

MN 146 Advice from Nandaka - Nandakovāda Sutta

23-Jul-03

BV: And the request is a particular sutta for tonight. This is called "The Advice from Nandaka". I had the name a little bit wrong. It's sutta number one-forty-six in The Middle Length Sayings.

MN: 1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Savatthi in Jeta's grove, Anathapindika's Park.
2. Then Mahapajapati Gotami

BV: This was the Buddha's aunt. When his mother died after seven days after his birth, she took him as her son and suckled him and took care of him.

MN: together with five hundred bhikkhunis went to the Blessed One. After paying homage to the Blessed One, she stood at one side and said to him: "Venerable sir, let the Blessed One advise the Bhikkhunis, let the Blessed One instruct the bhikkhunis, let the Blessed One give the bhikkhunis a talk on the Dhamma."

3. Now on that occasion the elder bhikkhus were taking turns in advising the bhikkhunis, but the venerable Nandaka did not want to advise them when his turn came. Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Ananda: "Ananda, whose turn is it today to advise the bhikkhunis?"

"Venerable sir, it is the venerable Nandaka's turn to advise the bhikkhunis, but he does not want to advise them even though it is his turn."

BV: Now, Nandaka, in a previous life was a king. And he had five hundred women that were his concubines, and they all happened to

be these bhikkhunis. And he thought: "If I advise them, other monks with psychic abilities will realize that they were part of my concubines and they will criticize me, so I don't want to do that."

MN: 4. Then the Blessed One addressed the venerable Nandaka: "Advise the bhikkhunis, Nandaka, Instruct the bhikkhunis, Nandaka. Give the bhikkhunis a talk on the Dhamma, brahmin."

BV: "Brahmin" here does not mean from the Brahmin class, it means someone who's well gone. He was an arahat.

MN: "Yes venerable sir," the venerable Nandaka replied. Then in the morning, the venerable Nandaka dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Savatthi for alms. When he had wandered for alms in Savatthi and had returned from his almsround, after his meal he went with a companion to the Rajaka Park. The bhikkhunis saw the venerable Nandaka coming in the distance and prepared a seat and set out water for the feet.

BV: To wash his feet.

MN: The venerable Nandaka sat down on the seat made ready and washed his feet. The bhikkhunis paid homage to him and sat down to one side. When they were seated, the venerable Nandaka told the bhikkhunis:

5. "Sisters, this talk will be in the form of questions.

BV: And I want you to answer in the same way.

MN: When you understand, you should say: 'We understand'; when you do not understand you should say: 'We do not understand'; when you are doubtful or perplexed you should ask me: 'How is this, venerable sir? What is the meaning of this?'"

"Venerable sir, we are satisfied and pleased with the master Nandaka for inviting us in this way."

6. "Sisters, what do you think? Is the EYE permanent or impermanent?"

TT: 05:14

BV: What?

S: ~

BV: Ok.

MN: "Impermanent, venerable sir," – "Is what is {im}permanent suffering or happiness?" –

S: ~

MN: "Suffering, venerable sir." –

BV: [to the students listening Bhante said here] I want you to answer.

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self?'"

SR: "No venerable sir."

MN: "Sisters, what do you think?"

BV: Sisters and brothers.

Repeats . . what do you think?

MN: "Is the EAR permanent or impermanent?" –

SR: "Impermanent,

MN: "venerable sir." –

BV: I am a venerable sir, actually.

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?" –

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir." –

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

BV: Ok.

MN: ... what do you think? Is the NOSE permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: ... what do you think? Is the TONGUE permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: ... what do you think? Is the BODY permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

BV: I want you to think about, deeply about what we're doing here.

MN: Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: ... what do you think? Is the MIND permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

TT: 10:01

MN: "Why is that?" "Because, venerable sir, we have already seen this well as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: 'THESE SIX INTERNAL BASES ARE IMPERMANENT.'"

"Good, good, ... So it is with a noble disciple who sees this as it actually is with proper wisdom.

7. ... what do you think? Are FORMS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "... what do you think? Are SOUNDS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "... what do you think? Are ODOURS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "...what do you think? Are FLAVOURS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "... Are TANGIBLES permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "... Are MIND-OBJECTS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "Why is that?" "Because, ... we have already seen this well as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: 'THESE SIX EXTERNAL BASES ARE IMPERMANENT'"

"Good, good, ... So it is with a noble disciple who sees this as it actually is with proper wisdom.

