

MN 95 With Canki - Canki Sutta

At the Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center

A Dhamma talk by Bhante Vimalaramsi 05-Oct-06

BV: I think you will find this very interesting.

MN:

1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was wandering in the Kosalan country with a large Sangha of monks, and eventually he arrived at a Kosalan Brahmin village named Opasāda. There the Blessed One stayed in the Gods' Grove, the Sāla-tree Grove to the north of Opasāda.

2. Now on that occasion the brahmin Cankī was ruling over Opasāda, a crown property abounding in living beings, rich in grasslands, woodlands, waterways, grain, a royal endowment, a sacred grant given to him by King Pasenadi of Kosala.

BV: They had a lot of divisions. If somebody did something that made the ruler of an entire area, made him happy, then he would give him this area or that area to take care of, with this many villages, and this many towns, and this many cities in it. So he was one of those kind of people.

MN:

3.{...}

4. Then the brahmin householders of Opasāda set forth from Opasāda in groups and bands and headed northwards to the Gods' Grove, the Sāla-tree Grove.

5. Now on that occasion the brahmin Cankī had retired to the upper storey of his palace for his midday rest. Then he saw the brahmin householders of Opasāda setting forth from Opasāda in groups and bands and heading northwards to the Gods' Grove, the Sāla-tree Grove. When he saw them, he asked his minister: "Good minister, why are the brahmin householders of Opasāda setting forth from Opasāda in groups and bands and heading northwards to the Gods' Grove, the Sāla-tree Grove?"

6. "Sir, there is the recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyans who went forth from a Sakyan clan, who has been wandering in the Kosalan country. They are going to see that Master Gotama."

"Then, good minister, go to the brahmin householders of Opasāda and tell them: 'Sirs, the brahmin Cankī says this: "Please wait, sirs. The brahmin Cankī will also go to see the recluse Gotama."'"

"Yes, sir," the minister replied, and he went to the brahmin householders of Opasāda and gave them the message.

7. Now on that occasion five hundred brahmins from various states were staying at Opasāda for some business or other. They heard: "The brahmin Cankī, it is said, is going to see the recluse Gotama." Then they went to the brahmin Cankī and asked him: "Sir, is it true that you are going to see the recluse Gotama?"

"So it is, sirs. I am going to see the recluse Gotama."

8. "Sir, do not go to see the recluse Gotama. It is not proper, Master Cankī, for you to go to see the recluse Gotama; rather, it is proper for the recluse Gotama to come to see you. For you, sir, are well born on both sides, of pure maternal and paternal descent seven generations back, unassailable and impeccable in respect of birth. Since that is so, Master Cankī, it is not proper for you to go to see the recluse Gotama; rather, it is proper for the recluse Gotama to come to see you. You, sir, are rich, with great wealth and great possessions. You, sir, are a master of the Three Vedas with their vocabularies, liturgy, phonology, and etymology, and the histories as a fifth; skilled in philology and grammar, you are fully versed in natural philosophy and in the marks of a Great Man. You, sir, are handsome, comely, and graceful, possessing supreme beauty of complexion, with sublime beauty and sublime presence, remarkable to behold. You, sir, are virtuous, mature in virtue, possessing mature virtue. You, sir, are a good speaker with a good delivery; you speak words that are courteous, distinct, flawless, and communicate the meaning. You, sir, teach the teachers of many, and you teach the recitation of the hymns to three hundred brahmin students. You, sir, are honoured, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by King Pasenadi of Kosala. You, sir, are honoured, respected, revered, venerated, and esteemed by the brahmin Pokkharasati. You, sir, rule over Opasāda, a crown property abounding in living beings... a sacred grant given to you by King Pasenadi of Kosala. Since this is so, Master Cankī, it is not proper for you to go to see the recluse Gotama; rather, it is proper for the recluse Gotama to come to see you."

9. When this was said, the brahmin Cankī told those brahmins: "Now, sirs, hear from me why it is proper for me to go to see Master Gotama, and why it is not proper for Master Gotama to come to see me. Sirs, the recluse Gotama is well born on both sides, of pure maternal and paternal descent seven generations back, unassailable and impeccable in respect of birth. Since this is so, sirs, it is not proper for Master Gotama to come to see me; rather, it is proper for me to go to see Master Gotama. Sirs, the recluse Gotama went forth abandoning much gold and

