

MN 111 Anupada Sutta - One by One As They Occurred
Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi on 18 March 2012
At Dhamma Dena Vipassanā Center, Joshua Tree, California

Transcript of first 1 hour 17 minutes of the recorded talk.

MN 111:

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

2. "Monks, Sāriputta is wise; Sāriputta has great wisdom; Sāriputta has wide wisdom; Sāriputta has joyous wisdom; Sāriputta has quick wisdom; Sāriputta has keen wisdom; Sāriputta has penetrative wisdom. ...

BV: Now, all of these different things are talking about how Sāriputta is able to see the links of dependent origination and put it together.

MN:

... 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:

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

BV: Secluded from sensual pleasures means letting go of the six sense doors, not being drawn to the sense doors and indulging in that sense, whether it's hearing, or smelling, or tasting, or touching, or seeing, or thinking. Being secluded from unwholesome states means that he didn't have any hindrances arise at that time.

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.

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

BV: Now, this next little bit is very interesting because this is the description of the five aggregates. Ok? The five aggregates and the four foundations of mindfulness are just different ways of saying the same thing. You have five aggregates: you have the body, you have feeling, you have perception, you have thoughts, you have consciousness. Four foundations of mindfulness: you have body, same; feeling, same; perception is part of feeling and it's also part of consciousness; and you have dhammas; and you have consciousness. So those four foundations of mindfulness and the five aggregates are just different ways of saying the same thing. So the point being - these states in the jhāna - while you're in the jhāna you are able to practice the four foundations of mindfulness at exactly the same time. Now, the way that this is described is a little bit different than the five aggregates. Instead of 'body' it says 'contact' here because when you get into the later jhānas you don't feel your body unless there is contact. Ok?

When you get to the fourth jhāna, you're not going to be able to radiate loving kindness from your heart anymore because you won't feel it. The feeling of loving kindness will come up into your head. The only thing that you will feel in your body is if there is contact, if something touches. So he just uses 'contact' and changes it with... changes 'body' into 'contact' because of the later meditations.

Ok...

MN:

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

BV: Now, this little statement right here is saying that he's seeing impermanence, he's seeing things change. They were there for a period of time, they disappeared. That is impermanence.

MN:

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

BV: He didn't hold onto anything.

MN:

... unrepelled, ...

BV: He didn't push anything away.

MN:

... independent, ...

BV: He saw that these are impersonal processes that arise and pass away.

MN:

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

BV: A mind rid of barriers is a mind that doesn't have any hindrances in them.

MN:

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

BV: Yes?

ST: I have a question. So does that mean that his mind then moves so these phenomena, would arise and his mind would not move to these phenomena? Or...

BV: What phenomena are you talking about?

ST: Like the...

BV: These different things occur while he is on his object of meditation. He's able to observe these different things.

SK: If he's detached then he's not interested in what arises.

ST Right. So he is aware that these things are happening, but his mind is not really like...

BV: Right. He's not going to them.

ST: I see.

BV: Ok?

ST: Yes.

MN:

5. "Again, monks, with the stilling of thinking and examining thought, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the second jhāna which has self-confidence, stillness of mind without thinking and examining thought, with joy and happiness born of collectedness.

BV: Now, when you get into the second jhāna... well when you get into the first jhāna, you have joy arise. Ok, there's five different kinds of joy that can arise. The first three kinds of joy can arise for anyone at any time when the conditions are right. The last two kinds of joy only arise through mental development.

The first kind of joy is goose bumps, and you have a happy feeling and then it goes away.

The next kind of joy is like a flash of lightening. It's there, it's real intense for short period of time, goes away.

The next kind of joy is called... is like standing in the ocean and then having a wave of joy come over, and then another wave of joy come over.

Again, these three kinds of joy can happen to anyone at any time. It doesn't matter whether they have mental development or not.

