

MN111 One by One As They Occurred - Anupada Sutta

Presented by Ven Bhante Vimalaramsi on 12th November 2005

BV: Ok. So the sutta tonight is one of my favorite suttas. It's MN111, the Anupada Sutta - One by One As They Occurred, page 899 if you want that. This is when the Buddha is describing how Sāriputta practiced meditation and became an arahat, all of the different stages that he went through.

Ok...

MN: 1: THUS HAVE I HEARD. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattṭhi 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's wisdom 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: What's the definition of wisdom? It's seeing the impersonal nature of dependent origination as it occurs. Now, this is an interesting set of words that the Buddha used about Sāriputta. He said his wisdom is very great, he understands all of the different aspects of dependent origination. It's 'wide', he sees it all of the time. It's 'joyous', he does it with a light mind. And 'quick', and 'keen', and 'penetrative'.

MN: ... During half a month, monks, Sāriputta gained insight into states one by one as they occurred. Now Sāriputta's insights into states one by one as they occurred was this:

3. "Here, monks, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, 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: That's just the standard description of the first jhāna.

Now...

MN: 4. "And the states in the first jhāna—the thinking, the examining thought, the joy, the happiness, the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: He had the five aggregates while he was in the jhāna. This is one way of showing that it wasn't absorption concentration that he was practicing. This is a major insight.

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

BV: Now, that's pretty amazing in itself. I mean, he had... you talk about the first jhāna, you talk about the five factors of the first jhāna, but that's not all he saw while he was in the jhāna. He saw all of these other things, and they didn't all happen at exactly the same time. They happen one by one, as they arose he saw that.

MN: ...{repeats: 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: He saw that everything is part of an impersonal and impermanent process.

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 grab onto it and hold on to any one of those states.

MN: ... unrepelled, ...

BV: He didn't try to stop any of these states from happening.

MN: ... independent, ...

BV: He saw them as individual occurrences, and it was impersonal.

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

BV: When you get into the first jhāna, you don't have any hindrances arise at that time. When your mindfulness weakens a little bit, then you're not in the jhāna anymore and you have a hindrance coming up.

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

BV: In other words he said: "Great, this happened, but there's more to it than this."

And...

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

BV: So as I've explained earlier, when you get into the second jhāna, you start really understanding how this works, and you start getting confident that you can handle these things when they come up, and you don't have to wrestle with them and fight for a day or two before you can let them go. You start letting go more quickly, more easily. And without having the thinking and examining thought, it means that you don't have a lot of verbalization in your mind at that time. You still have some, but these are like observation thoughts: "Oh, my mind is very still right now. My back is very straight. Ah, there's the joy." But these are only one thought and you let it go. You don't get into repeating it because that will lead you to slip out of the jhāna and work with another hindrance. Your mind becomes very composed. The joy you experience in this jhāna is stronger than it was in the first jhāna, it only makes sense, and the feeling you have is one of very strong lightness, in your mind and in your body.

I've had some students that... they get into this state and they start talking about: "You know, I was sure that I was floating, and I just had to open up my eyes to see if I was going to hit the ceiling or not." It's that kind of a light feeling, it really is nice. And it has happened, not very often, but it has happened that you can actually float. You'll just come right up off the ground, and you'll be there for a little while, and then you come down. And then the joy really grabs you again, and you go up and you come down like that. I've seen that happen. I had one student that it actually did happen with, but that's one out of two thousand or so. So it doesn't happen very often. It depends on the individual and how strong the joy actually is.

Now, the whole reason for having the joy arise is because when that joy fades away, you have very strong comfort in your body and in your mind. Very, very comfortable, more comfortable than you've ever felt. It just: "Ah." And your mind is very easily... it just stays on the object of meditation, and you start to see it move a little bit, and you relax and it just goes... stays right there. The tranquility is very strong. You have a very unified mind, and it stays with your object of meditation. This is what a lot of people call "effortless effort".

Ok...

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

BV: You know you have a body.

