

MN 106 The Way to the Imperturbable - Āneñjasappāya Sutta
Dhamma Talk by Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi April 2002

BV: The Way to the Imperturbable

This is really kind of an unusual sutta, in that the Buddha already assumes that everybody has gotten at least to the fourth jhāna. (Laughs) And then we go from there.

So –

MN: 1. THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Kuru country where there was a town of the Kurus named Kammāsadhamma. There the Blessed One addressed the monks thus: “Monks.”—“Venerable sir,” they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. “Monks, sensual pleasures are impermanent, hollow, false, deceptive; they are illusory, the prattle of fools. Sensual pleasures here and now and sensual pleasures in lives to come, sensual perceptions here and now and sensual perceptions in lives to come—both alike are Māra’s realm, Māra’s domain, Māra’s bait, Māra’s hunting ground.

BV: You know who Māra is? The bad guy. But he’s actually a deva. Did you know that? He’s a deva. But he’s just so into sensual pleasures and that sort of thing, that he tries to entice people when they start letting go of that, he tries to entice them to have more of these kind of things arise.

MN: On account of them, these evil unwholesome mental states such as covetousness, ill will, and presumption arise, and they constitute an obstruction to a noble disciple in training here.

3. “Therein, monks, a noble disciple considers thus: ‘Sensual pleasures here and now and sensual pleasures in lives to come, sensual perceptions here and now and sensual perceptions in lives to come, constitute an obstruction to a noble disciple in training here.

Suppose I were to abide with a mind abundant and exalted, having transcended the world and made a firm determination with the mind. When I do so, there will be no more evil unwholesome mental states such as covetousness, ill will, and presumption in me, and with the abandoning of them my mind will be unlimited, immeasurable, and well developed.'

BV: Now, when you first started your retreat, I started talking to you about making a determination right before you go to sleep, that you wake up with a smiling mind and a smiling face.

When you start working with your determinations, like you're sitting and you have a tendency to move quite a bit while you're sitting, you make a determination, that, you're going to sit without moving, and you're going to start watching your mind, and start letting go and relaxing like that. Determinations are a real important aspect of the spiritual path. And what a determination is, is just, it's pointing your mind in the direction you want it to go. Now, I was talking about determinations one time in Malaysia, and a lady that, for five years she had been practicing with me, and she was very adept at getting into the jhānas. And, about a week after I gave that talk, she came up and she started talking to me, she said: "I can't get into the jhānas anymore. I can't understand it. I don't know what's wrong." So I started questioning her. And finally I asked her: is she making a determination, and she said: "Yes." And I said: "What kind of determination are you making?" And she said: "Well, I'm making a determination to get into the jhāna." And that determination caused her to try too hard, so she wound up with a lot of restlessness. So that's the wrong kind of determination. The right kind of determination is, make a determination that you're going to sit very still; you're not going to move; you make a determination that your mind is going to be peaceful and calm. So that way you're pointing your mind in the right direction, and it doesn't have any craving or clinging behind it. So, what we're talking about here, is, when you get up into, the, immaterial jhānas, where you, are starting to work with infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothing, neither-perception-nor-non-perception, you can start making a determination, that, unwholesome states – what's covetousness?

Greed, and ill will, hatred. So I want it, I don't want it, mind. And presumption. What does presumption mean? It means you're naturally assuming, that, your meditation is going to go along fine without your making any determinations is basically what it boils down to. So, you can make a determination that, the lust, and the ill will, the hatred, or aversion, doesn't arise, for you, when you go into the meditation, right before you go in to the meditation. You can make a determination that your mind will be, very alert, and clear, and you'll start noticing that your mind tends towards that.

MN: (repeats: "and with the abandoning of them my mind will be unlimited, immeasurable, and well developed.")

BV: So, when you make a determination that the "I want, and I don't want" don't arise, your meditation is the Brahma Vihāras right now, ok? And when you get into the arūpa jhanas, you're getting in to the compassion, the joy, the equanimity, and they're unlimited; there's no boundaries; they're immeasurable; they'll get huge, and very, very strong subtle states of mind. Now you can also make determination to stay on your object of meditation, so that your mind stays very clear, on your meditation object. And when you make that kind of determination, you'll start to notice that when your mind first starts to move a little bit, you can relax right then. And then you start working more with that very fine balancing act, of, putting in a little bit too much energy, and you get some restlessness; not quite enough energy and you get some dullness. And, the more you, are aware, of these things when they first start to arise, the deeper your meditation will go; the faster you'll go, deep into your meditation.

