

MN111 Anupada Sutta - One by One As They Occurred
Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi
at Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center 9 September 2006

SK: Introduction

BV: This particular sutta is one of my favorite suttas, and the reason it's one of my favorite suttas is, it tells you exactly what's happening when you experience each one of the jhānas. Now, the jhāna is not a stage of concentration, a jhāna is a stage of understanding. So this particular sutta pretty much let's you know that what the Buddha was talking about was a different kind of mental development than what is normally being practiced today.

In the Saṃyutta Nikāya, one sutta in particular, I can't remember the number right off, it says that any time you see the five aggregates, you're seeing the four foundations of mindfulness. Now, all of these different suttas have the five aggregates in them up to the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, and I'll explain that a little bit later.

No, with your legs crossed like that, please. Some of the monk's rules are that we can't give a Dhamma talk if people are sitting in a particular way.

So...

MN 111:

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One at Sāvatti in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the monks thus: "Monks."— "Venerable, sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

2. "Monks, Sāriputta is wise; Sāriputta has great wisdom; Sāriputta has wide wisdom; Sāriputta has joyous wisdom; Sāriputta has quick wisdom; Sāriputta has keen wisdom; Sāriputta has penetrative wisdom. During half a month, monks, Sāriputta gained insight into states one by one as they occurred. Now Sāriputta's insight into states one by one as they occurred was this: ...

BV: Now, anytime we are talking about wisdom, we're talking about directly seeing and experiencing dependent origination. Dependent origination is the very

core of the Buddha's teaching, that and the four noble truths. That's what he spent forty-five years telling us about.

Now, part of dependent origination is this: in order to see, you have to have a good working eye and there has to be color and form. When the good working eye hits the color and form, eye consciousness arises. The meeting of these three things is called 'eye contact'. With eye contact as condition, eye feeling arises. Feeling is pleasant, painful, or neither painful nor pleasant. It doesn't have anything to do with emotions, or it can. That's real clear isn't it? Feeling is just feeling, it's either a painful feeling, a pleasant feeling, or a neutral feeling. Emotions are... happen down the way, down in your habitual tendency area. With feeling as condition, craving arises. Now, craving always manifests as tension or tightness in your mind and in your body. It always is the mind that judges whether something is good or not: "I like it." or "I don't like it." and that "I like it" or "I don't like it" causes this tension to arise. Now, I make a big deal out of relaxing a lot, and why I make a big deal out of that is because that's how you let go of craving.

The way ninety-nine percent of the meditation practices are being taught today, there is no relaxing in it. Because of that, there... everybody is practicing one form or another of one-pointed concentration. Now, what's the difference? When your mind is on your object of meditation it gets distracted. When you're practicing one-pointed concentration, you let go of that distraction and immediately come back. You're not seeing the craving, you're not recognizing that it's there even, and when you bring that mind back, the force of the concentration will eventually start suppressing things, pushing them down so that they won't arise anymore: like the hindrances, feelings in the body. Once you get into the deeper jhāna... or into the jhānas, you don't know you have a body anymore because your mind is focused just on your object of meditation, whatever that happens to be.

Now, when you're practicing tranquility meditation that the Buddha teaches: your mind is on your object of meditation, that's the same; gets distracted, that's the same; let go of the distraction, that's the same; now, you relax the tension and tightness caused by mind's attention moving from one thing to another. There's tension and tightness in your body that's very easy to recognize. When you relax your body your mind automatically relaxes. That's the connection between mind and body. The place that you'll be able to recognize it most once you get used to seeing it, is the tension and tightness in your head. It's in your head and in your mind at the same time, and when you let go of that distraction, you'll feel your mind open up and relax. It's a feeling of expansion, and then there's this clarity,

and the calmness that is very noticeable. Then you bring that mind back to your object of meditation. So you've let go of the tension or tightness caused... that caused the craving to arise, you've let that go. You don't have any craving in your mind, that's why your mind is pure at that time. There's no thoughts, there's only this pure observation mind, and you bring that pure mind back to your object of meditation.

Now, in Thailand, in Sri Lanka, in Burma, they teach one-pointed concentration mostly, and it takes years of practice before you can even experience a jhāna. I'm talking... in Thailand it takes around ten years for monks to be able to do that, to be able to experience a jhāna. If you were to stay here for four or five days, and practice exactly the way that I teach, you will be able to experience a jhāna.

The jhāna is a level of your understanding of how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. And there's certain things that happen during the first, the... your experience of jhāna, which we'll go into it in just a moment. So you can see that there's... by doing this, by experiencing going deeper into your understanding of how mind's attention works, your progress in the meditation is actually much faster.

One of the things that the Buddha stressed very much was understanding. It was more important to understand how your mind works than it was to get into any kind of deep meditative state. Through understanding is how you liberate your mind, not through deep concentration, not through having your mind go blank because you've been on one point for so long. You don't understand what happened, you don't understand how it happened, you just know it did, but the Buddha was very, very interested in your understanding exactly how your mind works.

MN:

... {repeats: Now Sāriputta's insight into states one by one as they occurred} ...

BV: Now, when people experience one-pointed concentration, they won't see this, and they'll even... there's one monk in Australia that's teaching one-pointed concentration, and he doesn't even break up joy and happiness. He calls it piṭi-sukha because he can't recognize it. He says: "Well, that's just... that's the experience there is, it's joy and happiness together, but you see right here that they are very different mental states.

MN:

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

BV: How do you become secluded from sensual pleasures? While you're sitting in meditation, you close your eyes, sensual pleasure of seeing doesn't arise. If a sound arises, the way you become secluded from the sound is by noticing that your attention went to the sound, let it be, relax, come back, while you're smiling. One of things that I insist on your doing, while you're doing the meditation, is smiling, and I do this for a very good reason. When your mind has a smile in it, your mind is very alert. Your mind notices when it starts to get heavy, and it's much easier to let go of the heavy mental states. So you actually improve your observation powers by a lot when you're smiling. So the meditation is a smiling meditation.