8. ... what do you think? Is EYE-CONSCIOUSNESS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "... what do you think? Is EAR-CONSCIOUSNESS permanent or impermanent?"

TT: 14:14

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: "Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: {Sisters, what do you think?} Is NOSE-CONSCIOUSNESS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: ... Is TONGUE-CONSCIOUSNESS permanent or impermanent?" –

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: ... Is BODY-CONSCIOUSNESS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: ... Is MIND-CONSCIOUSNESS permanent or impermanent?"

SR: "Impermanent, venerable sir"

MN: Is what is impermanent suffering or happiness?"

SR: "Suffering, venerable sir."

MN: "Is what is impermanent, suffering and subject to change fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "Why is that?" "Because, ... we have already seen this well as it actually is with proper wisdom thus: 'THESE SIX CLASSES OF CONSCIOUSNESS ARE IMPERMANENT.'" "Good, good, ... So it is with a noble disciple who sees this as it actually is with proper wisdom.

9. ... suppose an oil lamp is burning: its oil is impermanent and subject to change, its wick is impermanent and subject to change, its flame is impermanent and subject to change, and its radiance is impermanent and subject to change. Now would anyone be speaking rightly who spoke thus: 'While this oil-lamp is burning, its oil, wick, and flame are impermanent and subject to change, but its radiance is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "Why is that?" "Because, venerable sir, while that oil lamp is burning, its oil wick, and flame are impermanent and subject to change, so its radiance must be impermanent and subject to change."

“So too, ... would anyone be speaking rightly who spoke thus: ‘These six internal bases are impermanent and subject to change, but the pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling that one experiences in dependence upon the six internal bases is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change?’”

SR: “No, venerable sir.”

MN: “Why is that?” “Because, [venerable sir,] each feeling arises in dependence upon its corresponding condition, and with the cessation of its corresponding condition, the feeling ceases.

“Good, ... So it is with a noble disciple who sees this as it actually is with proper wisdom.

TT: 18:44

10. ... suppose a great tree is standing possessed of heartwood: its root is impermanent and subject to change, its trunk is impermanent and subject to change, its branches and foliage are impermanent and subject to change, and its shadow is impermanent and subject to change. Now would anyone be speaking rightly who spoke thus: ‘The root, trunk, branches, and foliage of this great tree standing possessed of heartwood are impermanent and subject to change, but its shadow is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change?’”

SR: “No, venerable sir.”

MN: “Why is that?” “Because, ... the root, trunk, branches, and foliage of this great tree standing possessed of heartwood are impermanent and subject to change, so its shadow must be impermanent and subject to change.”

“So too, ... would anyone be speaking rightly who spoke thus: ‘These six external bases are impermanent and subject to change, but the pleasant, painful, or neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling that one

experiences in dependence upon the six external bases is permanent, everlasting, eternal, not subject to change?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "Why is that?" "Because, ... each feeling arises in dependence upon its corresponding condition, and with the cessation of its corresponding condition, the feeling ceases.

"Good, ... So it is with a noble disciple who sees this as it actually is with proper wisdom.

11. ... suppose a skilled butcher or his apprentice were to kill a cow and carve it up with a sharp butcher's knife. Without damaging the inner mass of flesh and without damaging the outer hide, he would cut, sever, and carve away the inner tendons, sinews, and ligaments with the sharp butcher's knife. ... having cut, severed, and carved all this away, he would remove the outer hide and cover the cow again with that same hide. Would he be speaking rightly if he were to say: 'This cow is joined to this hide just as it was before'?"

SR: "No, venerable sir."

MN: "Why is that?" "Because, ... if that skilled butcher or his apprentice were to kill a cow . . . and cut, sever, and carve all that away, even though he covers the cow again with that same hide and says: 'This cow is joined to this hide just as it was before' that cow would still be disjoined from that hide."

12 ... I have given this simile in order to convey a meaning. This is the meaning: 'The inner mass of flesh' is a term for the six internal bases. 'The outer hide' is a term for the six external bases. 'The inner tendons, sinews, and ligaments' is a term for delight and lust. 'The sharp butcher's knife' is a term for noble wisdom – the noble wisdom that cuts, severs, and carves away the inner defilements, fetters, and bonds.

13. " there are SEVEN ENLIGHTENMENT FACTORS through the development and cultivation of which a monk, by realising for himself with direct knowledge, here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints. What are the seven? Here sisters, a monk develops the MINDFULNESS enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

TT: 24:36

BV: So, the seven factors of enlightenment, starting with mindfulness. Let's go through that part again.