MN: ... 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, even in the lower jhānas - in the first jhāna, in the second jhāna - you are developing equanimity. You're starting to get more and more of a sense of balance with whatever arises. As you go deeper into your meditation, the equanimity keeps getting stronger and stronger. This is quite different than what people experience with absorption meditation too. So your energy needs to be very much balanced while you're in the jhāna. If you try to hold on to joy, or happiness, or the tranquility - whatever arises - that's the fastest way to make it disappear. Once it disappears, then what you are going to experience is a hindrance arising, a distraction of some sort. It doesn't matter what distraction pulls your mind away from your object of meditation. It doesn't matter how many times your mind gets pulled away from the object of meditation. What matters is, what you do with that in the present moment. When your mind gets pulled away, you notice it.

Now, once you get into the second jhāna, you start noticing these things a little bit more quickly. So you're not going to get caught for five or ten minutes, you're just going to say: "Ok, that happened", and let it be, and relax, and come back. And you're going to bounce back and forth for a little while. That is helping you develop your mindfulness even more, and this is very necessary part of the practice. It's necessary because as your mindfulness goes deeper, your observation power of how your mind's attention moves from one place to another. And as you see that, you start recognizing: there's a feeling, and then there's this craving, and then all of a sudden: "I'm thinking other thoughts", and these are the habitual tendencies of those other thoughts. As you recognize that, you are developing wisdom.

So distractions when they come are your friend, and it's very necessary for the distractions to come because they're the thing that help you to let go of your attachments - because that's where all attachments are, in the hindrances - and you start seeing it as an impersonal process. It gets easier to let go of, and it starts losing energy, and then that distraction goes away, you're going to go deeper in your meditation. So it doesn't matter how many times your mind gets pulled away. This is called a 'working meditation'. You got to roll up your sleeves and say: "Ok, we're going to play this game this time, so let's play it!" And it's not easy to put up with that sort of thing, but as you get your sense of balance with the meditation, then it just becomes one more thing to watch, it's no big deal.

Now, as sensitive as some of you are, you can have strange things arise in your mind that are distractions, but they seem like they're really neat and you want to have them: "Ok, I like this one. Let's play with that awhile." But then you start realizing: "I'm not with the feeling of loving kindness. I'm not radiating that feeling of loving kindness and the wish. I'm not with my friend at all. It's just another trick

of my mind. Just let it go and relax, it's nothing." As you do that over and over again, it will become less, so it doesn't happen so often.

Ok...

MN: ... {repeats: 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 thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanished.' ...

BV: This is a major insight, seeing that all of these different things are just there for a little while, and they're going to change. Now, they can change for very positive things, like going from joy into the tranquility, and becoming more peaceful and calm; and then it can change from that into equanimity; and then it can change from that - and your mindfulness got weak - to a hindrance. But it's ok, it's all just part of the process.

MN: ... Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, dissociated, ...

BV: That's another word for saying 'impersonal'. It's just this, whatever this happens to be.

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

BV: So he knew that: "Yeah, this is still... it's going on." But it's nice, but there's still more to it.

MN: 7. "Again, monks, with the fading away as well of joy, Sāriputta abided in equanimity, mindful and fully aware, still feeling pleasure with the body, ...

BV: He still had that happiness. See, when - anytime Bhikkhu Bodhi - he changed some of the words from an older translation; he changed 'joy' into 'rapture'; and he changed 'pleasure', he change that from 'happiness'; and I prefer the old translation of those words. The happy feeling is very peaceful, very comfortable, very calm.

Now, the difference between joy and happiness is described in one of the commentaries in this way: you're in the desert, you haven't had anything to drink, it's really hot, you're really thirsty, and you look off in the distance, and you see an oasis. Seeing that, your mind becomes very happy, and it becomes excited, and it starts fluttering like this (gesture), and as you get closer, it keeps fluttering, and then you get right to the oasis and there is a pool there. Now, you jump in the water, and the water is exactly the right temperature, and your mind goes: "Ah!", and your body goes: "Ah!" That's happiness. It's just *this*, it's very placid, very peaceful, very calm, everything is perfect. Coming up to that, there's some excitement with it.