The next kind of joy is called 'uplifting joy'. This is what you experience in the first two jhānas, this kind of joy. Mind is very light, your body feels very light. It is a very happy feeling and it has excitement in it. Ok? Now, in the first jhāna, you experience that a little bit. In the second jhāna, it's quite a bit more. You feel much, much lighter in your mind, much lighter in your body. So much so that you feel like you're floating.

The last kind of joy is the awakening factor of joy, and it's called 'all pervading joy'. It's like taking a cup and filling it full of water and just keep pouring, and pouring, and pouring. There's no part of the cup that's not untouched by this joy. This kind of joy doesn't have the excitement in it. It is a very happy feeling, but it's not doing this (gesture – wiggles hand ~10:50 to 11:00 on video) with your mind, it's not moving so much.

When you experience the second jhāna, every time you try to make a... verbalize a wish in your mind, it causes tightness in your mind. Ok? So you have to let go of that tightness. If you do that a couple of times, and that tightness comes up every time, then drop the verbalization of the wish, just bring up the feeling of the wish. This is where the Buddha talked about it being... having 'noble silence' because you have to drop your verbalization in your mind. Now you just bring up the feeling of peace or happiness or joy, whatever it happens to be.

Ok. Now you have self-confidence... when you get to the second jhāna, you start to feel very strongly that now you're starting to understand how this stuff works. You're starting to understand that these hindrances, when they arise, are not your enemy to fight with. You're starting to understand that when you let them go, and use the 6Rs, and come back to your object of meditation, they're actually helping you to go deeper into your practice. So you start to feel more confident: "Ah, now I feel like I know what I'm doing." And this happens not only while you're sitting, but it also can happen with your daily activities.

Now, there is a belief, and it comes from people that practice one-pointed concentration or absorption concentration, that the only time you can experience jhāna is when you are sitting in meditation. This is not true. You can experience joy when you're walking down the street. Right? You can have a lot of joy arise, and you can radiate loving kindness to everybody you meet when you're walking or while you're doing something; washing dishes, taking a bath. You can get into a jhāna at any time, and this happens all the way up to the realm of nothingness, and we'll get into that in a little bit.

So you start to have more confidence that what you're doing is a good thing. Radiating the loving kindness, and you radiate it to everybody around you while you're doing your daily activities, you start to see them smile and be happy. I get a big kick out of going into big stores, grocery stores or whatever, and I start looking for little kids that are crying. Ok? And then I go up and I stand by them and I start radiating loving kindness to them and then they get this shocked look on their face, and they stop crying and then they start smiling. Now, what am I doing by doing that? I'm practicing generosity. Ok? This was a real shock in Asia every time I brought it up because they only talk about generosity as giving material things, but generosity is a lot bigger than that. You practice generosity with your body, you practice generosity with your speech, you practice generosity with your mind. When you're smiling, you're practicing generosity because you're giving that smile to other people. When you say things that make them and you happy, you're practicing generosity with your speech. Quite often, after the little

baby stops crying, mom is standing right beside her or him, and quite often I will start talking with mom about what a nice little baby it is. Now, what does that do for her? One, I've helped her to calm down the crying baby, and two, I've given her compliments. What does that do to her mind? See, you practice your generosity in all different kinds of ways.

When the Buddha talked about meditation, he talked about practicing three things. He talked about first practicing your generosity. When you practice your generosity you get out of yourself and you take notice of people around you, and you start radiating loving kindness to people around you, that's a way of practicing your generosity. So you get out of yourself and you start paying attention to other people, and help them to be happy. You say things that make other people happy. Now, speech is not only an external thing, speech is also an internal thing. Ok? Has to do with your thinking. So being kind to yourself and wishing yourself well, you're practicing your generosity to yourself, but you're also able to give that good feeling away.

The second part of meditation is what we do in the morning, we're taking the precepts and keeping the precepts. This is an important part of the practice. Now, an awful lot of people in the West have had the word 'morality' shoved down their throat and it kind of gets caught, "don't really like it", but when you keep your precepts, you are practicing morality. It's not a 'sometime thing', it's something that you need to practice all the time. Why? When you break a precept, you knowingly are causing yourself a guilty feeling, and then you have remorse. When you break a precept, it will affect you because hindrances arise because you break a precept.