MN: {...} Once there is full confidence, he either attains to the imperturbable now or else he resolves upon it with wisdom. On the dissolution of the body, after death, it is possible that the evolving consciousness may pass on to rebirth in the imperturbable.

BV: Talking about being in the fourth jhāna. And if you die when you still have the fourth jhāna, you're going to be reborn in one of the Brahma locas. Now for the fourth jhāna, there's one Brahma loca, that, it's called "exceeding radiant", and another one is, a mindless

state, where you have a body, that's a fine material plane body, but there's no mind in it, so you're like a statue. Now, I've been around a lot of people that find this real repulsive. But one time, when I was with Dipa Ma, she had gotten into her meditation very deeply, and she sat for seven days, without moving. So, we were talking about that, and I said: "Why did you do that? What's the advantage of sitting for seven days? I don't understand." And she gave me a one word reply: "Relief." There was nothing that disturbed her mind. She was sitting in neither-perception-nor-non-perception. Nothing disturbed her mind at all, and that's like being in this Brahma loca where there's no disturbance and it's just relief. There's no tension arising or anything like that. And this would be called an imperturbable state.

MN: This, monks, is declared to be the first way directed to the imperturbable.

4. "Again, monks, a noble disciple considers thus: 'There are sensual pleasures here and now and sensual pleasures in lives to come, sensual perceptions here and now and sensual perceptions in lives to come; whatever material form there is, all material form is the four great elements and the material form derived from the four great elements.' When he practices in this way and frequently abides thus, his mind acquires confidence in this base. Once there is full confidence, he either attains to the imperturbable now or else he resolves upon it with wisdom.

BV: That means going deeper in your meditation.

MN: On the dissolution of the body, after death. It is possible that the evolving consciousness may pass on to rebirth in the imperturbable. This, monks, is declared to be the second way directed to the imperturbable.

BV:—Now we're talking about the base of infinite space, so we'll go over that again, so you can get a better feel for it.

MN: (repeats: "whatever material form there is, all material form is the four great elements and the material form derived from the four great elements.' When he practices in this way and frequently abides thus, his mind acquires confidence in this base.")

It's that feeling of expansion, and whatever direction you direct your mind to, that feeling of expansion, going out, no, no boundaries, no limits, and it actually can go beyond this universe, and that's big place. And, your mind, when you're in that state, there's no fluttering. There's no movement, as long as your mindfulness is very sharp. There's only this feeling of expansion, whatever direction you're going in, or all directions at the same time.

MN: 5. "Again, monks, a noble disciple considers thus: 'Sensual pleasures here and now and sensual pleasures in lives to come, sensual perceptions here and now and sensual perceptions in lives to come, material forms here and now and material forms in lives to come, perceptions of forms here and now and perceptions of forms in lives to come—both alike are impermanent. What is impermanent is not worth delighting in, not worth welcoming, not worth holding to.' When he practices in this way and frequently abides thus, his mind acquires confidence in this base.

BV: Now what we're talking about here, is getting into the base of infinite consciousness, when you're seeing consciousnesses up and down, come and go, come and go, come and go, come and go, and you see the true impermanence of everything. And you see the suffering caused by that continual movement. Arising, passing away, arising, passing away, it doesn't matter what sense door it's at. It can be at the eye, at the ear, what's happened in your meditation, is your mind becomes so still and so calm, that there's barely any movement at all, there's just kind of a vibration. And with that vibration you're able to see a million thought moments, (laughs) arising, passing away, arising, passing away; it really happens fast, and there's never any doubt, when you get into that state, that everything is impermanent. And there's never any doubt when you get into that state, that this is all an impersonal process; you don't have any

control over it. It's just arising and passing away of phenomena, that's all.

Ok –

MN: {...}

6. "Again, monks, a noble disciple considers thus: 'Sensual pleasures here and now and sensual pleasures in lives to come, sensual perceptions here and now and sensual perceptions in lives to come, material forms here and now and material forms in lives to come, perceptions of forms here and now and perceptions of forms in lives to come, and perceptions of the imperturbable—all are perceptions. Where these perceptions cease without remainder, that is the peaceful, that is the sublime, namely, the base of nothingness. 'When he practices in this way and frequently abides thus, his mind acquires confidence in this base.