Now, as you go deeper in your meditation, that excited kind of happiness turns into too coarse a feeling, and your mind doesn't want it anymore, so it just drops it automatically. And the happiness that you feel with your body, as you go deeper into the third jhāna, is that you will start to experience more and more comfort in your mind, more and more comfort in your body, so much so that you lose feeling in different places. It doesn't happen that you lose complete feeling in your body in the third jhāna, except on occasion; you can still have some parts there. When you get to the fourth jhāna, you don't feel your body unless there's contact. Now, this is one of the interesting things about this particular jhāna.

MN: ... 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.'

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, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Contact means you still have a body, and you don't really notice it until there's contact. So I come up and I tap you on the shoulder. You know that I tapped you on the shoulder, but now your equanimity is starting to get strong, it doesn't make your mind wobble so much. And then I say to you: "I would like to talk to you for a moment." Now, that's another contact, it's a contact at the ear. Again, you have that strong equanimity. You're fully aware of what's happening in the present moment. You're fully aware with what's happening with your mind.

MN: ... the enthusiasm, ...

BV: And that's another one that I changed the definition of because he used the word 'zeal', and I've never found anybody that really understands what zeal means. They always have the idea that it's a lot stronger than it is. It's a balanced kind of enthusiasm, so I use 'enthusiasm' instead of 'zeal' because it's easier to understand. But the enthusiasm is: "What's going to happen next? Let's see." It's that curiosity: "This is great stuff. What's going to happen next? Don't know." Now, the 'don't know' is... the 'don't know' mind is very, very necessary for your progress in the meditation.

You hear me talk about all of the different jhānas and that sort of thing, and you start looking for it, but you don't know for sure whether you've had it or not. If you don't know for sure, you haven't had it. But develop that 'I don't know' mind because that will help overcome expectations and that sort of thing, and trying to put in a little bit too much energy. The energy always has to be balanced, always at ease.

Ok, the...

MN: ... decision, ...

BV: Now, 'decision' is an interesting aspect of the meditation, and your decision is: when something arises, like a contact, you can get involved with it. It can be mostly... it's contact with thoughts. The thought arises, you can make the decision: "I need to think about that for a little while," or you can make the decision: "Ah, just let it be, it's nothing." If it's important, it'll come up later again anyway. Let it be.

MN: ... {energy}, ...

BV: The energy has to be balanced.

MN: ...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 thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanished.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: So he knows he's starting to go deep, but he knows that there's still lots more stuff.

MN: 9. "Again, with abandoning of pleasure and pain, ...

BV: That means letting go of the happiness and the unsatisfactoriness of having some sensations arise, developing that balance with it. Once you get up to the third jhāna, your balance is generally pretty good and your understanding is very good. Every different level of the jhāna is another level of understanding of how this process is working. It has all of these different things arising because that's what happens when you have that kind of understanding, but there's always keeping your curiosity and enthusiasm going for: "What's going to happen next?" Even when you're sitting very still without mind moving at all.

It takes adjustment to your energy at that time not to fall off into dullness because you can sit without having anything arise in your mind for awhile, and your mind says: "Well, this is no fun. I'm going to just dull out a little bit. Doesn't matter." You know what I mean? So you have to keep your energy pretty well balanced, and the need for the energy is always changing a little bit. So it takes fairly close observation of the amount of energy you need in each one of the jhānas.

MN: ... with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, ...

BV: The joy has already disappeared, the grief is the dissatisfaction that can arise in the start of the meditation.

MN: ... Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the fourth jhāna , which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.

BV: Now, that doesn't mean that you won't have stiffness arise, or a pain arise in your body somewhere. It means that you're seeing it with such balance that it doesn't matter whether it's there or not, and it might not even necessarily pull your attention to it. So you just allow it to be, keep relaxing, and now you're starting to notice more and more subtle, little, tiny movements before any kind of distraction arises. When you see your mind starting to wobble or change a little bit, recognize that and relax, and then your mind will become still again. You can't do it too fast, you can't do it too slow, it has to be done just as you notice it; relax. You're not going to notice it every time. There can be times when your mindfulness slips a little bit, and a whole thought can come up. Ok, and then you see that, and let it go, and relax.