So keeping the precepts and keeping them very closely, what it does is it helps you to know what you're going to do before you do it, and then you can back away from killing living beings, and spraying that nasty stuff that gets into the ground like all these farmers are doing right now. And they know they're killing beings by doing it, and they're harming a lot of other beings around too.

You don't take something that's not given. How does it feel when somebody steals something of yours. Why would you do that to somebody else?

You refrain from having wrong sexual activity. What is wrong sexual activity? Wrong sexual activity is sexual activity with another person's mate. Sexual activity with someone that's too young. In essence, it's any kind of sexual activity that causes you or anyone else around you to not be happy, anyone involved.

The next precept is a hard one to keep because it has to do with speech. It's real easy to let things slip. It's real easy to get caught up in cursing. It's real easy to get caught up in gossip. What is gossip? Gossip is saying something about somebody else and making up stories about them. Doesn't have anything to do with reality.

The last precept is not taking any drugs or alcohol.

Now, if you keep these precepts without breaking them, your mind becomes hindrance free. Ok? Now, I've taught people that have... they've really kept their precepts very closely, and they come and they want to meditate. The first day of the meditation, they could get into a jhāna very easily because they don't have the hindrances coming up and knocking them out of what they're doing. Mind becomes very peaceful and calm when you keep the precepts. Mind becomes disturbed when you break the precepts.

Now, there's... I go to a certain website and there's a lot of discussions of different things. There's some... quite a few healing ideas that come up and that sort of thing, and there's two or three people on that site that insist on cursing, and a person that curses often is telling everyone around them that they are low-born. They're coarse, and this kind of language makes everybody else back away from that person. I don't want to be around somebody that's using the f-word all the time. I don't want to be around somebody that gets angry and starts cursing every time some little thing happens. Why? Because their mindfulness isn't good at that time. They're breaking a precept, and that will come back and cause problems for them, but it also causes problems for me if I have to read this or listen to it. I don't want to be around it.

So keeping the precept of right speech at times can be somewhat difficult. Little white lies are lies, you're not saying something that's true, so don't do that. It's better to say nothing than it is to say something that you know that's not true. It's better to keep silent rather than express your anger through cursing at something else. And this affects your meditation here and now. Ok? You can have the practice of, or the habit of, cursing and then you come and you want to practice meditation and have progress, but because of breaking that precept, it affects the way your meditation occurs right now. You're not going to be able to go as deep.

There's nobody that's going to stand over you and throw down lightning bolts or something like that because you broke a precept, but you know you broke it and

therein lies the problem because that causes remorse to arise in your mind. That causes you to see things happening in the world in a different way because it clouds your mind.

Ok, I'll get off my soap box. The last part of meditation is daily activity practice plus sitting. So those three kinds of practice are meditation. It's not separate, one thing from another. These are interconnected, interwoven.

Ok...

MN:

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

BV: Again, you have the four foundations of mindfulness expressed as the five aggregates.

MN:

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

BV: Now, this 'decision' that Sāriputta saw... the decision is what your free will is all about. You have a choice whether to 6R or not, whether to relax and let go of something or not. If you hold on to it, that choice is going to come back as: this is going to arise over and over and over again until you let it go, or you choose to use the 6Rs and relax and let go of that false idea in a personal self, and then your mind gets more and more clear. So you have a choice of what you do with what arises in the present moment, and what you do with that dictates what happens in the future. This is karma, this is the way it works, and it's a subtle form of karma, it's not a big gross thing.

Ok...

MN:

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

BV: So even though you start going through these different jhānas, you still have the realization: "Yeah, there's more. I still have more to experience." But things start getting easier when you get into the second jhāna, and it gets easier when you get into the third jhāna because you're starting to really understand that the hindrances are there to teach you where your attachment is, to teach you how to let go of these attachments, and when you let go of attachments, you let go of suffering. So it's real important to understand this.