Once there is full confidence, he either attains to the base of nothingness now or else he resolves upon it with wisdom on the dissolution of the body, after death. It is possible that the evolving consciousness may pass on to rebirth in the base of nothingness.

BV: In other words, when you die, and you're in the base of nothingness, you go to a strictly mental realm, and it lasts for sixty thousand maha kappas. You remember how I described a maha kappa before? That's sixty thousand expansions of the universe and contractions of the universe. That's a long time.

MN: {...}

7. "Again, monks, a noble disciple, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, considers thus: 'This is void of a self or of what belongs to a self.'"

When he practices in this way and frequently abides thus, his mind acquires confidence in this base. Once there is full confidence, he either attains to the base of nothingness now or else he resolves upon it with wisdom on the dissolution of the body, after death. It is

possible that the evolving consciousness may pass on to rebirth in the base of nothingness.

This, monks, is declared to be the second way directed to the base of nothingness.

8. "Again, monks, a noble disciple considers thus: 'I am not anything belonging to anyone anywhere, nor is there anything belonging to me in anyone anywhere.'

When he practices in this way and frequently abides thus, his mind acquires confidence in this base.

BV: Now, these different ways of looking at the base of nothingness, you can start dwelling on everything being impermanent, everything moving, you can dwell on the unsatisfactoriness even of this pleasant state, and you can dwell on the impersonality, of this state. The way that I like to teach is the impersonality of it, of just seeing these things as factors that are in the mind that you need to hone and your enlightenment factors need to be put into real balance no matter what happens.

Ok...

MN: {...}

9. "Again, monks, a noble disciple considers thus: 'Sensual pleasures here and now and sensual pleasures in lives to come,

BV: And so on...

MN: {...}

Where these perceptions cease without remainder, that is the peaceful, that is the sublime, namely, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.'

BV: Now when you get into the base of non-perception, mind becomes so subtle, and so small, that you're not able to really recognize it. You know there's something there, but you can't really

see it. It's like I was telling you before, it's the two monks walking along and there's a little trickle, and one monk says: "I want to go get a drink of water." And the other monk said: "Well why don't you go get my towel, I want to take a bath?" And the first monk said: "Well, there's water, but there's not enough." And that's what happens. When you get into the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, the perception is the recognizing and naming. Ok? And when your mind becomes so tiny and so subtle, and there's still some feeling, but not much, you know that there's something there, but you can't, really, quite, put your finger on it. And, this is, quite an interesting state to be in. Now while you're in this state, there's no aggregates anymore, you don't even recognize the, enlightenment factors. Everything is just too fine. When you get out of that state, then you start reflecting on it: "Yeah, there was some feeling there." As you reflect you'll be able to see it a little bit more clearly what was really there. But still, you have to keep, relaxing, even in that state. There's still, some, little tiny movement.

MN: {...}

10. When this was said, the venerable Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "Venerable sir, here a monk is practicing thus: 'It might not be, and it might not be mine; it will not be, and it will not be mine. What exists, what has come to be, that I am abandoning.' Thus he obtains equanimity. Venerable sir, does such a monk attain Nibbāna?"

BV: Interesting question.

MN: "One monk here, Ānanda, might attain Nibbāna, another monk here might not attain Nibbāna."

BV: Why? We'll find out.

MN: "What is the cause and reason, venerable sir, why one monk here might attain Nibbāna, while another monk here might not attain Nibbāna?"

“Here, Ānanda, a monk is practicing thus: It might not be, and it might not be mine; it will not be, and it will not be mine. What exists, what has come to be, that I am abandoning.’ Thus he obtains equanimity. He delights in that equanimity, welcomes it, and remains holding to it. As he does so, his consciousness becomes dependent on it and clings to it.

A monk with clinging, Ānanda, does not attain Nibbāna.

BV: Can’t hold on to anything.

MN: 11. “But, venerable sir, when that monk clings, what does he cling to?”

“To the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, Ānanda.”

“When that monk clings, venerable sir, it seems he clings to the best object of clinging.”

BV: So if you’re going to cling to something, make that what you cling to.