Sometimes mind can get incredibly attached to certain views, certain opinions, certain concepts, and even though you have equanimity, these they keep on coming up. So it's the balance of watching that, letting it be, and relaxing, and coming back. Now you've given up your rookie status, now you've become an old pro. And this is the one jhāna that the Buddha... he spent a lot of time praising. Now, your mind is very manageable, your mind is wieldy and malleable, and all of these other things you know, and you start looking at that, and you start going: "Yeah, it really is. Isn't this something?" Quite nice.

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, volition, and mind; ...

BV: So you still can have contact at any one of the sense doors depending on the situation. That definitely does not happen with absorption concentration. And one of the reasons I started becoming so interested in finding out what the Buddha was teaching was because I understand these absorption concentrations, and they don't seem like they're leading anywhere. I mean, it's a great state to be in, it's real exciting, don't have any hindrances arise, your mind just stays where you want it to stay, but that's it. You're not learning how the process really works because your mind is stuck on it.

This particular kind of meditation of relaxing often doesn't allow your mind to go so deep and become absorbed in anything. That's why you still have the five aggregates there, have the potential for them to

arise at any time. And it gets kind of interesting because the aggregates arise, and you can start seeing each one of the individual aggregates: "Oh, isn't that something?" It's enough to keep your enthusiasm going, I'll say that for it. It gets really interesting, it gets to be fun.

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 thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanished.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

BV: Now, this is as far as you can go in what is called the 'material jhānas'. The rest of these are called 'immaterial jhānas', and this is real interesting because of the states in those jhānas, but we'll get to that in a moment.

MN: 11. "Again, monks, with the complete surmounting of perceptions of form, with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact, with the non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that 'space is infinite,' Sāriputta entered upon and abided in the base of infinite space.

BV: Now, when you're practicing the Brahma Vihāras, which is what I'm teaching you, you get to the third jhāna, and you're still radiating, and you get into the flow, and it's really nice coming from your heart, and you'll go deeper and all of a sudden there is no feeling in the heart anymore. Now the loving kindness is starting to radiate from your mind. As you go deeper into the fourth jhāna, then you'll get to a space where you'll start to feel mind expand, and it keeps expanding and expanding in all directions at the same time, but there's no center-point. And the feeling of loving kindness changes.

Now, when you get to the fourth jhāna - as I've explained before - you go through all of the different kinds of beings that I want you to send the loving kindness to, so you don't have any more enemies. After that, then I will have you starting to radiate in the six directions, to all beings: in front, in back, to the right, to the left, above, below, and all around at the same time. As you go deeper into that, the feeling will change. I won't tell you how it changes, you have to tell me, so I know for sure what state you're in, but it is a definite change. It's very pleasant and you will like it.

Now, you've heard a lot of stories about: the Buddha got up every morning and the first meditation he did was 'infinite compassion'; he practiced compassion for an hour. This is the state that they're talking about him being in - infinite space - while his mind has this compassion in it. And it's quite amazing to feel this, and there is no boundaries. There's nothing but an expanded feeling and this feeling, and it is very, very pleasant.

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

BV: You still have the five aggregates. I can still walk up to you, even though you're in an immaterial realm, and I can say: "Please, we need to do this right now. Please break your sitting." Whatever. You'll hear it, you'll have balance to it, you can keep that meditation going while you're getting up, while you're moving around. But it gets kind of weird because you feel the radiation coming from here (head), you feel the expansion. And you get up and you start walking, and you don't feel anything between here (head) and your feet. Wherever your feet have contact, you feel that. So you're walking around without a body basically. And when that happens the first few times, just about everybody comes to me with some kind of a cute little thing about what it feels like. And it is kind of peculiar to be able to do that, but you can.