Now, it's not only seeing and hearing, but anytime your mind gets distracted, recognize that your mind has become distracted, let go of the distraction, release it. Even if your mind is in the middle of a sentence, let it go. Now, how do you let go? You don't pay attention to it anymore, just let it be. Now you relax the tension and tightness caused by mind's movement, now you smile, then you return to your object of meditation. Now, your object of meditation is the loving kindness meditation, and I'll give the instructions a little later for you. And the meditation is a smiling meditation.

What I just described to you, I've been developing this way of learning how to meditate for a number of years, and we call it the 6Rs. You recognize that your mind is distracted, you release, you relax, you re-smile, you return, and then you repeat staying with your object of meditation while you're smiling, and if there's a distraction then you repeat that whole thing again. Now, you don't have to verbalize it, it's just a way to help remind you that this is what you want to be doing with your mind.

Now, when we're talking about sensual pleasures, we're talking about the six sense doors, not five sense doors. It's eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. So you learn how to do the 6Rs with any kind of distraction, and when you do that, that means that you are practicing the being secluded from sensual pleasures.

MN:

... secluded from unwholesome states, ...

BV: Now, there's five unwholesome states that arise, or they can arise, and they are considered unwholesome because they take your attention completely away from the meditation, and get you caught in thinking about this and thinking about that, and that is the five hindrances. Now, when the hindrances arise, they don't generally just arise one at a time, they like to gang up on you. You get restlessness, like you're moving your body right now, that's a form of restlessness, but there's a restlessness and kind of a like of doing that. Ok?

So you have: the first hindrance is lust, greed, "I like it"; the next one is hatred, aversion, "I don't like it"; then there's sleepiness and dullness; and then there's restlessness and anxiety; and then there's doubt. Now, the doubt is the spiritual doubt of whether you're doing the practice correctly or not, then getting all caught up in thinking about. The doubt, when it arises, it has aversion in it and it also has restlessness in it. So that's a biggie. As you begin to practice more and more, you will start to see the doubt disappear fairly easy because you start gaining a lot of confidence once you start getting into the meditation and into the practice, and you're starting to see yourself progress. Then the doubts, they just kind of fade away because: "I'm doing it right. I know I'm doing it right. I couldn't be anything other than correct because I'm feeling the difference, and I'm noticing that I'm more happy, I'm more uplifted, I'm more alert, I have sore toes."

So being secluded from unwholesome states means letting go of the hindrances. Now, the hindrances are a very major part of your practice. They are the thing that pulls your mind away from your object of meditation, the loving kindness and smiling, and you don't even know where you are half the time because you're so caught up in the story.

Now, wandering mind is another form of restlessness: "Oh, this is too important. I have to think about this right now." When you're practicing the way that I'm teaching, you want to pay attention to how the hindrance arises. Why doesn't matter; the story about the hindrance doesn't matter. How does that process work? "I was sitting very calmly on my object of meditation, and all of a sudden I'm over here thinking about this and that." How did that happen? It doesn't just jump over there. There is a definite process, and you need to observe how mind's attention moves from one thing to another, and the more closely you observe how it happens, the more quickly you start letting go of the distraction itself. You start seeing how it arises, you start seeing, after you get caught for a little while: "Oh, now I'm thinking about this, let it be, relax, come back, smile." All of that, and then your mind goes back to that again. Now, this time you're watching a little bit more closely, you're starting to become familiar with how your hindrance arose,

and you see what happened right before your mind just took off and started thinking. So when you can recognize that, you stop right then and let it go, now you're not caught for as long a period of time with your hindrance. And then you let go, and you come back, and then you see what happened right before that, what happened in your mind, in your body. So what you're looking for is how the process works. As you become more familiar with how it works, and how mind's attention actually does arise, then you are able to let it go, and before long you start seeing very subtle, little things about how mind vibrates and that sort of thing. And you can let it go right then, and your mind isn't distracted. So how it arises is really the essence of the Buddha's teaching.

Psychologists these days are very much interested in 'why', but they're not interested in 'how' mind works. They're more caught up in the thinking about, in the emotional states of: "Why did this emotional state come up?" In Buddhism, we don't care why it came up, it came up because the conditions are right for it to come up. What you do with what arises in the present moment dictates what happens in the future. If you see that your mind is caught by this emotional state of - sadness, and anxiety, fear, depression, whatever the catch of the day is - if you see how that arises, you can let it go and not be caught by it, and that directly leads to happiness, it leads to contentment. So when we become secluded from unwholesome states, what we're doing is learning how to let go of these distractions that pull our mind away.

Now, I was telling you about how dependent origination works. This falls right into that. You have eye, you have color and form, eye hits color and form, eye consciousness arises. The meeting of the three is called eye contact. With contact as condition, feeling arises: pleasant, painful, neither painful nor pleasant. Right on its tail, with craving as condition, clinging arises. Clinging is all of your opinions, all of your thoughts, all of your concepts, all of the reasons why, and the strong identification with: "This is me. This is who I am." Anytime you have a strong identification with your thoughts and feelings, you're not seeing how the process works. You're taking the process very personally, and you're grabbing onto it: "This is me. This is who I am. I'm mad and I don't like it." And then your mind takes off with all kinds of crazy things. So the clinging is the story: why this feeling arose, and why "I like this feeling" or "I don't like this feeling", why "I want this feeling to go away" or "I want it to stay". Right after the clinging then your habitual tendency arises. Every time this kind of feeling arises: "I act in this way." And this gives birth to more and more pain and suffering, and anything that has a birth, exists for a little while and then it disappears; it dies. So I've just told you exactly what dependent origination is. The trick is, being able to see that in

everything, how the process works. When you see this as process, then you start seeing that it is an impersonal process because you didn't ask it to come up, it comes up all by itself. What you do with what arises in the present moment dictates what happens in the future.