bullion stored away in vaults and depositories. Sirs, the recluse Gotama went forth from the home life into homelessness while still young, a black-haired young man endowed with the blessing of youth, in the prime of life. Sirs, the recluse Gotama shaved off his hair and beard, put on the yellow robe, and went forth from the home life into homelessness though his mother and father wished otherwise and wept with tearful faces. Sirs, the recluse Gotama is handsome, comely, and graceful, possessing supreme beauty of complexion, with sublime beauty and sublime presence, remarkable to behold. Sirs, the recluse Gotama is virtuous, with noble virtue, with wholesome virtue, possessing wholesome virtue. Sirs, the recluse Gotama is a good speaker with a good delivery; he speaks words that are courteous, distinct, flawless, and communicate the meaning. Sirs, the recluse Gotama is a teacher of the teachers of many. Sirs, the recluse Gotama is free from sensual lust and without personal vanity. Sirs, the recluse Gotama holds the doctrine of the moral efficacy of action, the doctrine of the moral efficacy of deeds; he does not seek any harm for the line of brahmins. Sirs, the recluse Gotama went forth from an aristocratic family, from one of the original noble families. Sirs, the recluse Gotama went forth from a rich family, from a family of great wealth and great possessions. Sirs, people come from remote kingdoms and remote districts to question the recluse Gotama. Sirs, many thousands of deities have gone for refuge for life to the recluse Gotama. Sirs, a good report of the recluse Gotama has been spread to this effect: That 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.' Sirs, the recluse Gotama possesses the thirty-two marks of a Great Man. Sirs, King Seniya Bimbisara of Magadha and his wife and children have gone for refuge for life to the recluse Gotama. Sirs, King Pasenadi of Kosala and his wife and children have gone for refuge for life to the recluse Gotama. Sirs, the brahmin Pokkharasati and his wife and children have gone for refuge for life to the recluse Gotama. Sirs, the recluse Gotama has arrived at Opasāda and is living at Opasāda in the Gods' Grove, the Sāla-tree Grove to the north of Opasāda. Now any recluses or brahmins that come to our town are our guests, and guests should be honoured, respected, revered, and venerated by us. Since the recluse Gotama has arrived at Opasāda, he is our guest, and as our guest should be honoured, respected, revered, and venerated by us. Since this is so, sirs, it is not proper for Master Gotama to come to see me; rather, it is proper for me to go to see Master Gotama.

"Sirs, this much is the praise of Master Gotama that I have learned, but the praise of Master Gotama is not limited to that for the praise of Master Gotama is immeasurable. Since Master Gotama possesses each one of these factors, it is not proper for him to come to see me; rather, it is proper for me to go to see Master Gotama. Therefore, sirs, let all of us go to see the recluse Gotama."

10. Then the brahmin Cankī, together with a large company of brahmins, went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side.

11. Now on that occasion the Blessed One was seated finishing some amiable talk with some very senior brahmins. At the time, sitting in the assembly, was a brahmin student named Kāpaṭhika. Young, shaven-headed, sixteen years old, he was a master of the Three Vedas with their vocabularies, liturgy, phonology, and etymology, and the histories as a fifth; skilled in philology and grammar, he was fully versed in natural philosophy and in the marks of a Great Man. While the very senior brahmins were conversing with the Blessed One, he often broke in and interrupted their talk. Then the Blessed One rebuked the brahmin student Kāpaṭhika thus: "Let not the venerable Bhāradvāja break in and interrupt the talk of the very senior brahmins while they are conversing. Let the venerable Bhāradvāja wait until the talk is finished."

When this was said, the brahmin Cankī said to the Blessed One: "Let not Master Gotama rebuke the brahmin student Kāpaṭhika. The brahmin student Kāpaṭhika is a clansman, he is very learned, he has a good delivery, he is wise; he is capable of taking part in this discussion with Master Gotama."

12. Then the Blessed One thought: "Surely, since the brahmins honour him thus, the brahmin student Kāpaṭhika must be accomplished in the scriptures of the Three Vedas."

Then the brahmin student Kāpaṭhika thought: "When the recluse Gotama catches my eye, I shall ask him a question."

Then, knowing with his own mind the thought in the brahmin student Kāpaṭhika's mind, the Blessed One turned his eye towards him. Then the brahmin student Kāpaṭhika thought: "The recluse Gotama has turned towards me. Suppose I ask him a question." Then he said to the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, in regard to the ancient brahmanic hymns that have come down through oral transmission and in the scriptural collections, the brahmins come to the definite conclusion: 'Only this is true, anything else is wrong.' What does Master Gotama say about this?"

13. "How then, Bhāradvāja, among the brahmins is there even a single brahmin who says thus: 'I know this, I see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong?'"—"No, Master Gotama."

"How then, Bhāradvāja, among the brahmins is there even a single teacher or a single teacher's teacher back to the seventh generation of teachers who says thus: 'I know this, I see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong?'"—"No, Master Gotama."

“How then, Bhāradvāja, the ancient brahmin seers, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns, whose ancient hymns that were formerly chanted, uttered, and compiled, the brahmins nowadays still chant and repeat, repeating what was spoken and reciting what was recited - that is, Atthaka, Vamaka, Vamadeva, Vessamitta, Yamataggi, Angirasa, Bhāradvāja, Vasettha, Kassapa, and Bhagu - did even these ancient brahmin seers say thus: ‘We know this, we see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong?’— “No, Master Gotama.”