MN:

7. "Again, monks, with the fading away 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: So what happens when you get into the third jhāna is, joy doesn't arise anymore. You feel really comfortable in your mind and in your body. You have very nice equanimity starting to come up. That means: a sound happens or a sensation arises in your body, it doesn't make your mind shake and go to it. You have this balance of mind that says: "Ok, that happened. That sound is there. It's ok for it to be there. That feeling is ok."

Now, as you go deeper into this particular jhāna, you start losing feeling in different parts of your body. You're sitting with your hands together and all of a sudden you don't feel your hands, but if you put your attention on your hands, you will feel it. Otherwise you just won't feel it. And it'll start to happen in different parts of the body. As you lose tension in your mind, you lose feeling in the body. So all of a sudden you're sitting there and you go: "I don't feel my leg, it's not there." Put your attention on them: "Yeah, they're still there." But when you stay with your object of meditation, then you just won't notice your body so much anymore. This is where a lot of tension and tightness in your body is let go of, and you start... your circulation gets better, things like that.

MN:

8. "And the states in the third jhāna—the equanimity, the happiness, the mindfulness, the full awareness, and unification of mind; ...

BV: Again, the five aggregates.

MN:

... 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; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood this:...and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is still more to do.

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

BV: When you get to the fourth jhāna, the feeling of loving kindness, that radiating feeling in your heart, disappears, and it manifests in your head. So you're not going to be feeling anything from your neck down, unless you put your attention on it. When you get to the fourth jhāna, the equanimity that you experience is very strong. You feel very strong balance of mind. Your awareness is much sharper than ever before. When you get into the fourth jhāna, there can still be sensations that arise in your body, but it doesn't make your mind shake and go to them. The equanimity that you experience in the fourth jhāna is the highest form of equanimity... is the highest feeling that you can experience as a human being. Equanimity - although there's different levels of equanimity - when you get to equanimity, this is the highest feeling that you'll be able to experience.

When you get to the fourth jhāna, that's when I will come to you, or you'll come to me and tell me about it, and I will tell you: "Now you have become an advanced meditator. Now you understand how mind actually does work." And I will change your meditation from sending loving kindness to just one person to a variety of different beings in different ways. When you're able to do that, then I will tell you to start sending loving kindness in the six directions: in front of you, behind you, to the right, to the left, above, below - five minutes in each direction. You're sending loving kindness to all beings, and then you send loving kindness to all beings, in all directions, at the same time.

This is when the meditation starts to get real fun because your understanding is starting to grow very quickly, and you understand how mind works. You understand that when your mindfulness gets a little weak then you're going to have a hindrance arise, but you start seeing hindrances as a helper for you. They're your best friend even though you might not think about it at the time. They're teaching you where your attachments are, they're teaching you how to let

go of those attachments. It's helping your mindfulness get stronger so that the hindrances are a real necessary part of the practice.

MN:

10. "And the states in the fourth jhāna—the equanimity, the neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, the mental unconcern due to tranquility, the purity of mindfulness, and unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, formations, and mind; the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention - these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared, and he understood that there's still more to go:...and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: So even though you get to the fourth jhāna, you know that there's still more to do with your practice, you know it. You have to start getting your enthusiasm up, you want to keep going: "This is ok. This is all right. I like this." This jhāna is as high as you can experience with loving kindness. Ok? This is as high as you go with loving kindness. Now you're going to start practicing what is called the brahmavihāras: 'brahma' - godly; 'vihāra' - home. Ok? So these are the heavenly realms.

Now, when you are sitting, and you get into any one of these first four jhānas, it's time to get up and do your walking. You keep your jhāna going while you do your walking meditation. You stay with your object of meditation, you keep the jhāna going. When you get into the fourth jhāna, it gets a little bit weird because you don't feel anything unless there's contact. So when the wind's not blowing, you walk, you feel the bottom of your feet because there's contact when you touch the ground, you feel nothing between the bottom of your feet and the rest of your body, excluding the head. You still will feel the head, you'll still be able to radiate that loving kindness out. So you're able to do... it doesn't matter what other thing that you're doing, you can have very strong equanimity while you're taking a bath, or washing the dishes, or cleaning the house, or washing the car, whatever it happens to be. It takes practice to be able to get into it and keep it there.