Repeats : (a meditator develops the MINDFULNESS enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation)

What does that mean when we're talking about mindfulness? You're able to observe what is happening in the present moment, without getting caught by story, and the emotional attachment to whatever arises.

S: ~

BV: That's dispassion. You're secluded by: whenever a sense door arises, you allow it to be and relax, come back to your object of meditation. "The cessation" is letting go of the tension and tightness and relaxing. And it "ripens in relinquishment". "The relinquishment" is letting go of the belief that that sense door that arose is yours personally. Ok? Got it?

Ok.

MN: He develops the INVESTIGATION OF

BV: This says "INVESTIGATION-OF-STATES" but I say "INVESTIGATION-OF-EXPERIENCE."

MN: ... enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

BV: What does that mean?

S: ~

BV: [hint] Without.

S: ~

BV: Without clinging! And also, you're relinquishing the craving. Giving it up.

MN: He develops the ENERGY enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

S: ~

BV: Energy. The energy you put into the investigation, and the mindfulness of observation.

So, when your friends [the hindrances] come to visit, you start to see more clearly how your friends arise, and pull you away from your object of meditation. And it takes energy to recognize that, let it be. Relax, and come back to your object of meditation. If you put too much energy into it, what arises because of that?

S: Restlessness.

BV: Another friend! Restlessness! And, dislike of it. So you not only have one friend, you've got a whole crowd. It's a party. Yeah?

S: ~

BV: Ok, and if you don't put enough energy into it. . .

S: ~

BV: Sloth and torpor, and sloth and torpor is a contracted mind. It's a mind that pulls in. And that is an uncomfortable feeling. So there's aversion to that too. But, there can also be: "I like that feeling, I like that contracted mind that gets lazy, and I just want to go to sleep. So it can be with either the lust, or it can be with the aversion. It can be with the greedy mind because you like that state, or it can be with the aversion mind because you don't like that state. They always seem to come and gather around. Cause all kinds of problems. So you're learning to walk on the tight rope of energy. And the more familiar you become with it, the easier it is to keep your balance along the path.

Ok.

TT: 29:55

MN: He develops the JOY enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

BV: A lot of times, when joy arises, it's such a pleasurable feeling, that you start paying attention to the joy, and tightening around it, "I like it", and you can become attached to that feeling. That's why, when people get into the second jhana, the joy is very strong, and then as your mind goes deeper in your meditation, joy disappears; you should hear some of the complaints that I get because of that. "How's your meditation going?" - "Quite good, but I don't have any joy. Disappeared." - "Ok, fine" - "But you don't understand. There's no joy!" - "Yeah, do you feel like you have a nice balanced mind?" - "Oh, yeah, my mind's very balanced, but there's no joy!" - "Ok, do you feel real comfortable in your mind and your body?" - "Yes, but you don't understand; there's no joy! It's not there anymore!" - "Fine, continue, everything is going along nicely." People get angry at me at that time sometimes. "You dirty rat! You're supposed to help me get the joy back! I want the joy!" Who's attached to the joy? Now the joy happens in different ways at different times in your practice. With the first two jhanas, it's an uplifting joy. And that has

excitement in it. As you go deeper, you still can get your enlightenment factor of joy, but it doesn't have as much excitement in it. And it just kind of bubbles out everywhere, it just kind of comes out. But it doesn't matter what kind of joy that arises. When joy arises, if it pulls your mind to it, you let it go, and relax, and gently come back to your object of meditation. There's really no difference between pleasant feeling and unpleasant feeling. Same coin, different sides. What do you do with a painful feeling? You allow it to be there and you relax and you come back to your object of meditation. No difference between that and the joy. You treat it in the same way. And when your mind goes back to that feeling - how did it get there? Let's investigate. Let's put some energy in to see how the process works. Not too much energy, because that will make you restless. But, as you do this over and over again, it becomes more of a calm kind of energy. It's not the one that's "trying real hard to see it!" – It's the one that says: "Oh, I just saw this, before that. Isn't that interesting?" You let it be, you relax, you come back to your object of meditation. It gets pulled back again, and then you say: "Oh, I see this more clearly now. This happens before that arises. So, when this arises next time, I can let it go right then and relax."

Relax.