“So, Bhāradvāja, it seems that among the brahmins there is not even a single brahmin who says thus: ‘I know this, I see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ And among the brahmins there is not even a single teacher or a single teacher’s teacher back to the seventh generation of teachers, who says thus: ‘I know this, I see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ And the ancient brahmin seers, the creators of the hymns, the composers of the hymns... even these ancient brahmin seers did not say thus: ‘We know this, we see this: only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ Suppose there were a file of blind men each in touch with the next: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. So too, Bhāradvāja, in regard to their statement the brahmins seem to be like a file of blind men: the first one does not see, the middle one does not see, and the last one does not see. What do you think, Bhāradvāja, that being so, does not the faith of the brahmins turn out to be groundless?”

14. “The brahmins honour this not only out of faith, Master Gotama. They also honour it as oral tradition.”

“Bhāradvāja, first you took your stand on faith, now you speak of oral tradition. There are five things, Bhāradvāja, that may turn out in two different ways here and now. What five? Faith, approval, oral tradition, reasoned cogitation, and reflective acceptance of a view. These five things may turn out in two different ways here and now. Now something may be fully accepted out of faith, yet it may be empty, hollow, and false; but something else may not be fully accepted out of faith, yet it may be factual, true, and unmistakable. Again, something may be fully approved of... well transmitted... well cogitated... well reflected upon, yet it may be empty, hollow, and false; but something else may not be well reflected upon, yet it may be factual, true, and unmistakable. [Under these conditions] it is not proper for a wise man who preserves truth to come to the definite conclusion: ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong.’”

15. “But, Master Gotama, in what way is there the preservation of truth? How does one preserve truth? We ask Master Gotama about the preservation of truth.”

“If a person has faith, Bhāradvāja, he preserves truth when he says: ‘My faith is thus’; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the preservation of truth;

in this way he preserves truth; in this way we describe the preservation of truth. But as yet there is no discovery of truth.

“If a person approves of something... if he receives an oral tradition... if he [reaches a conclusion based on] reasoned cogitation... if he gains a reflective acceptance of a view, he preserves truth when he says: ‘My reflective acceptance of a view is thus’; but he does not yet come to the definite conclusion: ‘Only this is true, anything else is wrong.’ In this way too, Bhāradvāja, there is the preservation of truth; in this way he preserves truth; in this way we describe the preservation of truth. But as yet there is no discovery of truth.”

16. “In that way, Master Gotama, there is the preservation of truth; in that way one preserves truth; in that way we recognise the preservation of truth. But in what way, Master Gotama, is there the discovery of truth? In what way does one discover truth? We ask Master Gotama about the discovery of truth.”

17. “Here, Bhāradvāja, a monk may be living in dependence on some village or town. Then a householder or a householder’s son goes to him and investigates him in regard to three kinds of states: in regard to states based on greed, in regard to states based on hate, and in regard to states based on delusion: ‘Are there in this venerable one any states based on greed such that, with his mind obsessed by those states, while not knowing he might say, “I know,” or while not seeing he might say, “I see,” or he might urge others to act in a way that would lead to their harm and suffering for a long time?’ As he investigates him he comes to know: ‘There are no such states based on greed in this venerable one. The bodily behaviour and the verbal behaviour of this venerable one are not those of one affected by greed. And the Dhamma that this venerable one teaches is profound, hard to see and hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, unattainable by mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise. This Dhamma cannot easily be taught by one affected by greed.’

18. “When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on greed, he next investigates him in regard to states based on hate: ‘Are there in this venerable one any states based on hate such that, with his mind obsessed by those states... he might urge others to act in a way that would lead to their harm and suffering for a long time?’ As he investigates him, he comes to know: ‘There are no such states based on hate in this venerable one. The bodily behaviour and the verbal behaviour of this venerable one are not those of one affected by hate. And the Dhamma that this venerable one teaches is profound... to be experienced by the wise. This Dhamma cannot easily be taught by one affected by hate.’

19. “When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on hate, he next investigates him in regard to states based on delusion: ‘Are

there in this venerable one any states based on delusion such that, with his mind obsessed by those states... he might urge others to act in a way that would lead to their harm and suffering for a long time?'

BV: What is delusion? ... What is delusion? Anybody?

S: Ignorance.

BV: Of what?

S: The Truth.

BV: And what is the Truth?

S: ??

BV: Delusion is the belief that thoughts and feelings are yours personally. It's when you have a deluded mind, that means you have **atta** (idea of self). When you have an undeluded mind it means **anatta**. So that'll help make this a little bit clearer.