What I'm doing with this retreat for you is - there used to be a book out, I think it was in the 60's, it was called 'The Crack in the Cosmic Egg' - what I'm doing is putting that crack in your eggs. I'm giving... I'm showing you the experience - you still got to get out of the egg, still have to bust out - but this weakens that so it's easier to bust out. Ok? Ok, now these first four jhānas are called the 'material jhānas', now we're going to start experiencing the 'immaterial jhānas'.

MN:

11. "Again, monks, with the complete surmounting of gross perceptions of form, with the disappearance of gross perceptions of sensory impact, {...} aware that 'space is infinite,' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite space.

BV: What happens when you get in the base of infinite space is the feeling of loving kindness changes, and a feeling of compassion arises. Ok? Now, what you're going to feel in your mind, you're going to feel an expansion going out, and out, and out, and doesn't stop. It just... this is infinite space, and it just keeps going out in all the directions at the same time, it's just expansion. There's no center-point, there's no 'me', there's no 'my', there's just this feeling of expansion and the feeling of compassion. Now, the Mahāyāna have really focused very much on compassion. They use the word 'compassion' when they should be using the word 'loving-kindness', and they get caught up in "the Buddha experienced infinite compassion". Well, there's a little problem with that in that every day the Buddha sat in meditation when he first got up, and he practiced compassion and infinite space. Ok? So the Mahāyāna, what they did was they just took the 'infinite' out in that place and said: "This is infinite compassion." But it's 'compassion' and 'infinite space'.

MN:

12. "And the states in the base of infinite space—the perception of the base of infinite space and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, formations, and mind; ...

BV: So you still have the four foundations of mindfulness even though you're in an immaterial jhāna.

MN:

... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood this:...and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is still more to do.

BV: Now, you'll be in infinite space for a period of time, and your mindfulness for whatever reason will get weak, and now you have another hindrance arise. And you 6R the hindrance and your mindfulness starts to get better, and you start

going deeper into your practice, and then that feeling of compassion will change to a feeling of joy.

MN:

13. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of infinite space, aware that 'consciousness is infinite' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite consciousness.

BV: What happens now is that feeling of compassion... the feeling of compassion fades away, the feeling of joy arises, the feeling of that infinite space passes away, and at each one of the sense doors you will see individual consciousnesses arise and pass away. Now, (finger snap) that was roughly a hundred thousand arising and passing away, and you're going to be able to see each one of those individually. You'll see it arise and pass away, arise and pass away. It doesn't matter what sense door it is. A lot of people notice it very much at the eyes, and it's like watching a movie that's going too slow, and you're seeing a picture and you're seeing a blank spot, and you see a picture and a blank spot. And that happens at the ear, at the nose, at the tongue, feeling at the body, and mind. It's just arising, passing away, continually, very quick.

Now, when you get into these states, you start to realize that: "Yeah, everything is impermanent." You see that. There's no doubt in your mind that everything arises and passes away very quickly, and you get kind of tired of seeing the arising and passing away of everything, and that's a form of 'dukkha' - 'unsatisfactoriness' - because there's no stillness in this. Your mind can't be at ease because it's always coming up and going away, coming up and going away, so fast. And you start to see and realize directly that there is no controller, there is no self that makes these things happen. They happen by themselves, there's nobody home. So you're seeing directly: impermanence, suffering, and the impersonal nature of everything, and you start to lose that tight grip of thinking that: "I'm in control and I can do anything." "I'm not there. It's happening by itself."

MN:

14. "And the states in the base of infinite consciousness—the perception of the base of infinite consciousness and unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, formations, and mind; ...

BV: So you still have the five aggregates there. You still have the four foundations of mindfulness there.

MN:

... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. ...

BV: Now, when you get to infinite consciousness and tell me about it, one of the things I generally tell people to do is start looking at that space in between the consciousnesses: "What is that? What's there? What is that space?"

