholesome states.

BV: The more fun you have with your meditation, and the more you smile into things, and the more interest you put into developing your smile and your uplifted mind, the easier the meditation becomes. Now this is what it's talking about is: "He is energetic in abandoning unwholesome states." Every time you see your mind starting to get heavy, about anything, then that is considered an unwholesome state. Why? Because you're starting to identify with those thoughts and feelings and taking them personally. When you let go of that heaviness of mind and you start relaxing and smiling, your mind becomes uplifted, and that is wholesome. The more you develop your wholesome mind, that uplifted mind, that sense of fun, in life, and relaxing, the more pure your mind becomes. It works! And it works quite well.

MN: 16. "He has mindfulness; he possesses the highest mindfulness and skill; he recalls and recollects what was done long ago and spoken long ago.

BV: I don't understand why they are talking about mindfulness in this way. They're talking about, not mindfulness, they're talking about memory, and how every morning we read some of the verses of the Dhammapada, about practicing joy. And the more you practice joy, the more you remember doing it, the more joyful you become. That's what this is talking about—remembering uplifting, wholesome things from the past, but not dwelling on them and identifying with them. Just remembering that feeling, so you can have that feeling come up.

The more you have this happy feeling, this uplifted feeling, and give that feeling away, the more relief you have in your practice.

MN: { ...}

18. "And how is a noble disciple one who obtains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and provide a pleasant abiding here and now? Here, quite secluded from sensual pleasures,

BV: You remember what you do with sensual pleasures; you allow them to be, without getting involved with them. Now, when you are truly secluded from sensual pleasures, while you're sitting in meditation, your eyes are closed. Ok, when we are quite secluded from sensual pleasures, that means when you're sitting in meditation, you close your eyes and the sensual pleasure of seeing is very secluded at that time, because you can't see anything.

When there is a distracting sound—you hear people talking, there might be music, whatever—as soon as you notice that your mind goes to that distraction, you let that distraction go, relax, and come back to your object of meditation. That is how you become secluded from the sensual pleasure of hearing. And it's the same with all of the sense doors.

Now being

MN: secluded from unwholesome states,

BV: That means that, whenever a hindrance arises, you see how it arises, you let it be, you relax, you come back to your object of meditation. After you do that, that hindrance becomes weaker and weaker, until it disappears. When that disappears, you have a sense of relief and then you have a lot of joy arising. When you have this kind of joy, then no more hindrances at that time will arise.

MN: a noble disciple enters upon and abides in the first jhāna...

BV: You have joy arising, which is an uplifted joy, it's very light in your mind, light in your body. When joy arises, that can turn into a

distraction, if you try to hold on to it. So you allow that feeling to be there, relax, and come back to your object of meditation. After a period of time, the joy will fade away, and you start to feel very strong tranquility of mind, very peaceful, very calm, and you feel very comfortable in both mind and body. This is what the Buddha called happiness. Your mind stays with your object of meditation without any distractions in it. It's very composed, very collected on your object of meditation.

MN: With the stilling of applied and sustained thought, he enters upon and abides in the second jhāna...

BV: When you get into the second jhana, you have a lot of self-confidence; the joy that arises is much stronger; you feel much lighter in your mind, much lighter in your body. You will be smiling. When the joy fades away, tranquility is very strong, and then you begin to feel really very comfortable in your mind and in your body. And your mind is very, very composed; it's very much at ease. This is where, when you're practicing Loving-Kindness, you stop making a wish verbally in your mind. If you continue making a wish, you will get a headache. When you stop and let go and relax, then this is called the state of Noble Silence, where you don't verbalize a wish any more.

These are all states that occur, while you're in the second jhana.

Now,

MN: With the fading away as well of rapture...he enters upon and abides in the third jhāna...

BV: When you get into the third jhana, the joy is too coarse a feeling now. You still have happiness arising and this is a very comfortable feeling in your mind and in your body, very comfortable. The tranquility you have is very strong at this time. You have equanimity. You start to get very strong balance of mind, but you have full awareness. As you start to let go of the tension and tightness in your mind, you start to lose sensation in your body, because that's what

you're feeling, this tension and tightness. So, you'll be sitting and all of a sudden you don't feel your legs or you don't feel your arms or hands or shoulder, whatever.