MN:

As he investigates him, he comes to know: There are no such states based on delusion in this venerable one. The bodily behaviour and the verbal behaviour of this venerable one are not those of one affected by delusion. And the Dhamma that this venerable one teaches is profound... to be experienced by the wise.

BV: Now what we're talking about here, is the seeing of Dependent Origination. That's what he's really talking about when he says you see... understood by and experienced by the wise. Wisdom, every time it's mentioned in the suttas, is talking about Dependent Origination.

MN:

This Dhamma cannot easily be taught by one affected by delusion.'

BV: Now in some traditions, they call these the three poisons. And everybody knows what greed is, or lust, and hatred is, but almost nobody understands what delusion is. You should hear some of the answers I get when I ask people what delusion is. So, try to keep that in mind, that every time you *relax*, you're letting go of delusion. Because right after you relax, there's a clear space that has very good awareness in it, but there's no self identifying with it, it's just this pure awareness.

S: So what is clinging?

BV: Clinging are all of the thoughts about whatever your craving is on. It's a feeling, at one of the sense doors, right? In order to see, you have good working eye, color and form; meeting the three is called contact. Now this is directly Dependent Origination. With contact as condition, feeling arises. With feeling as condition, craving arises. With craving as condition, clinging arises. This is your thoughts, your opinions, your imaginations, your story, your concepts. Basically your "thought-y" mind. And when you take an opinion or you take a concept, and you start saying "This is right! This is what I believe!", now you're attaching a lot of clinging onto that. And like it says here, maybe it's right and maybe it's not, it just depends. But when you see something without the clinging, and without the craving, you're seeing it with such a pure mind -- you're seeing it with an arahat's mind.

S: So you don't necessarily have to see each one of those things, because they may not be there.

BV: Well, when you let go of the craving, the clinging doesn't arise, the habitual tendency doesn't arise, and the rest of the Dependent Origination, the birth and the sorrow and lamentation and all that stuff doesn't arise either. So that's one of the reasons why craving is such a major thing that it's talked about in the suttas.

S: So craving is the identification?

BV: It's the start of the identification process. Now when I'm telling you to look and see what happens in between the feeling and the craving, I'm telling you to look at craving even more closely. Because this is subtle stuff. And it always is the start of "I am that. I like that. I don't like that." When it gets into the clinging, that's when the big "Oh Yeah" and the attachment to the concepts and imaginations and ideas and story about, and taking it personally, and then your habitual tendency - which another monk in San Diego doesn't like that I use "habitual tendency" for bhava, because that's what it is. I had a major discussion with U Silananda about this and we agreed. The habitual tendency is your justification of your clinging, and you're holding onto that view. It's the thing that really grabs onto that view: "I'm right, you're wrong." And when you let go of craving, in its subtlest form, your mind is so pure, none of that other stuff comes into being. This is why craving is considered to be the weak link in Dependent Origination. Because there's no identification unless there is craving. Now, you have this pure awareness that you're able to see things.

S: They always talk about if you see impermanence, suffering and no self you will attain enlightenment. What about those?

BV: You see anicca, dukkha, anatta automatically. Because you're seeing, when you see Dependent Origination, you're seeing the arising and passing away of things. And you're seeing the cause and effect of these things. You're seeing that when you let go of the craving, there is no dukkha after that. But as long as there's even the

littlest flash of craving, there is dukkha, and that is the identification with it. That is the “I”-dentification with it! And, that also very much clouds your experience.

For example, somebody calls me up on the phone and they tell me something that I don’t like to hear and all of a sudden there’s anger coming up. And that means that your habitual tendency of the way you look at the world is taking you completely away from the present moment. And it causes all kinds of pain and suffering to arise.

Because I put a stress on **smiling**, that helps your mind to be light enough to be able to catch these other things, so you stop identifying with them. You know “It’s just this feeling, it’s a painful feeling.” Yeah, ok, so it’s painful. So what? It’s allowing the feeling to be, without reacting to it.

S: So if you keep going with the smiling, you’re keeping...

BV: You’re keeping your mind open and light.

SK: Before this when I first met Bhante I was still working for a couple of CEO’s, and he said, yes, you can use the mirror by the telephone...the mirror has to sit by the telephone. You’re not allowed to handle any situations that come in on the telephone without the mirror being there. Watch yourself while you are talking in the mirror. Are you smiling? Are you frowning?

SK: I had to sit one up there, you know, it’s really funny. I kept forgetting to look at it...

BV: It’s hard to be mad when you’re smiling!