So...

MN:

... {...} with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed {...} there is still more to go.

BV: And you know this. You know that: "I got to go deeper. This is happening, but I got to go see what's behind that."

MN:

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

BV: This is where... this is where mind stops looking outside of itself, and you start to see how mind arises and passes away, but there's no more physicality at all. This is a really, incredibly interesting state to be in. There's all kinds of interesting things that happen in this state. For one thing, if you try to stay...

Oh, I forgot to tell you. When you get to nothingness the feeling of joy changes to a feeling of very amazing equanimity, very deep. And I can tell, somebody comes in for the interview: "Well, how are you doing today?" "Fine. Everything is fine." "Any new stuff happening?" "No. Everything is fine." Mind is just very, very balanced. Now, when you get into this state, if you try to radiate that feeling of equanimity, your mind is going to have restlessness in it. If you don't put enough energy into staying with that, your mind is going to get dull, sleepy. So when you get into this state, this is where you're actually learning how to adjust little tiny bits at a time. You start to notice that the restlessness starts to come up, you 6R that and you back off on your energy, you're trying too hard. Starts to dull out a little bit, you 6R that and then you add a little bit more energy.

Now, the thing is, all the way through the meditation from day one, you're learning how to do this balancing act. Ok? At first it's quite gross, but as you go deeper in your practice, it gets more subtle, it gets easier to see. When you start meditating, your mind flip-flops from one thing to another, and as you start going into the jhānas it doesn't flip-flop so much anymore, and when you get to the fourth jhāna it's not flip-flopping anymore, it's vibrating. As you go into the arūpa jhānas, the vibration becomes less, and less, and less. So you start to see things in a more and more subtle way. Your mindfulness becomes extremely sharp. Your mind becomes very alert. Still have to smile, still have to have fun doing this. Generally when people get into the realm of nothingness, they have a tendency to get a little bit serious. Your progress is much faster with a light mind. A serious mind means heaviness. Let go of that, have fun with this stuff.

By this time, the 6Rs are becoming more and more automatic. It's like something starts to come up and instead of intentionally saying: "Oh, I got to 6R that," mind will just start doing it little bits at a time.

MN:

16. "And the states in the base of nothingness—the perception of the base of nothingness and the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, formations, and mind; ...

BV: Now, you still experience the four foundations of mindfulness. You still have the five aggregates. This is as far as you'll be able to recognize these because the vibration now is very slight in your mind, and as you go to the next stage of the meditation, it's difficult to tell whether there's anything there or not. It's too subtle to be able to recognize.

Ok, and...

MN:

... {...} He understood {...}:...{...} with the cultivation of that attainment there's still more to go {...}.

17. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of nothingness, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

BV: Neither-feeling-nor-non-feeling, neither-consciousness-nor-non-consciousness.

MN:

18. {"...} Having done so, he contemplated the states that had passed, ceased, and changed, ...

BV: What happens when you get into this state is, it's like being asleep and being aware at the same time. Mind becomes so subtle that it's hard to tell whether it's really there or not. When you come out of that state, then you reflect on what happened while you were in that state, and 6R whatever it is that comes up into your mind.

This is exceptionally deep practice, and as you become familiar with it, and you keep... you stay in that state, you start to see subtle, tiny, little, minute vibrations coming up, and 6R those. And when you 6R one of these vibrations that come up, then you get into what I call the 'exquisite stillness'. Your mind will get still and it will stay still for very long period of time, an hour, hour and a half, like that. And if something starts to arise, you'll be able to see it like it's from a long distance away, and you start 6Ring right then. These little, tiny things that arise are the different links of dependent origination. You've let go of the gross ones, now you start to see mind and body, you start to see consciousness, you see formations. Now, this is exceptional... exceptionally subtle states of mind.