MN: He develops the TRANQUILITY enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

TT: 35:15

BV: Ok. Now another, the dispassion and the cessation is when your mind becomes very tranquil, you let that be there too, and you stay with your object of meditation. But now your mind is ahaa, stays there. All along the path of the seven enlightenment factors, you're developing the last enlightenment factor to a very fine degree, which is equanimity. Getting there more and more.

MN: He develops the COLLECTEDNESS enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

BV: Your mind becomes very calm. Very peaceful, very alert. Now if your mindfulness slips a little bit, you're able to see that movement much more easily. You're able to see your mind wobble. And as soon as you see your mind starting to do that, you relax right there.

S: ~

BV: Let that go, relax.

S: ~

BV: That's right. That's a little bit . . . When you have a feeling of something should be happening and it doesn't seem like it is, that is what we call impatience. (Laughs.) And one of the things that the Buddha said is: "Patience leads to Nibbana."

S: ~

BV: A little touch of restlessness. Ok? So when you see your mind starting to do that, just relax right then, it's doing just exactly what it's supposed to be doing.

S: ~

BV: (Laughs.) Yeah, that's the nature of restlessness, isn't it? What is the cause of that restlessness? "I want."

S: ~

BV: It doesn't matter. It's the desire for something to be different than it is. And when that desire arises, it causes agitation in the mind. And with that agitation, there's tightness, and then there's thoughts. And there's a few other little things along the way that I won't tell you about yet. (Laughs,) "You dirty rat!" (Laughs.) But

there is something that happens before mind starts to wobble. You tell me when you see it.

S: ~

BV: Well, it will. Believe me, it will.

S: ~

BV: (Laughs.)

MN: He develops the EQUANIMITY enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

TT: 39:45

BV: So the whole point of the seven factors of enlightenment is learning the balance and allowing to be. Fine line. You have to learn how to walk it very carefully. That's one of the fun things about the meditation. Because you get to learn how to do that, and it's interesting. Not just a little bit, I mean when you get so that you can see this stuff fairly well, it turns into the best show in town. It's much more entertaining than any movie you've ever seen. The subtle little things that your mind does, to try to distract you away, because it doesn't like being disciplined, and you've had lifetime after lifetime after lifetime after lifetime of not disciplining it, so you have that habitual habit, it doesn't like to let go so easy. But just relax and do it. It's all part of the game. Have fun with it. It's the most incredibly interesting thing you've ever had the opportunity to observe. So, keep that mind. That says . . . not the mind that says: "Oh, here we go again", but the mind that says: "Wow, look at that!" There has to be some wonderment in with that. "Isn't that beautiful? Wow!" Even when anger comes up, even when hatred comes up. It turns into the most interesting thing that you could ever observe, when you watch it closely and you gain that equanimity with it. Why is it so much fun? Because you're seeing things the way they truly are. You're seeing things as they actually occur. And you see how your mind starts to

grab on to these things, and run away! They want to go a thousand miles away. But you say: "Ok, you want to do that? You can go do that, but I'm not going to pay attention to you." Let go, relax. See that tight feeling, relax. Come back to your object of meditation.

MN: These are the seven enlightenment factors through the development and cultivation of which a meditator, by realising for himself with direct knowledge, here and now enters upon and abides in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints."

14. When the venerable Nandaka had advised the bhikkhunis thus, he dismissed them saying: "Go sisters, it is time." Then the bhikkhunis, having delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Nandaka's words, rose from their seats, and after paying homage to the venerable Nandaka, departed keeping him on their right.

BV: What that really means is keeping what he said correctly in their mind. A lot of times people have the idea that you always have to have your right arm, as you're leaving, showing to the teacher. It doesn't .. That doesn't matter. Everything in Buddhism has to do with mind, and relaxing all tensions and tightnesses.

MN: They went to the blessed One, and after paying homage to him, stood at one side. The Blessed One told them "Go, sisters, it is time." Then the bhikkhunis paid homage to the Blessed One and departed keeping him on their right.

15. Soon after they had left, the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus: "Monks, just as on the Uposatha day of the fourteenth people are not doubtful or perplexed as to whether the moon is incomplete or full, since then the moon is clearly incomplete, so too, those bhikkhunis are satisfied with Nandaka's teaching of the Dhamma, but their intention has not yet been fulfilled."

16-26. Then Blessed One addressed the venerable Nandaka: "Well then, Nandaka, tomorrow too you should advise those bhikkhunis in exactly the same way."