MN:

20. “When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on delusion, then he places faith in him; filled with faith he visits him and pays respect to him; having paid respect to him, he gives ear; when he gives ear, he hears the Dhamma; having heard the Dhamma, he memorises it and examines the meaning of the teachings he has memorised; when he examines their meaning, he gains a reflective acceptance of those teachings; when he has gained a reflective acceptance of those teachings, *enthusiasm* (zeal) springs up; when enthusiasm has sprung up, he applies his will; having applied his will, he scrutinises; having scrutinised, he strives; resolutely striving, he realises with the body the supreme truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom.

BV: Now you start to get more of a feel for the suttas the instructions are real simple, and yet very precise, and they go through everything. That’s one of the

things that just blew my mind when I started getting into them. I started seeing how absolutely precise he was by giving the instructions the way he did, that it works in every situation. And...oh man! That's why I went out for two weeks and wound up staying three months, I couldn't believe it! And I kept having to go back and say, "I wanna see that again".

MN:

In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the discovery of truth; in this way one discovers truth; in this way we describe the discovery of truth. But as yet there is no final arrival at truth."

BV: I wanna do this again just because it's really good...

MN: Repeated...

20. "When he has investigated him and has seen that he is purified from states based on delusion, then he places faith in him; filled with faith he visits him and pays respect to him; having paid respect to him, he gives ear; when he gives ear, he hears the Dhamma; having heard the Dhamma, he memorises it and examines the meaning of the teachings he has memorised; when he examines their meaning, he gains a reflective acceptance of those teachings; when he has gained a reflective acceptance of those teachings, enthusiasm springs up; when enthusiasm has sprung up, he applies his will; having applied his will, ...

BV: That is he starts making the choices. Either, or not.

MN:

... he scrutinises; having scrutinised, he strives; resolutely striving, he realises with the body the supreme truth...

Now the body is the relaxing of the tension because it's done in the body and in the mind. That's another reason why the instructions in the Ānāpānasati Sutta are amazing, because it's only four sentences, and it tells you exactly; **you tranquilize the bodily formation!** That means the subtle tightnesses that arise in body, when you do that, the tightnesses in the mind go away. It's really something! I mean it's way too simple for us folks. We have to have it much more complicated than that! Ha Ha!

MN:

... and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom. In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the discovery of truth; in this way one discovers truth; in this way we describe the discovery of truth. But as yet there is no final arrival at truth."

21. "In that way, Master Gotama, there is the discovery of truth; in that way one discovers truth; in that way we recognise the discovery of truth. But in what way, Master Gotama, is there the final arrival at truth? In what way does one finally arrive at truth? We ask Master Gotama about the final arrival at truth."

BV: Now it's getting good!

MN:

"The final arrival at truth, Bhāradvāja, lies in the repetition, development, and cultivation of those same things.

BV: The **repetition... the development... and cultivation**. The development is the development of the habit of letting go of craving, as soon as any tiny feeling starts to arise. So you can say, that as soon as feeling arises, and you relax right then, craving won't arise.

It's release, relax, and return to your object of meditation, and your object of meditation gets really subtle as if on the breath you start doing that, and you start seeing there's all kinds of other tiny, tiny little feelings that are there. And they keep getting more and more subtle, as you go deeper. Until finally you get to the state of neither perception nor non-perception, because you can't perceive whether there's any tension there or not. There still is, but you can't perceive it, *in a regular way*. When you get OUT of that state, then you start reflecting what you saw while you were in that state, and then you can say "Yes there's still this little tightness, so there still needs to be more of the relaxing while I'm in that state."

Now, this is where it gets tricky. Because when people practice one-pointed concentration, the breath just seems to disappear, and they don't see it anymore. But, according to some of the suttas, there is still the five aggregates that are present, even when you go into the arupa jhanas. That means there's still contact, and there is still breath, causing that contact to arise. And the breath is the reminder to relax. And then it gets real subtle with the different things that start happening as you go deeper; it just gets great!

S: But it seems like each time, it seems like each time that you release when you relax, that's the spot where it's like another lens comes in and you can see it a little more.

BV: Right, but it's only teeny, tiny at a time.

S: If you release and you don't relax, and then let the lens focus down and then you look, you'll start to notice that it's deeper and it's deeper, and the subtle little things like when you're looking at the stuff in nothingness and neither perception

nor non-perception, it's so completely subtle, but if you start to go through the different pieces...

BV: That's why the development of the habitual tendency of relaxing....

S: Right. It's really important.

S: I have a tendency to get absorbed into the perception or non-perception then it's just like gone and later it's like come back again.

BV: Yeah, that's the way it is, but then you have to reflect on what's happening in there. By the time you get to that state, you should have developed the habit of doing this often. But you don't see any breath at that time. You don't see, you just see, there are some mental things that happen while you're in there.

S: But there's this realization that absorption has taken place...

BV: But it's not really absorption. It's just the subtler and subtler vibrations of mind. It's not really being absorbed. Because by that time you should still have that habit of relaxing.