MN: “When that monk clings, Ānanda, he clings to the best object of clinging; for this is the best object of clinging, namely, the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

BV: But you’re so close. Why would you want to cling to it? (Laughs) So you see even that equanimity, that real balance, you can’t hold on to that, you have to let it go. Now I had a long discussion one time with Sayadaw U. Silinanda, and he was telling me that the only way you can attain Nibbāna, is if all the factors of enlightenment are in perfect balance, but, you can’t cling to any of it. You can’t have even the slightest like for that being there. If you do, who, likes it? So you see, you’re still holding on. You still, are causing that slight tightness to arise, that slight craving that leads to clinging. So, you have to keep doing this more and more, opening and relaxing, opening and relaxing, opening and relaxing. You get into that state, sometimes you’ll be able to see that you can relax a little bit, sometimes you

won't; that's ok. But as soon as you come out, you keep opening and relaxing, even while you're reflecting on what you saw, you open and relax. You let go of, even that slightest, little, movement of mind.

MN: 12. "Here, Ānanda, a monk is practicing thus: 'It might not be, and it might not be mine; it will not be, and it will not be mine. What exists, what has come to be, that I am abandoning.' Thus he obtains equanimity. He does not delight in that equanimity, welcome it, or remain holding to it. Since he does not do so, his consciousness does not become dependent on it and does not cling to it. A monk without clinging, Ānanda, attains Nibbāna."

BV: Pretty straight forward.

MN: 13. "It is wonderful, venerable sir, it is marvellous! The Blessed One, indeed, has explained to us the crossing of the flood in dependence upon one support or another. But, venerable sir, what is noble liberation?"

"Here, Ānanda, a noble disciple considers thus: 'Sensual pleasures here and now and sensual pleasures in lives to come, sensual perceptions here and now and sensual perceptions in lives to come, material forms here and now and material forms in lives to come, perceptions of forms here and now and perceptions of forms in lives to come, perceptions of the imperturbable, perceptions of the base of nothingness, and perceptions of the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception—this is personality as far as personality extends. This is the Deathless, namely, the liberation of the mind through not clinging.'

14. "Thus, Ānanda, I have taught the way directed to the imperturbable, I have taught the way directed to the base of nothingness, I have taught the way directed to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, I have taught the crossing of the flood in dependence upon one support or another, I have taught noble liberation.

15. "What should be done for his disciples out of compassion by a teacher who seeks their welfare and has compassion for them, that I have done for you, Ānanda. There are these roots of trees, these empty huts. Meditate, Ānanda, do not delay, or else you will regret it later. This is our instruction to you."

{...}

BV: So, when you start getting in to the real subtle states, there's still, some things that can knock you off balance, even the slightest little like, can stop your progress, and that little desire, that little like, that slight holding, will cause all kinds of problems, and cause a lot of hindrances to come up, because of the clinging, because you start thinking about that little desire, and then you try too hard. So, once you make a determination, you have to let it go. You make a determination to have, a, very clear mind, and let it go. You don't think about it any more. You make a determination to have a calm peaceful mind. You make a determination to let go of the "I like it." and "I don't like it." If you make the wrong kind of determination, you will have restlessness arise. Now, there's two kinds, of, desire. One kind of desire, in Pāli, is called "chanda". "c, h, a, n, d, a" Chanda, means, wholesome desire. Now wholesome desire is pointing your mind in the direction you want to go. If you want to go from here to San Francisco, if you don't point your mind in that direction, you're not going to get there. You wind up in, Chicago, or New York. But once you've made up your mind, that's where you want to go, then you let go. Now this doesn't have any desire in it, that's unwholesome. It doesn't have that strong: "I want, I have to possess, I have to own." Or "I like." Those are the kind of desire, that we're letting go of, more and more and more. So, when you're making a determination, what you're really doing, is, working with the chanda. Now if you happen to think of a determination that might be good, and you try it, and it starts leading to distraction, your mind doesn't settle down, then you have to let go of that determination, and come up with another. General determinations are much better than specific ones for right now. Now, after you get to a certain place in your meditation, if you want to work with, mastery, and, then you have to be able to make determinations, for going from the first jhāna to the third jhāna, the second jhāna, the fourth jhāna,