So all these practiced all this time of: getting up from your meditation ... and keeping your meditation going as you're standing up ... and as you go over your walking space ... and you walk back and forth, you keep your meditation going ... you come back, you keep your meditation going ... and then you sit, and you keep your meditation going. As you have the practice of doing that, it starts carrying over when you get into the arūpa jhānas, and it gets very interesting. Ok, and still you have that enthusiasm. Now your enthusiasm really starts to get: "Yeah, this is great stuff. What's going to happen next?" There's no projection of anything going to happen next. There's no looking forward to: "Ah, I know what's going to... this is coming." It's just going deeper into your meditation, watching the process of things arising and passing away more clearly, more clearly.

And you're seeing the impermanent nature of everything because everything is expanding. And you still have the five aggregates, which means: you still have body; you have feeling; you have perception; you have volition - your choice of what you're keeping your attention on; and you have consciousness. And it's quite good, and it's quite interesting, and you start to see these as individual things as they arise and pass away by themselves. And that gets interesting in itself, just watching those. And your enthusiasm starts to grow: "Alright, this is nice. Let's see, I want to be able to see more." But you can't put the wrong kind of energy in, you can't try too hard. As you go into the arūpa jhānas, you're starting to refine more and more the energy that you put into things, and instead of putting in this much energy (gesture), now you're just tweaking it a little bit: "That's a little bit too much. Oh, that's not quite right. That's... now."

Ok...

MN: ... the enthusiasm, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, and attention—these states were defined by him one by one as they occurred; known 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 vanish.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, ...

BV: See, you have to keep this always in a state of balance, not trying too hard. That's the thing with the determinations: if you make the wrong kind of determination, then you sit expecting, then when it doesn't come, then you push - and that's wrong kind of energy - then you get to look forward to your great old friend, restlessness.

MN: ... {detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers.} He understood: 'There is an escape beyond this,' with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

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

BV: Now, the feeling of expansion just fades away. The feeling of compassion changes - just like a change from the loving kindness, it changed into compassion - this feeling is going to change into... they call it 'sympathetic joy'. I never found a better word for that, but that's what happens. It's a kind of joy, it is very pleasurable, very nice. And you start to see consciousnesses ... arising and passing away ... arising and passing away ... very quickly. They're popping up and going away really fast.

And this is a time when a lot of students will come to me, and they'll start complaining about: "You know, all I'm seeing is this stuff, and it keeps popping up and going away... and I don't really... I'm getting kind of... tiresome." You're starting to realize for yourself, first hand - up close and personal - that everything is impermanent. It's a form of suffering, and you don't have any control of it. It's just stuff that's happening, and it can happen while you're walking; it can happen while you're sitting; it can

happen while you're eating; while you're taking a shower; it can happen all the time. And the deeper you go into it, the more it does happen all the time, and that helps you to let go of the unsatisfactory nature of things that are impermanent.

So this is the kind of lesson that you're teaching yourself just by watching your mind. And again, if your mindfulness wavers a little bit for one reason or another, you still got hindrances that are going to come up. So don't look forward to getting into this state, getting into the next state, without having some work to do in between. It's always some kind of work that needs to be done. You're letting go of more and more subtle things, and relaxing more and more, and your mind now, it's not moving anymore, but it's vibrating. And you have to let go of the vibration, and as you do, you go deeper and deeper, the vibration becomes finer and finer.

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, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Still have those five aggregates. Isn't that amazing?

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 thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come 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 an escape beyond this one,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

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

BV: Now, before in the base of infinite consciousness, you were seeing all of these different consciousnesses at the six sense doors, arising and passing away. Now you don't feel that at all. The feeling of joy changes to a very, very strong feeling of equanimity, mental balance that's just beautiful. But now mind is not looking outside of itself, it's not looking at the sense doors, but there's still other stuff that can rise, and you'll see that in just a moment.

MN: 16. "And the states in the base of nothingness—the perception of the base of nothingness ...

BV: So it's not sitting in nothing, it's sitting in not looking outside of itself. I've seen one interpretation that they didn't say: "Nothingness", they said: "No-thing-ness." In a way, I kind of go along with that a little bit more.

Ok, he saw...

MN: ... {repeats: the perception of the base of nothingness} the unification of mind; the contact, feeling, perception, volition, and mind; ...

BV: Still have the five aggregates. They don't rise in big ways, they don't arise in gross ways, but they still can arise.