S: Remember a student that was on retreat got absorbed into that state? Remember how she used to say when she came out she couldn't remember anything. There wasn't anything to remember. It was absorption. But a couple times she did experience, you know where she could walk around afterwards and she could remember a little bit of what was going on, and that's what you mean, the awareness is afterwards, right?

BV: Well, no the awareness is there, but it's hard to tell whether it's there, and there is still a little bit of feeling there. That's not the state of neither perception and feeling, nor, you know, neither/or with perception and feeling; it's just perception. The feeling is still there, and that's the thing that's still vibrating a little bit too. Then when you get to the cessation of the perception and feeling, that's when everything stops. And that's why you need to have that habit of relaxing. Because every time you relax, the vibration becomes less, and less, and less, and less, until it does finally stop.

S: And then Dependent Origination arises?

When the perception and feeling start arising again, that's when your mindfulness is so incredibly sharp, that you see exactly how it works. You see the cause and effect, and you see when this doesn't arise, that won't arise, and you see the cessation. And then, the big WHOOPEE! Great stuff!

MN:

In this way, Bhāradvāja, there is the final arrival at truth; in this way one finally arrives at truth; in this way we describe the final arrival at truth.”

22. “In that way, Master Gotama, there is the final arrival at truth; in that way one finally arrives at truth; in that way we recognise the final arrival at truth. But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for the final arrival at truth?”

BV: Good question!

MN:

We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for the final arrival at truth.”

“**Striving** is most helpful for the final arrival at truth, Bhāradvāja. If one does not strive, one will not finally arrive at truth; but because one strives, one does finally arrive at truth. That is why striving is most helpful for the final arrival at truth.”

23. “But what, Master Gotama, what is most helpful for striving? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for striving.”

“**Scrutiny...**

BV: I don't like this word. Instead of “scrutiny,” I much rather prefer “interest.” The more interest you have in the subtlety of how things are working... now you're scrutinizing it, yes you are, but it's the interest, it's the thing that just keeps you going with it, like “Wow, look at that, this is great stuff!” And you have to do this in a balanced way.

MN:

Scrutiny is most helpful for striving, Bhāradvāja. If one does not scrutinise, one will not strive; but because one scrutinises, one strives. That is why scrutiny is most helpful for striving.”

24. “But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for scrutiny? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for scrutiny.”

“**Application of the will...**

BV: The conscious decision to keep doing this. Keep relaxing.

MN:

... is most helpful for scrutiny, Bhāradvāja. If one does not apply one's will, one will not scrutinise; but because one applies one's will, one scrutinises. That is why application of the will is most helpful for scrutiny."

25. "But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for application of the will? We ask the Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for application of the will."

"**Enthusiasm** is most helpful for application of the will, Bhāradvāja. If one does not arouse enthusiasm, one will not apply one's will; but because one arouses enthusiasm, one applies one's will. That is why enthusiasm is most helpful for application of the will."

26. "But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for enthusiasm? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for enthusiasm."

"A reflective acceptance of the teachings is most helpful for enthusiasm, Bhāradvāja. If one does not gain a reflective acceptance of the teachings, enthusiasm will not spring up; but because one gains a reflective acceptance of the teachings, enthusiasm springs up. That is why a reflective acceptance of the teachings is most helpful for enthusiasm."

27. "But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for a reflective acceptance of the teachings? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for a reflective acceptance of the teachings."

"**Examination** of the meaning is most helpful for a reflective acceptance of the teachings, Bhāradvāja. If one does not examine their meaning, one will not gain a reflective acceptance of the teachings; but because one examines their meaning, one gains a reflective acceptance of the teachings. That is why examination of the meaning is most helpful for a reflective acceptance of the teachings."

28. "But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for examination of the meaning? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for examination of meaning."

"**Memorising the teachings** is most helpful for examining the meaning, Bhāradvāja. If one does not memorise a teaching, one will not examine its meaning; but because one memorises a teaching, one examines its meaning."

29. "But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for memorising the teachings? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for memorising the teachings."

"**Hearing the Dhamma** is most helpful for memorising the teachings, Bhāradvāja. If one does not hear the Dhamma, one will not memorise the teachings; but

because one hears the Dhamma, one memorises the teachings. That is why hearing the Dhamma is most helpful for memorising the teachings.”

30. “But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for hearing the Dhamma? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for hearing the Dhamma.”

“**Giving ear** is most helpful for hearing the Dhamma, Bhāradvāja. If one does not give ear, one will not hear the Dhamma; but because one gives ear, one hears the Dhamma. That is why giving ear is most helpful for hearing the Dhamma.”

31. “But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for giving ear? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for giving ear.”

“**Paying respect** is most helpful for giving ear, Bhāradvāja. If one does not pay respect, one will not give ear; but because one pays respect, one gives ear. That is why paying respect is most helpful for giving ear.”