So a lot of people have an idea that Buddhism doesn't have any free will in it because everything is preordained. Nothing is preordained. What you do with what arises in the present moment, that dictates what's going to happen in the future. If you resist what's happening in the present moment, if you fight what's happening in the present moment, if you try to control what's happening in the present moment, you can look forward to a lot of pain arising in the future, and it's pretty immediate. Don't you think?

SK: Yes.

BV: It's your choice whether to let go of that pain or not. As you start to let go of the pain, you stop identifying with those thoughts and feelings. You start seeing that this is a part of an impersonal process: "It's not me. It's not mine. It's not my anger. It's not my sadness. It's not my depression. It's just anger, pain, depression, anxiety, fear, whatever it happens to be, but it's not mine. I'm not dumb enough to sit here and say well, you know I haven't been really afraid for a long time. I might as well have fear come up now."

MN:

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

BV: Now, the kinds of joy that we're talking about here, there's basically five kinds of joy, but the last two kinds of joy are the kinds of joy that only arise through mental development. The kind of joy this is talking about is called 'uplifting joy'. There's a lot of excitement in the joy, and it's a real happy feeling. Your mind feels light, your body feels light. When the joy fades away, and nothing is permanent so it's not going to stay there forever, it will fade away. Now joy, when it arises, an awful lot of people say: "This is such a pleasant feeling, I want it to stay." and they try to hold onto it. That's a form of suffering, trying to control, trying to make it yours personally because it's a real nice feeling.

Joy and hatred are two sides of the same coin. Joy and pain are two sides of the same coin. What do you do when pain arises? You recognize that it's there, you allow it to be, you relax, you smile, you come back to your object of meditation.

What do you do with joy when joy arises? You recognize it's there, you let it be, you relax, you let it go, you relax, you smile, you come back to your object of meditation, and eventually it will fade away. When it fades away, you feel more comfortable than you've felt ever. You feel very much at ease, you feel comfortable in your mind, you feel comfortable in your body. Your mind becomes very tranquil, very calm. You can still have a distracting thought, but you'll notice it very quickly, and you can let that go, and relax, and come back. You won't have a string of thoughts, you'll just notice one, maybe two thoughts, and then let it go, and relax, and come back.

Now, what I just described to you was the first jhāna.

MN:

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

BV: Your mind becomes very unified, stays on your object of meditation, doesn't want to leave. The... what is it in Zen, they call it the 'effortless effort'? That's what this is.

MN:

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

BV: These are the five aggregates. What are the five aggregates? Body, feeling, perception, volition - now, with volition, there is the thinking - and consciousness. Now, here they describe it a little bit differently, but it's still basically the same thing. You couldn't have contact if you didn't have a body, and the reason that they start out by describing it with 'contact' is because when you get up into the higher jhānas, you don't really have feelings arise in your body when you get into the arūpa jhānas, unless there is contact. So being a little bit more precise the way it's talking about it.

MN:

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

BV: So when you get into the jhāna, these things all happen one by one. They don't happen in clusters, they don't happen all at the same time.

MN:

... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanished.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, ...

BV: He didn't try to hold on to them. He didn't like them.

MN:

... unrepelled, ...

BV: He didn't dislike them.

MN:

... independent, ...

BV: He was seeing this as part of a process, an impersonal process. He wasn't grabbing on with the "I like it. I don't like it." mind. He was independent, he didn't depend on craving at all.

MN:

... detached, ...

BV: Not attached to anything, just seeing it as process.

MN:

... free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. ...

BV: No hindrances arising.

MN:

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

BV: So he understood: "Yeah, this is a nice state, but there's still more work to do."

MN:

5. "Again, monks, with the stilling of thinking and observing thought, Sāriputta entered and abided in the second jhāna which has self-confidence and stillness of

mind without thinking and observing thought, with joy and happiness born of collectedness.

BV: Now, the self confidence: when you start having the hindrances arise, and you don't get caught by them for as long, and you start to understand that this is part of a process, you start to get real confident that you know what you're doing, because you do.

Now, one of the things that happens with most of the people that are practicing one-pointed concentration, is that when they get to certain stage of the concentration, it doesn't allow a hindrance to arise. The force of the concentration pushes it down. While you have good concentration that's true, but when your concentration begins to slip with your daily activities, then you have all kinds of problems with your emotional states and that sort of thing. And you're not able to recognize how this truly is a process, and you are taking it very personally.

So when you're practicing the tranquility meditation, you are actually practicing how to be observant all of the time, and when you're observant all of the time, then you can start letting go of these hindrances which are very painful, and just see them for what they are. They're only this feeling, they're only this emotion, this sensation, and it arises because the conditions are right to arise. So you can see it for what it is, allow it to be, relax, smile, come back to your object of meditation with your daily activities. This leads to a happy, balanced mind all the time. Of course it doesn't happen right away. How many years have you been alive getting caught by all of your emotional things, and causing yourself so much suffering? So you have this strong habitual tendency when this kind of thing happens: "I always act that way." But as you begin to let go of the hindrances more and more, you start seeing how this process works, you get caught for less period of time.

Now, I know that there are some people that they start to get depressed, and they don't like that feeling. So we'll go back to the five aggregates: feeling is one thing, and thoughts are something else, but what we have all learned to do, is try to think our feeling away. You're trying to control the feeling with your thought and it doesn't work. So you have the feeling here, you have your mind and your desire for the feeling to be a particular way, and they're not that way. So your mind starts trying to push it away, and the feeling gets bigger and becomes stronger, and now you're at war with yourself because you're identifying so strongly with your thoughts and your feelings, and because of that, that feeling gets bigger and lasts for longer, and it really becomes a problem. Your

depression: nowadays they have people that are depressed all the time because they don't even notice that there's a feeling that's there, and they're trying to control it, and they take drugs to get rid of it. Makes good sense doesn't it? "Give me the drugs."