But whenever there is contact, someone come up and they touch you, you would feel that. That's how you still have full awareness, because there is contact.

MN: With the abandoning of pleasure and pain...he enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

BV: Once you get to the fourth jhana, you don't have any feeling really arising in your body at all, because you've let go of all tension in your head, in your mind. And if there is contact, you will know that you are being touched. But you have such strong equanimity that it doesn't make your mind shake. It's just very strong balance.

MN: That is how a noble disciple is one who obtains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and provide a pleasant abiding here and now.

19. "When a noble disciple has thus become one who is possessed of virtue, who guards the doors of his sense faculties, who is moderate in eating, who is devoted to wakefulness, who possesses seven good qualities, who obtains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and provide a pleasant abiding here and now, he is called one in higher training who has entered upon the way. His eggs are unspoiled; he is capable of breaking out, capable of enlightenment, capable of attaining the supreme security from bondage.

"Suppose there were a hen with eight or ten or twelve eggs, which she had covered, incubated, and nurtured properly. Even though she did not wish: 'Oh, that my chicks might pierce their shells with the points of their claws and beaks and hatch out safely!' yet the chicks are capable of piercing their shells with the points of their claws and beaks and hatching out safely. So too, when a noble disciple has thus

become one who is possessed of virtue; he is called one in higher training who has entered upon the way. His eggs are unspoiled; he is capable of breaking out, capable of enlightenment, capable of attaining the supreme security from bondage.

20. "Based upon that same supreme mindfulness whose purity is due to equanimity, this noble disciple recollects his manifold past lives,

BV: Then, all of this is ascribed to the fourth jhana. You have such strong balance of mind.

When you direct your mind to the knowledge of the recollection of past lifetimes, you have to start...I won't show you how to do this until you get to the fourth jhana, because you need that equanimity, because you will remember past lifetimes. It's learning how to develop that skill of memory. But there are some things that we've done in past lifetimes that aren't very nice. And there're some things that are real scary that have happened to us in our past lifetimes, and unless you have that strong equanimity, it's very dangerous to remember past lifetimes. That is why when we talk about some people getting hypnotized and they remember so many past lifetimes and that kind of thing, unless that person is very skilled, it is dangerous. It's not a toy to be played with.

MN : He recollects his manifold past lives, that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty births, forty births, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, many aeons of world-contraction, many aeons of world-expansion, many aeons of world-contraction and expansion: 'There I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared here.' Thus with their aspects and particulars he recollects his manifold past lives. This is his first breaking out like that of the hen's chicks from their shells.

21. "Based upon that same supreme mindfulness whose purity is due to equanimity, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, this noble disciple sees beings passing away and reappearing,

"When his concentrated mind is thus purified, bright, unblemished, rid of imperfection, malleable, wieldy, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs it to knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings.

BV: What happens is, this actually happens naturally, by itself. You start remembering past lifetimes. And as you start remembering more and more past lifetimes, you start really understanding how karma works. And there's no doubt in your mind that karma is real. But you start gaining more and more equanimity with all of these past actions. And what happens is, you will go deeper in your meditation and when you go deeper in your meditation, you will see... Basically, what happens is, you start visiting other realms, heavenly realms, hell realms, ghost realms, all of the animal realms, all these kinds of different places. And you'll see how people are born there, with some of their actions that got them there, how long they lived, and they pass away. And you really start to get a feel of how everything is impermanent, and the wheel of Saṃsāra is continually going around and around.

repeats:(he directs it to knowledge of the passing away and reappearance of beings.)

MN: With the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate. He understands how beings pass on according to their actions thus: "These worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, revilers of noble ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell; but these worthy beings who were well conducted in body, speech, and mind, not revilers of noble ones, right in their views, giving effect to

right view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a good destination, even in the heavenly world.' Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings pass on according to their actions. {...}

22. "Based upon that same supreme mindfulness whose purity is due to equanimity, by realising for himself with direct knowledge, this noble disciple here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints. This is his third breaking out like that of the hen's chicks from their shells.