I have a student in Indonesia that I've had to almost beat her because she would get into that state, and she'd be in there for a hour, hour and a half, and she'd say: "Well, nothing's happening", and she'd break her sitting. And I: "No, don't do that. This is where you purify. Your mind is pure. There's no other way around it. Your mind is absolutely pure. Why is it pure? There's no craving, there's no vibration, there's no movement to speak of. It's so subtle that you can't even tell whether there's any vibration at all." You don't break a sitting because: "Well, I need some excitement. I got to go do something." And it was a problem, and it took me awhile to get her to stop doing that. "Well, but nothing's happening." "Great!" That's really it, you know? That's really the... what you want to be experiencing.

Ok. And...

MN:

... {...} He understood: There is an escape beyond this,' ...

BV: This is where some people get a little bit confused about what Nibbāna is, and they think that they've experienced Nibbāna, but they haven't quite yet.

MN:

... {...}

19. "Again, monks, by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the cessation of perception, feeling and consciousness. And his taints were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom.

BV: So what happened? Mind lets go of everything. Just like you turn the light-switch off. You don't know you're in this state until you got out. There is no perception, there is no feeling, there is no consciousness. When you come out of that state - you'll be in it for five minutes, seven minutes, ten minutes, like that - when you come out of that state, you will see the links of dependent origination, how they arise and how they cease, and because you see this so clearly and so directly, your mind has a big: "Oh, wow!" That's how it really does work, and there is no more condition for things to arise. You will experience Nibbāna. That's what Nibbāna is, it's the unconditioned state. Every link of dependent origination, it has a cause for the next link to arise. When there's no more causes, there's no more conditions. When there's no more conditions, you experience Nibbāna. When you come out of that, you will be happy. Then I mean you will be happy, and you come and tell me, and I say: "Oh, good. That's good. Go 6R that and sit some more." But what happens is, you're so happy and it's such an amazing feeling that it's hard to sit, and you'll stay like that for quite a while, quite a few days.

And...

MN:

20. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he recalled the states that passed, ceased, and changed, {...} 'So indeed, these states, not having been, came into being; having been, they vanish.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is no escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is not.

21. "Monks, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'He has attained mastery and perfection in noble virtue, mastery and perfection in noble collectedness, attained mastery and perfection in noble wisdom, attained mastery and perfection in noble deliverance,' it is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

22. "Monks, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone: 'He is the son of the Blessed One, born of his breast, born of his mouth, born of the Dhamma, created by the Dhamma, an heir in the Dhamma, not an heir in material things,' it is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said.

23. "Monks, the matchless Wheel of Dhamma set rolling by the Tathāgata is kept rolling rightly by Sāriputta."

That is what the Blessed One said. The monks were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

BV: Now, Sāriputta was second in wisdom to the Buddha. He was second to the Buddha in his understanding of how the links of dependent origination actually do work. He experienced all of the jhānas and saw the links of dependent origination. Every link of dependent origination has the four noble truths in it, so he also saw and realized the four noble truths. Is it possible to experience this in this lifetime? Absolutely. Will you become an arahat in this lifetime? I have no idea. Wait and see. But even getting into some of the lower stages of awakening is, it's a good thing.

Ok. Does anybody have any questions?

ST: Perhaps now these, could you explain the four noble truths?

BV: First noble truth is: there is suffering. We don't have to really be told that because we already know it. There's a lot of suffering that happens. The second noble truth is: there is a cause of suffering. What is the cause of suffering? Craving. The third noble truth is: there is the cessation of suffering. What is the cessation of suffering? Letting go of craving. The fourth noble truth is: the eightfold path. It's the way leading to the cessation of suffering. I will give you a Dhamma talk on that a little later, so you'll be able to understand the eightfold path more clearly. Is that good?

ST: Yes. Thank you.

BV: Ok. Anybody else?

ST: Yeah, um, now this one. It's hard to attain Nibbāna in two weeks?

BV: Yeah.

ST: So...

BV: He was kind of slow.

ST: ~~~ but it doesn't talk about it for the final, oh ~~~

BV: No. It doesn't, does it?

ST: No.

BV: It talks about him becoming an arahat.

ST: So that can...