When you start to do this meditation and start to learn how your mind works, instead of being... getting depressed, staying depressed for a couple of weeks - just for an example - after a little period of time of doing the meditation, instead of fourteen days of depression then it turns into ten days ... as you continue on then it's seven days ... as you continue on then it's five days ... as you continue on then it's three days ... as you continue on then it's one day ... as you continue on it's for say twelve hours ... as you continue on and learn how this process works, the time that you're caught by this process, and identify with it, becomes less and less. And you can get so that you can be depressed for a good five minutes. Before you saw... before you start to notice that: "I'm causing myself this pain. I don't need to do that."

As you begin to see how your mind works, and it always works in exactly the same way every time. There's contact, there's feeling, there's craving, there's thinking about, and your habitual tendency. Those are the important ones to be able to recognize, especially the feeling. If you can notice when a feeling at one of the sense doors arises, then relax right then when that feeling comes up. Craving will not arise; and if craving doesn't arise, clinging doesn't arise; and if clinging doesn't arise, your habitual tendency doesn't arise; if the habitual tendency doesn't arise, the birth of a new kind of suffering doesn't arise. So it's real important to be able to understand how your mind works, not only while you're sitting in meditation.

While you're doing your daily activities, watch how your mind acts when things don't go exactly the way you want them to, and look at how much pain you cause yourself by indulging in that feeling, and when you get to a certain stage, you'll start going: "What am I doing this to myself for. I don't need to do this." and you can let it go. That's what the meditation is all about. The meditation is being able to recognize how this process works, and being able to see that everything in your entire life is a part of this process, and it's not your personally. When you realize that, there's such a sense of relief. So when you get into the second jhāna, you start to have a lot more confidence as to how all of this stuff works, and that self confidence is not only while you're sitting, it's with your daily activities too. You start to be more confident that you're recognizing how you're causing yourself the

pain, and eventually you will let go of the pain, and not get caught by that one anymore... then another one comes up.

Ok...

MN:

6. "And the states in the second jhāna—the self-confidence, the joy, the pleasure, the unification of mind; ...

BV: When you get into the second jhāna, one of the ways you recognize that you're in the second jhāna is, at first you're verbalizing a wish for your happiness and your friend's happiness. In your mind, you're verbalizing and then you're bringing that feeling up and you're putting that feeling in your heart; that's how you do the practice. When you get to the second jhāna, every time you try to verbalize anything, you start noticing there's a lot of tension and tightness in your head. So you let go of the verbalizing, you let go of the internal dialog, and you just bring that feeling of - if it's peace, or happiness, or joy, or whatever it happens to be - you bring that feeling and put it into your heart and radiate that feeling. So that's one of the ways that you can tell that you're getting into the second jhāna. Another way is that the feeling of joy is quite a bit stronger. You feel much lighter in your mind, in your body, you don't have quite as much excitement in the joy, but you feel the joy being stronger. When the joy fades away, the happiness... you feel much more comfortable in your body, much more relaxed, at ease. You have a lot stronger kind of tranquility that arises, the unification of mind. You still have body, feeling, perception, thoughts, and consciousness while you're in the jhāna.

When people are practicing one-pointed concentration, like this monk that's teaching in Australia, he will tell you that when you get into the second jhāna, you don't have a body anymore, and you just have this very strongly focused mind. Somebody can come up to you and hit you, and you wouldn't know it. That's how strong the concentration is. Somebody can come up to you and they could make loud noises and you wouldn't hear it.

Yes?

ST: You're saying that there's a heavy ecstatic absorption, and you're referring to this that they call the second jhāna.

BV: Their jhāna, their kind of jhāna.

ST: Their jhāna, that corresponds what they are saying is the second jhāna.

BV: Yes, but it doesn't necessarily correspond with what we're talking about right here because the... you still have the five aggregates, you still have contact, and when there's contact, feeling arises and you perceive that feeling.

ST: So this... it's like all this stuff I heard about preliminary with the neighborhood access and all this. That would be more like the first jhāna.

BV: No. No, that's before the first jhāna.

ST: Oh, and then what are they calling the first... what phrase do they use for that?

BV: First jhāna.

ST: They don't have one of those little phrases that some talk about?

BV: Well, in Pail they call it appaṇā-samadhi, but that is all the commentaries.

ST: I want to learn about these things, like I'm talking to people and know what they're talking about.

BV: Well, basically speaking, when you get into access concentration, you still have a more fluid kind of concentration that's still... is alert, but it suppresses the hindrances. You have good strong... you stay with your object of meditation quite easily, but you still know about things that are around you, and if you try to bring a hindrance up, you want to say: "Ok, I want to test this state, let's think a thought of lust." And that lust comes up into your mind, your mind goes: "No. I won't accept it." Now, this is what they call - in vipassanā - this is what they call purity of mind, but it's not the same kind of purity of mind that the Buddha was talking about.

SK: Because it won't transfer over into your normal life, it's... yeah.

BV: Well, that's what their goal is, to be in access concentration all the time, but nobody seems to know how to do that.

SK: And the mind is getting harder and harder ...

BV: Yes.

SK: ... as they're doing that ...

BV: Definitely.

SK: ... and they're pushing because of the tension of the... even if it's a breeze ...

BV: Because of the tension of the craving ...

SK: Right.

BV: ... and they don't see the craving as it really is.

SK: Because it's not being taught.

BV: Major headaches after awhile. So intense that you could take one of those red hot coals right there, and you can put it right here, and that's nothing compared to the pain of the headache.

SK: And vertigo.

BV: Ah, sometimes that happens, not every time.

So when you're getting into access concentration, you feel like your mind is very alert, but you're ignoring that tension. You're just not paying attention to it at all, and it's there. And that's one of the things that I started questioning: "You know, I'm feeling this tightness in my head. Ah, it's nothing. Don't pay any attention to that." But it was really there, and the different insight knowledges, the way that they're teaching, you get to the fourth insight knowledge, which is called 'udayabbaya-ñāna', it's seeing the arising and passing away of phenomena. The pain is so intense that it will make you have tears. It's not that you're crying, it's just pain. I mean: "What the heck, you've been watching that for a long time." But it's really, really strong pain. It's like you bang your head really hard, you might not cry because you banged your head, but the pain caused tears to come.