“Yes, venerable sir” the venerable Nandaka replied. Then, the next morning the venerable Nandaka dressed . . .

BV: and he went through this whole thing, which I’m not going to do this time.

MN: Then the bhikkhunis paid homage to the Blessed One and departed ...

27. Soon after they had left, the Blessed One addressed the monks: “Monks just as on the Uposatha day

BV: A full moon or new moon, and it’s the fourteenth day or fifteenth day depending on how the moon is on that particular month, which is an incredibly complicated way of keeping the month.

In Burma, they have thirteen months in a year. Every month is thirty days. And then at the end of the year, they have four or five days, sometimes it’s five, that’s not part of the year anymore. And that’s when their new year is. [1] And that’s when they all flock to the monastery, on those days to listen to Dhamma talk. And I’ve seen my teacher in Burma start a Dhamma talk at about twelve-thirty in the afternoon and talk straight until six o’clock in the evening. And you could hear a pin drop, and there might be a thousand people listening to it. And it’s hot. This is in April and that’s the hottest month of the year in Burma. So they’re sitting; there’s a thousand people in one room, and they have these fans, these ceiling fans blowing all of that hot air down, so many bodies together, and it’s one-hundred-and-five to one-hundred-and-ten outside anyway, and they are right there listening to what the teaching is. And people complain to me because I give long Dhamma talks.

S: ~

BV: (Laughs.) I think I would have some real problems giving a Dhamma talk for six hours. That’s a difficult thing.

S: ~

BV: (Laughs.)

Repeats . . ("Monks just as on the Uposatha day)

MN: of the fifteenth people are not doubtful or perplexed as to whether the moon is incomplete or full, since then the moon is clearly full, so too, those bhikkhunis are satisfied with Nandaka's teaching of the Dhamma and their intention has been fulfilled. Monks, even the least advanced of those five hundred bhikkhunis is a stream-enterer, no longer subject to perdition, bound [for deliverance], headed for enlightenment.

BV: Just by listening to this Dhamma talk two times in a row.

S: Want to read it again?

BV: (Laughs.)

And they all became arahats. (Laughs.)

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

TT 50:06

BV: I like that particular sutta because if you're really listening closely, and you think when I say: "Is nose permanent or impermanent?" and you think deeply about the impermanence of the nose, or the impermanence of the tongue, or the impermanence of the body, or the impermanence of mind-objects, when you think deeply about that impermanence, and you see everything that's impermanent: "That's not me, that's not mine."

S: ~

BV: Including mind. When you see and realize deeply that this is part of the process and everything in the process of mind and body is impersonal. And there's nothing to hold on to. What can you hold on to? That's relinquishment then isn't it? So the more deeply you go into the sutta, and see for yourself exactly how all of the six sense doors are impermanent, and all of the consciousnesses, the eye consciousness, the ear consciousness, the nose consciousness, the tongue consciousness, the body consciousness, the mind consciousness, is impermanent. Is there anything to hold on to? Is there anything there that's yours? These things arise by themselves, because the conditions are right for them to arise. And as you see that this is an impersonal process, you go deeper and just begin to let go at deeper and deeper levels. This is a very powerful sutta. I mean it did ok for five hundred bikkhunis.

S: ~

BV: Yeah. They all became, at the start they all became at least sotapannas. That means the first stage of enlightenment. That means that their rebirth is such that they will never experience a realm lower than the human being. They'll still come back and be reborn as a human being. Or they will be reborn in a deva loka, or brahma loka depending on their mental development. They can come back as many as seven times, before they become arahats. An interesting thing that has happened with people that are practicing vipassana is they say: "Only by practice can you become a sotapanna." But, during the first talk that the Buddha gave to the five ascetics, he was talking about the eightfold path and one of the monks became a sotapanna just from that understanding, that deep understanding of how the process really works.

Hey! Hey! (Talking to dogs)

S: ~

BV: I can appreciate that. Just be patient.

S: ~

BV: (Laughs.) "I'll be patient as long as I can get what I want right now!" (Laughs.)

TT 54:50

S: (Laughter)

BV: Anyway, You can become a sotapanna just by listening to the Dhamma and understanding it completely. This is one of the reasons that quite often the Buddha will say something about: "Listen attentively." I want you to not be distracted at all. Just listen to the words of the Buddha. And I was reading the words of the Buddha, I wasn't expounding on anything. They're not my words, which is something that scares a lot of other meditation teachers, because they want to freelance and make up and add in all kinds of other disciplines.