whatever. You can make determinations with, the time that you're in a jhāna. At first, you start working with, oh, between ten and fifteen minutes, but you need a clock that has a second hand on it. So you make the determination: "I'm going to go in and out of the first jhāna, in eleven minutes and thirty one seconds. And then when you can hit that, and you change the times all around, then, you extend the time a little bit. So you can do it for between fifteen minutes and thirty minutes. And then when you can hit that, then you extend the time up to an hour. But when you get into the hour, you know that you're going to sit in this jhāna for fifty nine minutes and fourteen seconds, then when you come out of that, you make another determination that I'm going to go in and out of the jhāna, in the first jhāna, I'm going to go in and out, in, three seconds, in five seconds. So you're working with, sitting longer and you're starting to work with the short periods of time. So you start gaining real mastery, being able to go in and out, in and out. And there's real advantage to doing this. But there's more advantage to attaining Nibbāna.

There's so many suttas, that talk about being able to, go through all of the jhānas and attaining Nibbāna, it's really shocking that a lot of people are teaching that if you practice the jhāna practice, it doesn't lead to Nibbāna. But, it depends on their perspective. If you're practicing absorption concentration, one-pointed concentration, that's true, because the force of the concentration pushes down those hindrances where your attachment is. So you still have those attachments, and that stops you from going any deeper. But with the tranquility meditation, you're letting go of attachments all the time. You're opening, and you're calming, you're opening, and you're calming.

Now you say: "Does that mean that I'm going to let go of every attachment that I've ever had?" No. Why? The Buddha couldn't do it. How can I? Because of his past action, when he started getting old, he had back problems. And he thought that was rather curious, so he started remembering his past lifetimes, and he saw that in one lifetime he was a boxer, and he broke somebody's back, and they were paralyzed, and because of that, now he had that back problem. And you'll see that in a lot of the suttas, that it talks about, he'll give

a talk for a little while, and then he'll say: "Ok, Ānanda, or Sāriputta, carry on, I'm going to lie down, and I'm going to rest my back." So he couldn't clear away every hindrance. But it also didn't affect his mind. It clears away enough, so that your mind becomes pure enough, that you'll be able to attain Nibbāna.

And can you do that here and now? Yes. I've always been shocked, and when I was in Thailand, that, I heard Mahāyāna monks and I heard Theravada monks too, they were telling people that: "No, you can't attain Nibbāna. It's too hard. Don't even try." And I think it's like that in Burma, and it's like that in Sri Lanka and Cambodia and all other kinds of places, too, which is kind of sad. But, it is attainable. It just takes, patience, and endurance, and, opening and relaxing, opening and relaxing, opening and relaxing, with everything. As your mind becomes calmer and calmer, you'll get to a space, where it stops, and that's what we call the cessation of perception and feeling. In Pāli it's "nirodhasamāpatti". And again, when you come back out of that, you see Dependent Origination, forwards, and then you see the cessation of it, backwards. And that is seeing, and realizing the Noble Truths. And I guarantee, that you will be able to do it, if you continue on the path. Once you get to the first jhāna, you have the opportunity, if you continue, to attain Nibbāna, here and now. It's not an empty promise that I'm making. It's a promise that the Buddha gave us.

So the more we can, realize, all of these little tensions and tightnesses that happen in our body and in our mind, and open, and relax, the more pure, mind becomes. And with that purity, there's clarity. And you'll be able to keep going deeper and deeper and deeper and it gets, really, really interesting. It's the best show in town.

Now when you get into the deeper states, it becomes real important, and, you'll find yourself sitting at all kinds of different times. "Now I got twenty minutes here, I'll sit." In Malaysia, I had students that would get up an extra two hours early, so that they could meditate, and have that sense of calm, and then, face their kids and, the hustle and bustle of their everyday life, and they did it every day. So, when

the Buddha's talking about: "I recommend that you meditate", don't hesitate, do it a lot, as much as you can.

And, realize that the meditation is not, just, about, sitting. That's a mistake that's happened because of the way, Buddhism was brought into this country. It was brought into this country with Zen meditation, and to people that practice Zen, meditation is sitting on the cushion. But meditation is about your awareness of what's happening in the present moment. What are you doing with your mind right now? How is your mind acting or reacting or responding? If it's responding, it's opening and relaxing to what ever arises. Because, some things, start causing tension, and I start noticing that: "Oh, there's some tension there, relax." And I relax and I wish myself well, I relax and I wish somebody else well, and, in, less than a minute, there's no more tension; there's no more tightness.