SK: And that's pretty universal.

BV: Yeah.

ST: How can you deal with that?

BV: You're taught from the very beginning what to do with pain. It's only a sensation, put your attention right in the middle of it, make it bigger, but the thing that they don't recognize is that when a painful sensation arises, the first thing your mind does it says: "I don't like that." And then they say: "Put your attention right in the middle of that sensation." "Whoa, I don't like it. I don't like it. It really gets tight." Doesn't work so well, and believe it or not, because I teach that what you do with pain is, allow the sensation to be there, and relax, come back to your object of meditation, that's one of the reasons that the vipassanā meditators don't like me because the pain is not there. They learn to watch the pain as much as possible because your mind does not waver away from it. Your mind stays right in the middle of it.

Yes?

ST: What if you accepted the pain as like you accept your hand, you know. It's something you got. It's going to be there for awhile.

BV: Right.

ST: Then it lessens.

BV: Yeah, but that's not the instructions for vipassanā. What they want you to do is develop what they call equanimity. You got a pain in your knee, you put your attention right in the middle of that, and you see what they call 'the true nature of the pain'. You see stabbing, you see pinching, you see heat, you see vibration, you see all of these different things in the pain, and as you watch that, then eventually your mind starts to gain a sense of balance with it. It's a great object of meditation, it really is, and when you get deeper into the insight knowledges, you get to a place that's called 'equanimity to formations' (saṅkhārupekkhā-ñāna), and at that time, really intense pain... I mean, you thought you were seeing pain before, but really intense pain comes up, but your mind will see that, it just doesn't waver. It's: "Ok, let's watch this one for awhile."

ST: Ah, a mental pain?

BV: It's a meditation pain. I'm not going to make you go through that.

ST: The reason I ask is, I broke my ankle and they put nine pins and two plates in it in June, and it took over six months to heal. It hurt.

BV: Yeah.

ST: But I just said: "I accepted that would hurt, that it's going to hurt:" So it's not debilitating.

BV: Yes. And when your attention goes to your ankle, what happens is your mind does this (gesture). So what you have to do is say: "Ok, that sensation is there", ...

ST: Now it doesn't matter.

BV: ... and allow it to be there, then relax, and smile into that. What does that do? The muscles in your lower leg and around your ankle, when the pain arises, they contract. When they contract, they stop the blood from flowing to that spot, and that makes the pain more intense. If you want to develop getting into the body's natural pain reliever, it's called endorphins, what you have to do is change the dislike of that and start putting love into that, and when you put love into it, all of those muscles start relaxing, and as you accept it, the endorphins start going through your body and then the pain just kind of dissipates by itself.

ST: Yeah, but then it will come back, ...

BV: Well ...

ST: ... and then it goes away again.

BV: Yeah, of course. That's the nature of it, but what you want to do every time is relax into it, and allow it to be there because that's the truth.

ST: You accept it.

BV: Yeah, right, but you accept it and relax into it, that's the one. It's the relaxing of your mind and saying: "Ok, you're there, there's tightness in my mind, relax."

Then...

MN:

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

BV: Now, what are we talking about right here? We're talking about seeing how everything, when it arises, is part of an impersonal process, and we're seeing right here, up close and personal, that everything changes.

MN:

... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. ...

BV: Everything is impersonal. Everything is changing.

MN:

... He understood there's a state beyond this and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: So you know that you still have more to go. Now, what happens when you go from the second jhāna to the third jhāna is the joy disappears, but by now you're pretty used to having the joy. And it's always kind of comical for me because people come up and they'll start complaining because the joy doesn't arise, and I ask them questions about their balance of mind and how comfortable they are in their meditation, and they tell me about that and they say: "Good." "Continue. Everything is going along fine." You don't have to have joy. It's just one of the stages.

Now, one of the reasons that you go from one jhāna to the next is because when your mindfulness weakens a little bit, then a hindrance arises, and as you recognize this hindrance and see the process, you let go and you get into the jhāna, and then you have that hindrance... another hindrance comes up and you work with that. When you start to get your self confidence going very nicely, and you start to see this process, you are teaching yourself exactly how mind works, and as you let that go your understanding of the process deepens, and you start seeing it in a much more profound and deeper way. You're teaching yourself.

So the hindrances, as much as a pain in the neck that they can be, are your best friend and teacher because they're showing you exactly where your attachment is, they're showing you exactly how to let go of the attachment if you do it in the right way, and it's helping you to go deeper into your meditation. So the hindrances are your best friend. They're not something to fight with, or dislike, or

try to control even. It's just: "Ok, this is what's happening right now." As you stop identifying with the hindrance and see it as an impersonal process, you start developing your personality so that there's a lot more positive and alert observations.

What happens when you get to the third jhāna is, you have another hindrance, but by this time you're pretty well used to it, and when you get to the third jhāna, the joy does not arise anymore, it's too coarse a feeling. You feel very, very comfortable in your body, very, very comfortable in your mind. As you go deeper into the third jhāna, you start losing feeling in different parts of your body. You can be sitting there and all of a sudden: "My feet disappeared. I can't feel my legs. I can't feel my arms. I can't feel my shoulder or my back", or wherever. As you lose tension in your mind, you lose tension in your body, but you're still aware that you have a body, and if there is any contact you will feel that. If I come up to you and I touch you, you would feel that, but it's not going to make your mind shake anymore, it's just going to stay there with this balance.

MN:

7. "... with the fading away as well of joy, Sāriputta abided in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, still feeling happiness with the body, he entered upon and abided in the third jhāna, on account of which noble ones announce 'He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.'

BV: Your mindfulness is very sharp. You're starting to see everything much more clearly now. You don't get caught for as long with the hindrances unless you make the conscious decision that it's time to really indulge in it, and almost nobody is crazy enough to do that.

MN:

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

BV: Now, the energy is a real interesting factor because as you go deeper into your meditation, you have to start learning how to pay attention to the energy that you're putting in your observations. If you put too much attention in, you will start to get restlessness, you'll start to feel this restless feeling, and then your mind becomes distracted with thinking thoughts. You don't put quite enough

energy into it, your mind gets dull, and you start to get sleepy. So the energy needs to be tweaked just a little bit sometimes.