32. “But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for paying respect? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for paying respect.”

“**Visiting** is most helpful for paying respect, Bhāradvāja. If one does not visit [a teacher], one will not pay respect to him; but because one visits [a teacher], one pays respect to him. That is why visiting is most helpful for paying respect.”

33. “But what, Master Gotama, is most helpful for visiting? We ask Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for visiting.” “**Faith** is most helpful for visiting, Bhāradvāja. If faith [in a teacher] does not arise, one will not visit him; but because faith [in a teacher] arises, one visits him. That is why faith is most helpful for visiting.”

34. “We asked Master Gotama about the preservation of truth, and Master Gotama answered about the preservation of truth; we approve of and accept that answer, and so we are satisfied. We asked Master Gotama about the discovery of truth, and Master Gotama answered about the discovery of truth; we approve of and accept that answer, and so we are satisfied. We asked Master Gotama about the final arrival at truth, and Master Gotama answered about the final arrival at truth; we approve of and accept that answer, and so we are satisfied. We asked Master Gotama about the thing most helpful for the final arrival at truth, and Master Gotama answered about the thing most helpful for the final arrival at truth; we approve of and accept that answer, and so we are satisfied. Whatever we asked Master Gotama about, that he has answered us; we approve of and accept that answer, and so we are satisfied.

Formerly, Master Gotama, we used to think: 'Who are these bald-pated recluses, these swarthy menial offspring of the Kinsman's feet, that they would understand the Dhamma?' But Master Gotama has indeed inspired in me love for recluses, confidence in recluses, reverence for recluses.

35. "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent... From today let Master Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."

BV: That's a really, it was a major coup, this particular sutta, when he gave it to this young Brahman student, because there were so many other Brahman teachers around at that time, and they all accepted the Buddha's teaching, and they let go of the Brahmanism of a permanent self. A lot of people became enlightened with this particular sutta.

I like that sutta a lot. I really do. And it touches on things that, if you don't really have a practice you would never understand the subtleties of what the Buddha was talking about with this particular sutta. You can go to some of the Dhamma teachers, just some of the big teachers in this country that really are renowned for their scholarship, and because they don't have the practice in the same way that the Buddha was describing, they will skip over some of the finer points of what is in the Teachings.

Like what is delusion? And what you gave was a good answer. But it wasn't as precise as it could be, that's why I kept going with that, so that you could see that yes, what you said was true, but you have to go deeper. And then you gave another answer, and you have to go deeper still.

And as far as I can see, seeing the characteristics of all existence always, well, it just boils down to one characteristic. And that is, anatta. When you see everything that arises, every one of the links of Dependent Origination as being an impersonal process, it's just a cause and effect thing that's happening, and when you see that in each one of those links, that to me is when you actually get the deep realization that this is the way it is. And with that deep understanding, there's that openness. And nibbana occurs because of that, because of that deep understanding.

And each level of the jhana is another level of your understanding of the process, because you're going more and more subtle all the time, and you're starting to see little tiny things, where before you were seeing these huge movements.

And you got real enthusiastic because you could see those, now you're starting to work with the real fine stuff. And trying to keep your meditation going all of the time. I don't care what you're doing, keep your meditation going, keep relaxing, keep letting go. You have a thought, and the thought might all of a sudden be "It shouldn't be like this" - a critical thought. Now that's anger. That's aversion. That's

dislike of the feeling of whatever sense door it was that caused that to arise. And you get a chance to see how really fast that comes, and then all of a sudden you're caught in your habitual tendency. And the faster you can recognize that and let it go, the easier everything becomes. And the more subtleness you start to see when you're able to do that.

Doing the daily activities is a very important part of the practice because that's when your calmness isn't as deep as it could be, and you still get to see some of the old tendencies come up.

Now when I would tell people that I don't want them to take anything seriously, and to smile into everything, there's a definite reason for doing that. Because when you have that smile going into what you're doing in the present moment, you can start to see that happen. And you start to see, "That's painful, I don't wanna do that anymore" and then you start changing the old way of, whenever this feeling arises, then this always happens. And when you're able to do that, there's a freedom, and a happiness that comes that's just remarkable.

Nibbana is what we want in this lifetime, that's really true, but we have to have a lot of mundane nibbanas occur before we get the big "Oh Wow!", before the big nibbana, the supermundane occurs. And that means we have to start letting go of more and more subtleties about how mind grabs onto things. And being able to let those go and relax into them.