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

BV: Now is when the enlightenment factors become more and more of a real factor. When you're sitting and you're walking that very fine tightrope between too much energy and not enough energy, you get

knocked off for one reason or another. You don't have sleepiness arise anymore, but you do have a dullness of mind. It's just not as sharp as it could be, and it's kind of a subtle kind of dullness, it's not a big gross kind of dullness. But let's say you put a little bit too much energy in, and mind becomes restless, you still have more than one hindrance arise. Most of the time when the restlessness comes up, there's dislike of it, you don't want it to bother you right now. So when that happens, then you take the last three of the enlightenment factors, and you start focusing your mind on those. That is: tranquility, collectedness of mind, and equanimity. The equanimity helps to get rid of the dissatisfaction, and that balance. The other two help with the wobbliness of the restlessness, the distractedness.

The thing with restlessness, especially when you get into the deeper jhānas, it is a very unpleasant feeling. It's a scattered kind of feeling, it's really not very nice, and the only way you can compose your mind is by focusing on the tranquility, and the tranquility is pulling together and calming. So you bring up that feeling of tranquility and focus on that, and the restlessness will fade away by itself. You have to bring up... you have to have that balance of mind and the composed nature of mind, the collected mind for restlessness not to be a major problem.

As far as the sloth and torpor, you have to be able to investigate more clearly how that sloth and torpor arose, and you need to adjust your energy level. And when you do that, you have a little bit of joy come up, but this kind of joy is that all pervading joy. It doesn't have that excitement in it, but it does pull your enthusiasm up more, so you watch more closely. And this is a real balancing act as you go deeper into this jhāna, the equanimity becomes super-strong, and you'll start to notice all of the enlightenment factors. You still have the aggregates, you still have these other things that can arise, but there's still a lot to see. It's just you don't see outside of your mind, you're seeing things arise as factors arising instead of a process more. As you keep relaxing and coming back to the feeling of equanimity, your mind will go deeper.

And with that...

MN: {... known to him those states arose, known they were present, known they disappeared. He understood thus:...and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.}

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

BV: A way of describing this is, there's perception there but it's real hard to see. There's still feeling, but it's kind of like this: there's a senior monk and a junior monk that are walking in the forest, and they walk over a little, tiny trickle of a stream. And the senior monk keeps walking, and the junior monk stops, and the senior monk turns around and says: "What are you stopping for?" And the junior monk said: "I want to get a drink from this little stream." And the senior monk says: "Oh, there's water. Then I want to take a bath. Go get my towel." But the junior monk said: "There's water, but there's not enough for that." Ok, that's what neither-perception-nor-non-perception is. There's some there, but it's really subtle, really subtle.

Ok, now this is an interesting state because what happens is, he emerged mindful from that attainment. He didn't have the five aggregates, they're too coarse for him to see. We're talking about really subtle stuff. Now, I was talking about vibration before, we're getting to very, very fine, little, tiny movements that happen in attention and mind; very, very small. So when you come out of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, you start reflecting about what happened with the last sitting, and then you start recognizing: "Oh, it was: this happened, and that happened". And by this time, you've developed the habit to a very fine degree that automatically your mind keeps relaxing. So even in the state of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, your mind is still doing that.

MN: 18. {"He emerged mindful from that attainment.} Having done so, he contemplated the states that had passed, and ceased, and changed, thus: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanished.' Regarding those states, he abided unattracted, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, dissociated, with a mind rid of barriers. He understood: There is an escape beyond this,' and with the cultivation of that attainment, he confirmed that there is.

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

BV: Now, it doesn't say that his taints were destroyed before he had the experience of the cessation of perception and feeling. It says it after that, and that's important distinction because in Theravāda Buddhism in particular, the state of the cessation of perception and feeling is considered to be Nibbāna. And in a way of talking, it is a kind of Nibbāna, but it's still part of the mundane. The taints don't get destroyed until you see dependent origination, and you see it forwards and you see the cessation of all of that.