Now, you can have a great sitting, and then you go and you say: "Well, that was such a good sitting." You get up, you do your walking, you come back, and you say: "Well, I'll do that again." and you start putting a little bit too much energy in because of that desire, and as that doesn't meet your expectations, then you put in a little bit more energy. Now, what you have to do is realize that that desire for your meditation to be good is the very thing that stops your meditation from being good.

So what you need to do is back off on your energy, don't try as hard, let go of that desire in longing for something to be in a particular way because you don't know what's going to happen next. That tree right there could fall on your head, who knows. Or that tree or that tree, I don't care which one, but you always wind up having to tweak your energy a little bit, so that you keep your balance. As you go deeper into the meditation, the balance becomes finer, and finer, and finer. So you have to learn how to work with your energy, so that you can keep with your object of meditation, and with a balance that equanimity can give you when you're doing it right.

It's like I was telling Joe last night, it's: as you go through the jhānas, the first jhāna, it's like walking on a tightrope that's about this big (gesture), as you go to the second jhāna it's a little bit smaller; as you go to the third jhāna it's a little bit smaller; as you go to the fourth jhāna it's smaller; and as you keep going, it gets smaller and smaller until it's just like a thread of the spider. But the whole time you're learning to work with your energy, and putting in exactly the right amount of energy, so you could stay balanced. It's all part of the learning process. You learn how to do it, just like you learn how to meditate. I can't honestly tell you how to meditate, nobody can. It comes from direct experience of your doing.

ST: Oh, but people did tell you what you're going to experience.

BV: And this is part of the problem with Buddhism because an awful lot of the people that are monks, they're into reading the books and then somebody comes to them and says: "Teach me how to meditate." So they teach from their understanding, not from their direct experience, and that makes a difference.

SK: Because their main resource is not there, their main resource is the commentary.

BV: Right.

ST: I heard that, you know, when you're first starting. Anyway, oh my God, did I turn the iron off, is the icebox door closed, should I let the dog in, the cat out. I heard that was called the monkey mind.

BV: That is part of the monkey mind, but that is the restlessness, and restlessness is a painful feeling, and that's the thing... huh?

ST: You don't go aggravating.

BV: Well, yeah. It's that too, but it starts out as a painful feeling, and then the craving and clinging come up, and then your story about: "Well, did I do this or didn't I do this?" or whatever. It's real interesting when somebody starts to get good with meditation, a lot of the restlessness, the surface restlessness, starts to disappear, and when you sit, you sit, you're not fidgeting, you're not moving around from one thing to another. Now, why does that happen? Because when you're sitting in meditation, there are certain sensations that arise, and it makes you want to move. When you start calming your mind, you see how that works, and you go deeper than that, and now you sit very still, you don't move around. And you can tell from, oh five hundred feet off, in a crowd, who's the meditator and who isn't. You can tell just by looking. Five hundred people sitting, if they're not meditators they're shifting, and scratching here, and then they're looking over here, and they're doing all of this stuff, and the meditator is just sitting.

I was... this has happened to me more than once actually, but I'll be... like a museum, or I'll be in a store, and I'm looking at something, and I'm paying attention to it, and I'm looking, and somebody stands right beside me, and they turn around, and they look up, and they see I'm a person, not a mannequin, and it's shocking to them: "I thought you were one of these mannequins."

ST: Does that really happen?

SK: Yeah, it does.

BV: Yes, more than once, but that shows you the state of my mind, at that time anyway, because my mind... my body wasn't moving around a lot, that's a reflection that my mind wasn't moving around a lot.

So...

MN:

9. "Again, monks, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

BV: When you're practicing loving kindness, you're practicing radiating loving kindness from your heart. When you get to the deeper stages, where you pretty much lose your body, all of a sudden you can't radiate from your heart anymore, and you'll start noticing the radiation comes from your head, and that's when you should come and talk to me because that's when we start doing the fun stuff.

When you get to the fourth jhāna, you are now considered an advanced meditator, and actually it doesn't take all that long to get to the fourth jhāna if you're practicing exactly the way that the Buddha is talking about in the books. You follow those instructions, and I've seen people in four days get to the fourth jhāna, and it's not that uncommon. It's not that they were super... super-human beings, they'd done meditation before, but they made up their mind that they were going to follow the directions that I was giving, precisely, exactly, and geez they just moved right along when that happened.

MN:

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

BV: Now, it's not that painful feeling won't arise or pleasant feeling won't arise, it's that it does not make your mind waver. You see that there's a painful feeling... I mean you can still have a bee come and sting you and you'll feel it, but your mind isn't going to jump to that and make you do all kinds of things. Say: "Ok, that's it." So the fourth jhāna: even the happy, comfortable, pleasant feeling is too coarse.

The highest feeling that you can experience in Buddhism is equanimity, it's that balance of mind, and there's different degrees of equanimity. This is like the beginnings... the beginning of equanimity, and as you go deeper, it gets deeper. The equanimity, the balance of mind, really becomes very, very deep, very profound as you go deeper in your meditation.

MN:

... {repeats: the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling}, the mental unconcern due to tranquility, ...

BV: Now, isn't that an amazing sentence?

MN:

... the purity of mindfulness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Five aggregates are still there. Now, this is another point of contention with people that are practicing one-pointed concentration because they will say very explicitly that you no longer breathe when you're in the fourth jhāna.

ST: What?

BV: You can't, you don't breathe. You don't breathe through your lungs anymore, you breathe through your ears, you breathe through the skin.

Now, I teach mindfulness of breathing, and I teach metta meditation, the loving kindness meditation. It doesn't much matter which one you're doing, except the loving kindness your progress is a lot faster than it is with the mindfulness of breathing, but some people are real attached to the breathing and they want to do it, and that's no problem. You still will go through all of these jhānas, you'll have the basically the same kind of experience. When you get to the fourth jhāna you're still breathing. When you get into the arūpa jhānas you're still breathing, and that's because you're doing the tranquility meditation as opposed to the one-pointed concentration.