S: ~

BV: Yeah, it's a good living.

So, you can also become a sakadagami. Now when you become a sotapanna, you have no doubt in the Path, ever arising again. You see it exactly the way it is. You see that rites and rituals do not lead to the cessation of suffering. And you see that everything is part of the process, and it's an impersonal process. And you see it very clearly. Some people, when they listen to the Dhamma, they understand it even more deeply, and become sakadagamis. Now a sakadagami is called a once returner. No, excuse me, three time returner. At the most, he will be reborn as a human being three times before he becomes an arahat. A sakadagami is someone who has lessened very drastically lust and hatred. [2] It just isn't very strong at all. And their understanding of the process of dependent origination is deeper. The only way that you can become an anagami or an arahat is through the practice of meditation, and seeing mindfulness of the body, the mindfulness of feeling, the mindfulness of mind, and the mindfulness of mind-objects. I already gave you

that talk. And then as it says in the Satipatthana Sutta, one of two things can be expected. Either becoming completely liberated here and now, or if there's a touch, little bit of attachment, you become an anagami. Now an anagami is called a never returner. When they die from this lifetime they will not be reborn as a human being. They will not be reborn in any lower realm than very high brahma lokas.

TT: 59:44

S: ~

BV: I don't quite know how to answer that.

S: ~

BV: And the deva loka, and the brahma loka. You can only get in the brahma loka through experiencing jhana. But these particular realms are very very high when you become an anagami. The lowest, there's five different realms for the anagami. The lowest one, your lifetime is, about eight maha kappas, and then it goes to sixteen and then . . . Well what happens is, in that realm you will practice your meditation and become an arahat, and then when you die, there is no more becoming. This is the realm that the Pureland Buddhists say that if you repeat Amitabha all the time, you will be reborn in this most fantastic and wonderful, incredible heavenly realm where all the sensual pleasures are heightened beyond belief. And they took that from these five realms.

S: ~

BV: Yeah, that's the Pureland stuff.

When you become an anagami, you loose completely all lust and all hatred. You can experience the cessation of perception and feeling whenever you want to direct your mind towards it, for however long you want to sit in it. You want to take a weekend vacation? You can sit in the cessation of perception and feeling. Very pure state. Very

nice state. I've only met one person that has had that experience, only one.

S: ~

BV: I doubt it. Because there's still lust, there's still anger that can arise. That's .. yeah, but this means you have this experience, it never arises again. So you've given up five fetters that block your spiritual practice.

If you become an arahat there are five other fetters that you give up. Restlessness, even as an anagami there can still be a little bit of restlessness, sloth and torpor, not sloth anymore but dullness. There can still be a desire to experience an immaterial realm, still have a little bit of attachment to want to become. You give up completely and totally all pride. Mona is, it's defined as, sometimes people call it conceit, or pride; it's a very subtle state of attachment, you give that up. And the last fetter that you give up that will never arise in your mind again, ignorance. You see everything all the time as it actually is. Ignorance is an interesting word, because it comes from the base of : "to ignore." To ignore what? To ignore how dependent origination works, how the four noble truths work, that's saying the same thing. In one sutta, Sariputta said: "He that sees dependent origination, sees the Dhamma; he that sees the Dhamma sees dependent origination." And dependent origination is the four noble truths. It's just the long version of the four noble truths. You give up any slightest, little, teeny, tiny, idea that anything is personal. You see everything as part of an impersonal process. Now an arahat is someone that, they don't laugh out loud anymore. The most that an arahat will do is, to show their joy or to show their acceptance of something, they will either smile showing their teeth a little bit, or they will smile not showing their teeth. They walk around in perfect equanimity all of the time. Nothing will upset that equanimity, because they see everything as part of process. I've never met anyone like that before.