MN: 20. "He emerged mindful from that attainment. Having done so, he recalled the states that had passed, ceased, and changed: 'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they vanished.' 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, attained 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, there's an interesting side-note to this. One of the reasons that it took Sāriputta two weeks to become an arahat, instead of one week like Moggallāna did, was because of his curiosity and his looking at dependent origination, and always analyzing the dependent origination. He had an attachment to the seeing and understanding of dependent origination. So at the time that he became enlightened, he was standing behind the Buddha, and he was fanning him while the Buddha was giving a Dhamma talk to someone else, and the realization that the Buddha was not even attached to Dhamma hit him, and immediately he let go of that attachment and became an arahat.

So we have to look at each one of these different levels as letting go of more and more attachment, and our wisdom becomes more and more refined, and seeing how everything works becomes more and more subtle. And honestly I have to say, I've never run across anything as satisfying as doing the Buddha's path. I've been doing this intensively for roughly twenty years. I've been practicing it for more longer than that, but I mean really intensively for twenty years since I've been a monk, and there's nothing that holds my interest more. I just pick up a book, and I just open it and I start looking at it, and it's: "Oh yeah, that's how that part works." And it's a whole series of "Oh, wows" and "Oh yeahs", and it's really great fun. So with that said...

You change the meditation from loving kindness to compassion - to that feeling - and then you change that to joy, and then you change that to equanimity, and that's why equanimity... and it's not that you do it, it's just that that happens when you get to that level. It's a completely impersonal process. Now, one of the things that I don't do is talk about what jhāna you're in until we get into the arūpa jhānas because it really doesn't matter, and by the time you're in the arūpa jhānas, you have such balance it doesn't matter then either. And don't think that this is impossible to attain, even if you're starting out. It is very attainable.

I had a student that came to me the last time I was in North Carolina, never done any meditation retreat, sat down, in eight days she was experiencing nothingness. All the way through the meditation you're going to be going through major changes because you're going to start seeing how you cause your own pain, and then you're going to start recognizing that you're doing this to yourself, and you're going to go: "Whoa, I don't want to do that anymore". You start letting it go.

But when the taints are destroyed, there are ten fetters: there is doubt, doubt in whether you're following the path correctly or not; there is a belief that rights and rituals will lead to enlightenment, you give that up; you give up the belief in a permanent self, in other words you start seeing everything as being an impersonal process; you give up lust; you give up hatred; you give up māna, pride; you give up restlessness; you give up dullness; you give up a desire to be reborn in another existence; and you give up ignorance. In other words, you completely see, understand, and realize the four noble truths, in dependent origination. So you could rather say that there's a pretty major personality change that happens.

Now, one of things I wanted to say was: just by your listening to the Dhamma talk, if you truly understand what the Buddha was saying, that can cause you to become the first stage of enlightenment, or the second stage of enlightenment. That can happen just from listening to the Dhamma talks and understanding it deep. And there are four stages of enlightenment, and then now we've covered all of them. See, it's when the perception and feeling stop. That's the only time that you'll be able to see it start up again, and the only time that your mind is going to have sharp enough mindfulness to be able to recognize all of those links. And you'll see them come up, and you'll go: "Wow!" And then you'll see: well, when this doesn't arise then that won't arise, when that doesn't arise this won't arise, and then you get to the final letting go of ignorance; Nibbāna occurs. That's when you've completely let go of any misunderstanding of the four noble truths. You see it completely, totally, the way it works.

That's why this is an education process, but it's self taught education. You're teaching yourself the meditation all the time. You're teaching yourself how you cause yourself pain: with a desire, with an expectation, with a dissatisfaction, with getting caught by whatever the catch of the day is, and that emotion. Now, every time you let go of these kind of distractions, you're purifying your mind. It doesn't mean that you won't get caught by anger again, or sadness, or depression, or whatever, but it doesn't last for as long. You're able to see it more and more clearly, and this is a process of letting go and clearing that, until finally you will get to a state where there is a cessation of perception and feeling. Then you're home free.

Let's share some merit here real quick.

May suffering ones, be suffering free
And the fear struck, fearless be
May the grieving shed all grief

And may all beings find relief.

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

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

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu

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