SK: And it's an aware jhāna instead of an absorption jhāna.

BV: Right.

ST: How can you do mindfulness of breathing then when you get to that stage? You're at four jhāna or there's no breathing anymore.

SK: Because they're saying that you're still in absorption state, you're breathing through your ...

BV: Skin and your ...

SK: ... and your ears. And you have a canal, you can do it, it's there.

ST: You know, your breathing could be so slow, and ...

BV: Yeah, but they say that the breathing stops, that's what they say, and I'm here to tell you that it doesn't when you're practicing the way that the Buddha tells us to do the instructions. So there's another difference between what's being taught right now as Buddhism, in the fourth jhāna. I mean, one monk is real big on the air disappearing, and I took him to this sutta and I said: "There's still contact. How do you explain that?" "Well you don't have a body anymore when you get to the fourth jhāna." "There's still contact when you're in the fifth jhāna. How do you explain that? There's still the five aggregates when you're in the infinite space. There's still five aggregates when you're in infinite consciousness."

ST: Now, when you get there, you still have your body, but when you're in a certain state of consciousness your body doesn't have it.

BV: But the thing that differentiates the Buddha's teaching with the people that are practicing other things is, even when you get into these deep states, you'd feel that, but they don't. They don't feel it at all. They say: "You don't have a body anymore." It's all a mental state.

ST: So you're aware ...

ST: No, it isn't mind over matter.

BV: No, what it is, is one-pointed concentration as opposed to tranquility concentration or...

SK: It is a state where you can ring a bell beside someone's ear and they don't hear it. Or I can hit you with a two-by-four and you don't feel it.

ST: I used to, I used to do hypnotherapy, and you can hypnotize yourself quite well. You're doing anything but not feeling anything.

BV: Yes you can, but does that lead to the cessation of suffering?

ST: I think that depends on what you allow yourself or teach yourself to believe.

BV: It doesn't have anything to do with belief, that's the thing. Belief will only take you so far. It has to be the direct experience of letting go of the craving continually. That's why you have to have the breath because the instructions, they say: "On the in-breath you relax. On the out-breath you relax." and it says that all the way up through the fourth jhāna and beyond. If you don't have the breath, if you don't feel the breath at all, what is your object of meditation then?

ST: Well it can be, you know, meditation can become a form of addiction.

BV: Ah. That again depends on whether it is one-pointed concentration or tranquility. What you're doing is you're learning when mind has subtler and subtler movements in it. You're learning how that subtle movement occurs, and every time you relax, there's this clarity of observation, and it gets very subtle indeed, but what you're trying to do is develop the habit of this relaxing continually. When you get up into the higher stages of the meditation, there will come a time where you don't know whether there's anything there or not. It almost feels like you're awake-sleeping, and that's called the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. The only time you know what's happening is not while you're in that state, but when you come out of that state and reflect on what was in that state. Now, if you didn't see that you were relaxing while you were in that state, you haven't developed your meditation well enough. It has to be an automatic relaxing because when you first start meditation, your mind is doing this (gesture). As you go deeper and deeper, it becomes less and less. You get into the fourth jhāna and beyond, then it's getting into vibration, and the vibration becomes less and less. How does that happen? By relaxing. As you let go of the vibration more and more, the mind becomes... goes in deeper, and the vibration becomes less and less until you can't tell whether it's vibrating or not, and you'll get to a place where it completely stops. There is no perception, there is no feeling. When you come out of that and you have perception and feeling, then you will see how dependent origination actually occurs. You'll see it real close. You'll notice how: when this arises, that arises, and you'll see each of these individual things for real. And then you'll see that when you let go of this one, then that one won't arise; when you let go of that one, this one won't arise; and that's how you finally get to let go of the ignorance. When that happens, your understanding is so profound that you will experience Nibbāna, and that's what the Buddha was trying to teach us, but it doesn't have to do with belief, it has to do with direct experience. You can't be anywhere, controlling anything; it's the observation that is the one.

ST: It's just being.

BV: Being, pure being. Yes.

So that's as far as I'm going to take you with this today. The fourth jhāna is plenty far enough to keep you for the weekend anyway. Now, I want to get into some of the instructions in the meditation, and please follow the instructions as closely as you possibly can. Don't add anything, don't subtract anything, just keep it simple. Do you remember awhile back they used to use, what do they call those things, ...

SK: Acronyms?

BV: ... acronyms, letters for words. Well, KISS: keep it simple son, or sister. The actual one is keep it simple stupid, but don't try to complicate anything. I told you about the 6Rs already: you recognize, you release, you relax, you re-smile, you return to your object of meditation, and you repeat staying with your object of meditation. Anytime you see that you're not doing that, then start doing it again. Do that with every distraction: let go of the distraction, relax, smile, come back to your object of meditation again, stay with your object of meditation as long as you can. Sometimes it's a second, sometimes it's an hour, it doesn't really matter. It's always going to be different, it's never going to be the same two sittings in a row. I guarantee that's true.

And that's how you have to learn to tweak your energy a little bit, so that you can have a better meditation. Make this a game to play instead of being serious with it. Got to smile, smile all the time! Now, the smile is in your mind, the smile is in your eyes, your smile is in your heart, your smile is on your lips. So it's not just a pasted-on smile. I don't care what you're doing: when you do your walking, I want you to smile; when you're going to the bathroom, I want you to smile; when you're taking a shower, I want you to smile. I don't care what you're doing, keep the smile going. This is a very important aspect of the meditation. It really does make a difference. It improves your mindfulness ten or twenty times because when your mind starts to grab onto something, and starts to think about it, you notice you're not smiling. Then you see: "Oh, I'm not smiling", and you start putting a smile into it again.