BV: When you practice the four foundations of mindfulness, and I'll read this to you:

MN 10 (paraphrased):

... one of two things can be expected, either you become an arahat here and now, or if you still have a little bit of craving and clinging left, you will become an anāgāmi.

BV: The two lower stages can be experienced just by understanding the Dhamma, not necessarily by practice. You can't become an anāgāmi or an arahat without sitting and doing your meditation, but by listening to the Dhamma, by listening to me read what the Buddha said, and understanding what the Buddha said, and you have a very attentive mind, you can become either a sotāpanna or a sakadāgāmi, second stage.

Now, and the proof of that is when the Buddha gave his first discourse, and he started talking about the noble eightfold path, and Assaji, just by listening to him, became a sotāpanna - just by listening, and understanding, that's the key. Having an attentive mind, not a mind that says: "Ah, I'm tired of listening." You know, when the Buddha would give a Dhamma talk, he might go all night? Uh? And people complain because I give a Dhamma talk that's two hours long. But a lot of people gained a lot of benefit from that.

So. Yes?

ST: Um. Bhikkhu Bodhi uses a phrase named 'unification of mind'?

BV: Yes.

ST: Ah, is that samadhi or is that some other...

BV: No, it's ekaggatā.

ST: Ekaggatā?

BV: Yeah, and he... I praised him for using that instead of ekaggatā because that word is very much misunderstood, and it's mistranslated a lot, and people are continually trying to break the word down: 'eka' means one, so that means one-pointed of mind; and as 'unification of mind', it's the coming together of your mindfulness, and your full awareness, and things like that.

ST: Bhante, my understanding is, ekaggatā doesn't appear in any of the suttas, it just appears in the commentaries. Is that your understanding?

BV: Hmm...

ST: And unification of mind is actually a more complete translation of the Pali. I don't know Pali so I just...

BV: Yes it is, it's a much better translation because it is a unifying, and 'uni' means one, but it's a pulling together of your understanding, and your mindfulness, and your full awareness.

ST: You could say it's not so much pulling together, it's just everything just coming together.

BV & ST: {chorus of voices}

ST: But 'coming' in Pali is gaccha gacchanti, you know? So...

ST: {whispered conversation}

ST: In my new book Satipaṭṭhāna, the author Analāyo... Bhikkhu Analāyo, talks about samadhi as being not 'concentration' ...

BV: Right.

ST: ... but 'collectedness' in one of its footnotes, and I didn't read the whole book, but I did find the footnote and...

BV: But then you know where he got that idea?

SK: Yeah, that was me. Bhante... ~~~

SK & ST: {chorus of voices}

BV: Yeah. He got a copy of my book and he was very much impressed with it. I wrote... he... there was an article about him doing that in Tricycle maybe? I don't remember what magazine it was, and it had his email address, so I wrote to him and told him who I was. He said: "Oh, I know you very well. I've been using your book and I'm starting to practice the way you're teaching." So he used 'collectedness'...

SK: He experimented with it.

ST: Ah, I can't wait to read the book. It's great.

BV: It's actually very close to the way that I teach in a lot of ways.

ST: Yeah, I was kind of dumbstruck when I read it. It's like: "Wow. Here's an academic, came out of using your definition and it... I like, ok, this is huge." I mean for academics because this argument has been persisting ...

BV: Yes, I...

ST: ... for a millennium.

SK: He does, he does experiment and stuff though, I talked to him. He came to the school where I was lecturing and um, to do a... doing together a Homburg University and the university I was working at in Sri Lanka, and I got to talk to him a little bit, and he does experiment with things. It's not like he's... he's more an academic than he is a meditator, but he does experiment with things. So, I was impressed with that.

TT: 01:17:05.216

Note: Q&A transcription ends here.

Does anybody have any further questions?

Ok? Let's share some merit then.

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

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

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

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu

Prepared by Chris Farrant 3rd March 2013

Proofed by CF 17th April 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 Nikāya with permission of

Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144 U.S.A.
www.wisdompubs.org