S: ~

BV: Just the way that I'm showing you right now. Want it? You won't have it as long as you want it. (Laughs) It won't occur; you can't desire it to come. But the more you see how the process works, and the more you see dependent origination, the more you let go and the more balance of mind you have. And with that balance when all of the other enlightenment factors come into balance, it all happens as relinquishment, letting go completely. And then there's the cessation of perception and feeling, when the perception and feeling come back, you see the cause of suffering. And that is: when ignorance arises, because ignorance arises, formations arise; because formations arise, consciousness arises; because consciousness arises, mentality/materiality arises; because mentality/materiality arises, six sense doors arise; because six sense doors arise, contact arises; because contact arises, feeling arises; because feeling arises, craving arises; because craving arises, clinging arises; because clinging arises, becoming arises; because that habitual tendency arises, birth arises; because birth arises, sickness, old age, sorrow, lamination, pain, grief, and despair arises. Because old age, sickness, death, pain, sorrow, lamination, grief, and despair arise, ignorance arises; and because ignorance arises, formations arise, and we start all over again. And when you see that, than you notice: Well, if ignorance doesn't arise, then the formations won't arise; when the formations don't arise, consciousness doesn't arise; when consciousness doesn't arise, mentality and materiality doesn't arise. That's the six internal bases and the six external bases that I just read to you in the sutta. When mentality and materiality don't arise, six sense doors don't arise; when the six sense doors don't arise, there's no contact to arise; when contact doesn't arise, there's no feeling that arises; when there's no feeling that arises, there's no craving that arises; because there's no craving that arises, clinging won't arise; because clinging won't arise, habitual tendency won't arise; because habitual tendency won't arise, birth won't arise; because birth won't arise, sickness, old age, death, pain, grief, despair and all of the rest won't arise. And when you see that, Nibbana occurs.

Now somebody asked me how to describe Nibbana, actually, a lot of people ask me how to describe Nibbana, and it's impossible. You can't really describe it. It turns into philosophy and wishful thinking

and all kinds of other things. It's an unconditioned state, there's no more condition. You've let go of all the condition. You've seen how they arise; you see how they don't arise anymore. There are no more conditions. In the Anguttra Nikaya somebody asked: "What is Nibbana?" and the Buddha answered: "Suppose you were to build a sand castle." - And you have this nice shape. Now, with everybody else, the sand castle is your mind and your body and that's held together with craving. But when you're an arahat, there is no more craving, so it's just these factors that are together right now. And suppose a wave comes and washes it all away. Now, those grains of sand that went into making that sand castle are still there, but they're not held together anymore. That's what happens at death, for an arahat. There is no more becoming. There's no energy. There's no light. There's nothing,

S: ~

BV: Well, karma disappears.

S: ~

BV: Yeah.

S: ~

BV: Right.

S: ~

BV: Lack of knowledge of how dependent origination works. And this is why it's very frustrating . . . What are you doing? You're. . . Restlessness. Restlessness. No.

Ignorance means that you ignore the process. Now when people are teaching insight meditation, they never talk about dependent origination in, as completely as I just talked about it. And that's the most profound teaching that the Buddha has. And like the Buddha was talking to Ananda last night, when he came and he said: "It's

easy as easy to see” – “No, it’s not. This is deep. This is very very profound.” It took a Buddha to recognize it again. And that’s why a Buddha comes around every now and then, to explain dependent origination and the way things actually work.

So. O yogis make meditate. Meditate hard; meditate now before it’s too late. With perfect energy.

S: ~

BV: Ok, let’s share some merit.

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

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

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

May they long protect the Buddha’s dispensation.

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

Footnotes:

1. Although BV’s idea was correct, the incorrect number of days was given here - to understand their traditional calendar system, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burmese_calendar
2. BV was right the first time, a Sakadagami is called a once returner.

The attainments happen like this:

First level attainment is Sotapana and includes the overcoming three of the fetters - 1) giving up personality view, *atta*; the idea of a personal self which is *atta*.; 2) Giving up doubt about how you are doing the practice which improves your confidence; 3) understanding that rites and rituals cannot lead us to nibbana. They will live through 7 more lifetimes, but the person will never be reborn as anything lower than a human being before they reach the Arahant level.

Second Level attainment is called Sakadigami. The person will never be reborn one more time in the human realm before attaining the next level of Anagami OR Arahant. The three fetters lost become stronger now.

Third Level attainment is called Anagami, and with this attainment they will never return into the human realm again. After their death they will be reborn into a particular type of Brahmaloaka where eventually they will become an Arahant and then, never be born again into ANY realm. There is no more Lust or Hatred in the mind again. At this level you are also called a Non-Returner.

The Fourth and highest level attainment is called the Arahant. All the taints are now completely destroyed, totally abandoned and this is called the Non-Returner. This means you are completely living with firm equanimity and you are off of the Wheel of Samsara. You cannot become caught anymore by Ignorance or Craving.

Each level must also repeat the experience of nibbana to achieve what is called Fruition which secures that level of attainment so it cannot then be lost.

Sister Khema

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