The meditation is a source of play; don't make it serious. The meditation is about developing your perspective that everything that arises is impersonal. If you see that you're caught by an emotional state, then laugh with yourself because you got caught. That changes your perspective from: "I am mad and I don't like it." to "Oh, it's only this anger." It changes the perspective of what you're taking as being personal, and changes it to an impersonal process. Keep your mind light.

The more joy you can experience while you're practicing your meditation, the faster your progress is in the meditation.

Now, stay with the same spiritual friend all the time. Don't jump from one person ... to another person ... to another person. The first ten minutes of every sitting, send loving kindness to yourself. Put yourself in your heart, you bring up a feeling, that of happiness, joy, whatever. You know what that feeling feels like, peace and calm. You know what it feels like to be peaceful and calm? Then you can make that wish for yourself. That's part of loving kindness too. Make the wish, put that feeling in your heart, surround yourself with that feeling, and radiate that feeling as long as you can.

When your mind gets distracted, then let go of the distraction, relax, smile, come back, and do it again. It doesn't matter how active your mind is. As soon as you notice that your mind is distracted and thinking about something, then simply let it go and start over again. You can't be critical of yourself, that's a 'no fair'. If you're critical of yourself then you're bringing up unwholesome thoughts and unwholesome feelings, and identifying with them. It's just thoughts, it's just feelings, so what. It's ok, play with them, have fun with them, relax into them. Allow them to be without keeping your attention on them.

After ten minutes, then you stay with the same spiritual friend all the time, and you take your spiritual friend and you put them right in the middle of your heart, and then when you make a wish for their happiness, you feel that wish, you surround them with that feeling. And the loving kindness is that glowing, radiating feeling that comes from your heart. You don't have to figure out what direction your friend is in because you keep your friend in your heart. If you can see your friend in your mind's eye with the visualization, do that. If you have trouble with visualization, then you visualize with your thoughts, but when you see your friend you always see them smiling and happy, and that helps remind you to be smiling and happy. If your mind starts to dull out, and you start to get sloth and torpor arising, it's because you're not paying enough attention to your spiritual friend. You're not taking enough interest in staying with wishing your spiritual friend happiness. That's what causes you to dull out. So be more interested!

I want you to sit no less than thirty minutes. Now, you can sit on the chair, you can sit on the floor, you can find a rock to sit on, I really don't much care. Wherever you feel comfortable sitting then go there and sit. We do have insect repellent because the insects around here are fairly fierce, but you can take care of that. But sit without moving your body at all for at least thirty minutes. If your

meditation is good and you feel like sitting longer then sit longer. There's sometimes you'll feel like thirty minutes is hours, and you'll sometimes you feel like thirty minutes is just seconds. When your meditation is good stay with it. Everybody is going to be on their own schedule.

Now, when you do your walking meditation, stay with your spiritual friend. When you get into a jhāna, you can be walking, you can be sitting, you can be taking a bath, you can be doing anything while you're in the jhāna. Don't lose it. Keep your meditation with you all the time. That means, got to smile all the time, even when you feel grumpy.

OK, does anybody have any questions? Oh, first sitting is at 5:30.

ST: In the morning?

BV: In the morning, in the Dhamma hall, and we go through taking the precepts and all of that sort of thing every day, and we do some reading, and then we sit. Breakfast is around seven o'clock. After breakfast, take care of your personal things. Around eight o'clock, she (SK) has a work period for everybody. Right?

SK: Yeah, just simple stuff.

BV: But the metta... the reason that we have a work period is not to get you to help us around here, it's to show you that the meditation can be done all the time. It doesn't matter what you're doing, you can still smile and be happy. Right? It really does make a difference. So you want to practice that while you're here.

And about eleven o'clock is when we'll eat lunch. After lunch, then you can lie down, take rest until about one o'clock... eleven o'clock, right?

SK: It was today.

BV: After one o'clock then you do your sitting and walking, alternating your sitting and walking. Don't sit here, and then you feel a little bit stiff, and you get up, and then you sit over here. Get up and do your walking meditation, but keep your meditation going all the time.

ST: How do you do the walking meditation?

BV: The same way you do your sitting meditation. You can walk in a normal way. If your mind is super-active, best not to walk fast, walk a little bit slower. If you need to pick up your energy, you can walk a little bit faster. That's what the meditation for walking is all about. You sit for a period of time, your blood starts to get real... almost stagnant because you don't have a lot of body activity. You get up and do your walking meditation, that gets the circulation going. So the next time you sit, you have a lot more energy. If you sit too much without doing any walking, you'll get to a place where your mind becomes very blank. It's just like somebody took an eraser and went... (gesture). And you have no idea how many people come to tell me how advanced they are in their meditation because they had sloth and torpor. I mean it's real. People think this is some kind of really high state, and what it is, is a state of not enough energy.

Now, if you have sloth and torpor, and every time you sit you just can't quite get up enough energy, do your walking meditation. Do it in a straight line for about forty feet, just walk back and forth. When you're doing... when you have sloth and torpor, you walk in a normal way forward, you stop, you don't turn around, and you walk backwards while you're still doing your meditation, you're still saying with your spiritual friend. You get to the end of that, then you walk forward and then you walk backward. That will pick up your energy very nicely. It really does work.

ST: I'd like to clarify something.

BV: Yeah.

ST: When you say spiritual friend, just exactly what do you mean?

BV: Ok. It's somebody that when you think of them and their good qualities, you have a lot of respect for them.

ST: It's a living person?

BV: It's a living person, it's a person of the same sex. Ok?

Once you pick that friend, don't change to another until I tell you to. So you stay with the same friend, every sitting, every walking, every... taking a shower, every going to the bathroom, every meal, every whatever you're doing. Stay with that same friend all the time, but you do want to pick a friend that you really do respect.

So why don't we 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

Prepare by Chris Farrant 9th June 2012
Proofed by CF 7th May 2013
Format ok by DJ

Sutta translation (C) Bhikkhu Bodhi 1995, 2001. Reprinted from The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikaya with permission of Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144 U.S.A.
www.wisdompubs.org