The whole idea of having stress, is, resisting what's arising in the present moment; that's what stress is. Now if you're really meditating, that means that you're aware of that tension and tightness in your body and in your mind. So you start opening and letting go of that, seeing that it's just a silly thing, anyway. "Oh, but this is real important." The more important it becomes, the more it affects your body and your mind negatively. Doesn't mean that you let things go and don't take care of things, you do. But you don't have to do it in a stressful way.

I've done a lot of Vipassana retreats, twenty years worth. Some of them real long retreats, and every time I did a retreat, the last thing the teacher said, when I got up, and ready to leave: "Don't forget to be mindful." And yeah, that sounds good, but be mindful of what? Be mindful of your mind in the present moment. How is it tightened down around things? Start seeing some of your old habitual habits, how you act when something, occurs, and what you do with that. Does it make your mind tense and tight? If it does, start relaxing, come back to your meditation.

The more you can focus on the meditation, during the day, the more you can focus on what your mind is doing in the present moment,

when somebody calls and they say things that can cause you to feel stressed a little bit, like: "You've only got twenty minutes to get here and it's a thirty minute ride, and you have to be here on time."

What's happening in your mind? And you can drive fast, and carefully, or you can drive with a scattered mind, and, recklessly.

So, it all comes down to, your awareness of what happens in the present moment. Now when you're doing your meditation and your mind starts to get more and more settled, and you have all of these wonderful states that can arise, don't be attached to any of it. And how do you not be attached? You stay with your object of meditation and you keep relaxing into it.

Now, if you start to get into, the immaterial realms, where you're radiating Loving-Kindness in all of the different directions, and, you start losing your body, you still need to, open and relax more. For every direction that you direct your mind to, you relax into that, and sometimes you can relax, and it doesn't feel like there's anything there to relax. Ok, relax some more. There is stuff there, there's all kind of different states that will arise, and it's truly wonderful to watch these states. It's really fascinating to see how, subtle, mind can become. So with your daily activities, you're not going to be able to be in one of these immaterial states while you're doing your daily activities, but you can certainly be aware of what your mind is doing in the present moment.

Now this is somewhat different, than, a lot of other meditations. Other meditations will tell you: "Well, be mindful of your body." And they forget to tell you that you got a mind directing that body, that's real tense and tight. Other people, they just say: "Be mindful." That sounds good, but what does it mean?

The more we can, really realize that this is a mind body process, and we have to be aware of both of them, because, well sometimes when you lie down on the bio-circuits, and you start relaxing, you will see, that a thought, starts to come up, and there's a tension somewhere in your body. You feel that energy of that tension. And when you let go of that thought, that tension isn't there anymore. And, you'll be

able to see that more and more, deeply, when, you go deeper into your meditation. So you don't need the bio-circuits anymore.

"What you think and ponder on, that's the inclination of your mind." When you continually think and ponder on relaxing, and opening up, and, feeling that, your mind will tend to do that. Now this is subtle stuff, it's not gross, by any means, and it takes a lot of practice. But, as you go deeper in your meditation, you'll start to notice, little, tiny things, that you never even saw happen before. And that's why it gets interesting. You'll see little tiny, tightnesses, that you never even dreamed were there.

But if you're practicing, the one pointed concentration, you don't see those things because your mind is so stuck on your object of meditation that you don't have the full awareness, so you're not able to practice the four foundations of mindfulness when you're practicing absorption concentration.

When you're practicing the tranquility, you are able to do that. And that's why this path, is the one that the Buddha taught.

Now yesterday I was talking about the word "samādhi". "Sama" means tranquil, "dhī" means wisdom. So, if you're really practicing the meditation of samādhi, you're not practicing absorption, you're practicing a collectedness of mind, a composed mind, a mind that continually opens up and becomes calm, tranquil mind, that's what the meditation's all about. And the more, we can do that, with our daily activities, with all things, that arise, the more clear your mind becomes, the less attached you become, the less emotional, and out of control, you become, and, the happier you become, that's what I'm interested in.