BV: What happens is, after a period of time you will be experiencing the Cessation of Perception and Feeling. Mind just clicks off for a little bit. When the perception and feeling arises again, you will see the links of Dependent Origination.

And, that's what this means, when it says, "deliverance by wisdom." Every time the word wisdom is used in the suttas, it is talking about seeing Dependent Origination and how Dependent Origination works.

So, what you see is and what you gain is deep understanding of how this process arises and passes away. And you see very clearly for yourself that this is an impersonal process. And this impersonal process means that there's only Cause and Effect relationships that are continually arising and passing away, arising and passing away. It's birth, death, birth, death, birth, death.

When you see this and you actually understand it, then there is the experience of Nibbāna that occurs.

So, what we just went through is, it's called The Tivijja. Ti means Three; Vijja means knowledges or wisdoms. And this is the way that the Buddha experienced Nibbāna. He got to the fourth jhana and then he started remembering his past lifetimes. Then he saw the arising and passing away of beings, and then he had the experience of the Cessation of Perception and Feeling and seeing Dependent Origination.

MN: 23. "When a noble disciple is possessed of virtue, that pertains to his conduct. When he guards the doors of his sense faculties, that pertains to his conduct. When he is moderate in eating, that pertains to his conduct. When he is devoted to wakefulness, that pertains to his conduct. When he possesses seven good qualities, that pertains to his conduct. When he is one who obtains at will, without trouble or difficulty, the four jhānas that constitute the higher mind and provide a pleasant abiding here and now, that pertains to his conduct.

24. "When he recollects his manifold past lives...with their aspects and particulars, that pertains to his true knowledge. When, with the divine eye...he sees beings passing away and reappearing and understands how beings pass on according to their actions, that pertains to his true knowledge. When, by realising for himself with direct knowledge, he here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints, that pertains to his true knowledge.

25. "This noble disciple is thus said to be perfect in true knowledge, perfect in conduct, perfect in true knowledge and conduct. And this stanza was uttered by the Brahmā Sanankumāra:

'The noble clan is held to be

The best of people as to lineage;

But best of gods and humans is one

Perfect in true knowledge and conduct.'

"Now that stanza was well sung by the Brahmā Sanankumāra, not ill sung; it was well spoken, not ill spoken; it has a meaning, and is not meaningless; and it was approved by the Blessed One.

26. Then the Blessed One rose and addressed the venerable Ānanda thus: "Good, good, Ānanda! It is good that you have spoken to the

Sakyans of Kapilavatthu about the disciple in higher training who has entered upon the way.

That is what the venerable Ānanda said. The Teacher approved. The Sakyans of Kapilavatthu were satisfied and delighted in the venerable Ānanda's words.

BV: So. That turned into a lot longer sutta than I thought it would.

The true knowledges that the Buddha experienced on the night of his enlightenment, were real eye openers for him. But he had already experienced seeing past lifetimes before, and he had already experienced seeing the arising and passing away of beings before. And he did understand Dependent Origination, but he had never realized those knowledges, and on the night of his enlightenment, he did realize those. He saw that beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is real, this is the way this works.

Right before he became enlightened, he was attacked by a lot of hindrances, big time. He had to work with those hindrances. By his not getting caught up in the hindrances and allowing them to be and relaxing into them and coming back to his object of meditation, those hindrances faded away. And because those hindrances were there and that's where his false idea in a self was, when he let those go, it was such a sense of relief, that the experience of, the cessation of all suffering, occurred. The hindrances are a very necessary part of the practice.

You get tired of hearing me say that, don't you? They are very necessary because they are showing you where your attachment is. They're showing you where your old habitual tendencies always take you. And as you become more familiar with how mind's attention goes to those hindrances, and how they arise, you are teaching yourself over and over again how the process of Dependent Origination actually does work. A very necessary part of the practice.

So, anything else?

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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U.S.A, www.wisdompubs.org**

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