There's two things that happen when you start doing this. One, you learn how to let go of the control. Like we've all developed for I don't know how many lifetimes, the idea that, with our mind, we can control what happens. And when we can't, that's when the dissatisfaction comes up. So what you're doing, every time you relax, is you're letting go of the idea that there is any controller at all. And as you do that, more and more, then you start developing this lighter, more alert mind. So the smile, as dumb as it sounds, is a key that really helps. And the lighter you can keep your mind, with the attitudes, the opinions, the concepts, the imaginations, the projections, all of these, you start letting go of those, because they really don't matter, they're only your ideas about what the truth is, and looking at the underlying cause of that; which is always the craving and the clinging.

Why do we do what we do?

S: One of the things that I find interesting is the awareness of where the decision is being made. For example you might be driving in a car, and you might be coming up to an intersection that allows you to take a different route to your destination. And at that intersection there's two choices, and both of them are equally the same, but somehow a decision gets made to take this one or that one. And it's like, why did that happen?

BV: It happened because of past experience. And it's not necessarily, just because of past experience in this lifetime. The intuition, that little quiet voice that says stuff, and it's always right, that is from your wholesome nature of past lifetimes, arising right now. And then it comes to the point, and it says "Turn left here." And that's where your decision, if the intuition is strong enough, you'll just follow it without considering it. If it's not, then you'll have the craving and the clinging get into it, and the justifying mind that says "No, I don't wanna turn here, I wanna go there."

S: I remember my dad was kind of funny, he would, never at a fork in a road go left, it was just weird.

BV: That might've happened from ten lifetimes of having something bad happen when he went left.

S: I distinctly remember my mother getting real mad at him once because she knew that where we were supposed to go was right down there, and he made this weak guess and justification and went the other way. It wasn't like they were bad people at the time or anything, it was just the habit.

S: It's the point of decision that I find kind of curious, because it doesn't seem conscious. It doesn't even seem intuitive. It's just all of a sudden, "Oh I'm going this way." Where was that decision made? You know?

BV: Subtle stuff!

BV: But it gets incredibly fun to watch. I mean, everything comes into it. You know that I like to do repetitious things, like that picture that I made for you, with those little pieces of string. That repetition gives me the opportunity to watch how my mind is working. And I love that.

But, other people don't like it, they say it's boring, but it's anything but boring, to me! It's doing the same movements over and over again, but being able to watch what my mind is doing while I'm doing that. Because that is basically what you're doing when you're sitting. You're watching your breath, you're doing it over and over again, you're not moving your body. It's basically doing the same thing. And you have to learn, when you first start, you have to learn that, yes, boredom is going to come up, and welcome to the real world, and whose boredom is it(?), and what do you do when you get bored, and how do you distract yourself so that you won't have that? And then when you go through that, doors all of a sudden open up, and everything becomes real interesting.

S: That's like pulling weeds in the garden. It becomes a very dynamic kind of meditation practice.

BV: It is. It really is. And you have to be careful while you're doing it, or else you'll screw up, and pull the wrong plants, or miss something, or whatever.

One of the things that Bhikkhu Bodhi does in this book is he uses the word "extirpate." So when he goes to pull weeds, he's going to extirpate the weeds.

S: Liberate the weeds!

BV: Pulling out by the root.

BV: Any question about your practice at all?

S: I sometimes feel like I'm floundering around, but I think I got some clarity tonight. I'm watching the breath, and relaxing the mind, and it's kind of, almost mantra-like, it's a rote.

BV: But watch the littleness, it gets real interesting. Don't put your mind on automatic while you're doing it. When you do things by rote, you have a tendency to think while you're doing it.

S: I'm not thinking. But it's just that I'm staying with it, but it's... it doesn't seem like a real depth of investigation.

BV: Well take more interest in it. The more interested you get, the more enthusiasm you get, the deeper you go, that's just... it's such subtle things. You have to really be careful with your energy because if you put too much in, your mind is going to start to get a little restless. That doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to have a lot of thoughts, but the restlessness is a feeling that's a painful feeling, and there is reaction to that. And if you don't put quite enough energy into it, you go into the dullness. You're not going to go into sleepiness so much anymore. But your mind is just going to dull out a little bit. When your mind gets dull, you'll hit the space, where it's just like your mind just blanks. It's just like somebody took the eraser and cleaned off the board. Ok that's because you're not putting enough effort and energy into watching. So take more interest in how that happens. And also you have to be careful of your body energy too. Because that will happen when your body energy starts to go down. And that happens, that's a sign that you need to get up and walk.

Now also watch when we do this in the morning, how your mind doesn't really want to, so it just kind of puts it on automatic. Don't let it. I mean, really do it. There's a reason for doing this. And that's just showing you another set of your clinging and your attachment. "This is boring, I do it everyday, I don't really like doing it, I don't wanna do it... But I'll do it anyway." But that has a lot of aversion in it. So let go of

the aversion and things will come alive for you when you're doing this. I mean it's really amazing.

S: Hallelujah!

BV: Let's share some merit.

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

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

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

May they long protect the Lord Buddha's dispensation.

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

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