The more happy we can be, the more we affect the world around us in a positive way. The more we can remember to stay with the Loving-Kindness, and send Loving-Kindness into what ever we're doing in the present moment, the more truly successful we will become. The more efficient you become. Why? Because you don't have a distracted mind. You know what it feels like in your daily life

when you get restless, and you've got twenty five things to do and you got ten minutes to do it. What's the best way, to get everything done? Sit down and let go of that restlessness, and relax into that for five minutes, and then you become so efficient that everything gets done. It's amazing.

I had a lot of college students, in Malaysia, and, in Malaysia, in college, they give you one test a year. You either pass it or you don't. So, about a month or a month and a half before their test, all of a sudden I had a great influx of college students, and they're all complaining about: "Ah, it's so hard to study, and my mind is so distracted, and I'm so worried!" So they come and they practice for a week, and I teach them how to let go of this stuff. When you're reading a book, and your mind becomes distracted, all of a sudden you're caught by this clinging, and you're starting to think about other things, and the other things you're thinking about is the worry, and the anxiety, and the fear, you have to let those things go, or you're not going to be efficient, you're not going to learn the stuff.

I was actually pretty successful as a teacher that way. Of all the people that came to me, I would say probably, ninety percent, passed with flying colors, and they would come back and they would say: "You know, that was the easiest test I've ever taken." Because, even while they were taking the test, if they ran across something they didn't know, I told them to: "Let it go! You don't know the answer right now? Put it aside, answer something else, get your confidence going again; come back to it. Let go of the worry that you're going to mess up."

And then, they would graduate, and they'd talk about going and finding a job, and being really afraid. So I told them to practice some Loving-Kindness. Go in with a smile, smile to the person that's interviewing them, wish them well, and you interview them, find out if that's the kind of job you want. It really works.

With your daily activity, while you're here, I don't care what you're doing, don't let your meditation, go, all the way up, till, you fall asleep, keep your meditation going.

Now, a lot of you are getting to the point, where, you start telling yourself, that it's time to be tired, so I'm going to go to bed. Let go of that one too, because, you get into a space, and, that, habitual habit of it's this time, I'm supposed to be tired, comes up, and if you let that go your meditation can be, absolutely phenomenal. I'll let you catch up on your sleep at another time. So, if it comes to be ten o'clock, and ten o'clock is the time that you stop meditating, but your meditation is reasonably good, and you don't feel tired, don't tell yourself you're supposed to be tired. You can take rest, you still have to get up at the five o'clock bell. You have to be there for the first sitting, but after the work period, I'll let you take some rest, if you need it, but you might be surprised, because, you'll get to certain places in your meditation, and, you don't need so much sleep, so don't tell yourself that, that's what I have to do.

When I was in Burma, I found that the best meditation had, in the whole day, was, at one center, they said that you can leave the meditation hall at ten o'clock and, go to sleep, and, always the hour right before that, everybody seemed to agree, and they all had really sleepy meditations and their energy was down, but I was actually feeling very strong. I wasn't tired, so when everybody else was sitting for that last hour, I was up walking. And then they would all leave the meditation hall, and I would have the best meditation because it was quiet. I mean quiet psychically and quiet energy wise. And my meditation would be good, until one o'clock or two o'clock in the morning. Now, we're supposed to get up at four, so I made an arrangement with the teacher that I would get up later, because I had such good meditation when it was quiet at night, when all of the psychic energy seems to mellow down a little bit. I recommend it strongly.

And again, when you wake up, get up, and sit. You might only last for ten or fifteen minutes, fine. But then again, you're getting to places where it can last quite a bit longer than that. I'll allow you to get your rest at another time. Don't tell yourself that I'm supposed to be tired because it's night, or it's a certain time. Ok? (Laughs) Don't be so enthusiastic. (Laughs)

Now, does anybody have any questions?

Yeah?

Yeah, one of two things is happening for you, either you're developing concentration, you haven't been relaxing enough, or you're trying too hard. And both ways are the same. There's no fast way, there's just see it, and relax. See it and do it. Ok, make a fist. Let go of that fist. How did you do that? You saw that there was tightness, and you let that tightness go. That's what you do in your mind. I think what happened today, was you kind of forgot to relax, and you got in to a concentration state, and it causes this kind of pain to arise. And it can get very intense, unless you start, relaxing more, opening and relaxing, opening and relaxing. But not just opening and relaxing, it's opening, relaxing, coming back to your object of meditation. And then there's distraction, let go, relax, come back, ok?

OK?

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 Buddha's dispensation.

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

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