

SN 12:10 Gotama the Great Sakyan Sage – Gotama Sutta
SN 12:2 Analysis of Dependent Origination - Vibhaṅga Sutta
SN 12:14 Ascetics and Brahmins - Dutiyasamaṇabrāhmaṇa Sutta
22-Feb-07 JT2

BV: This particular sutta is real important for a couple of reasons. One, because an awful lot of people think that the Buddha gained enlightenment on his night of enlightenment. All of a sudden he had the insights of Dependent Origination. Like that all of a sudden, just appeared. And what this sutta's talking about, is before he was enlightened and how he discovered, Dependent Origination. Now, you've been hearing me talk, all week, about Dependent Origination, and I never have given you all of the different parts of it, so I thought tonight might be a good night to get to it. So, please listen very attentively. This is fairly long. There's quite a bit of repetition in this one too. It helps it to sink in, and your understanding will grow as you listen very attentively.

SN 12:10 Gotama the Great Sakyan Sage (page 537)
(i. Origination)

"Monks, before my enlightenment, while I was still a bodhisatta not yet fully enlightened,

BV: By the way, the word "bodhisatta" is a Pāli word that means future Buddha. If you have taken the bodhisatta vow, it means that you renounce gaining enlightenment in this lifetime, and you're going to work to become a future Buddha. To me, that's a very dangerous vow. Because, if you take the bodhisatta vow now, you won't be able to, fully understand the Buddha's teaching, or experience nibbāna, in the Buddha era. What happens if you're reborn, not in a Buddha era? And what generally happens for an awful lot of people, is they know that they're a bodhisatta because when they're young, they will have, a dream, where there's a big Buddha image, and they will enter into that Buddha image. If they're just starting out, they will enter into his feet. If they've been around for a mahakappa or so, which I think you remember is an expansion and contraction of the universe, when they continue working with the bodhisatta vow, then they will enter

through the navel. If they keep their bodhisatta vow for another mahakappa, they can enter into the throat. When they are getting close, now only a mahakappa or so away, and you enter in through a third eye. And this is a vision that will happen every time you're reborn. After a few thousand, or even a hundred thousand lifetimes, people start to get tired of staying with the bodhisatta vow. They start realizing how much true work it is and they wind up giving up the bodhisatta vow. Now, they might not be born in a Buddha era for a long, long period of time, which means that they're prolonging their birth and death cycle, and all of the suffering that goes along with life. So I strongly don't recommend taking the bodhisatta vow. With that said, and I know that's going to shake up some people in the future –

SN:

{repeats: while I was still a bodhisatta not yet fully enlightened,} it occurred to me: 'Alas this world has fallen into trouble, in that it is born, ages, and dies, it passes away and is reborn, yet it does not understand the escape from this suffering headed by aging-and-death. When now will an escape be discerned from this suffering headed by aging-and-death?'

"Then. monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does aging-and-death come to be? By what is aging-and-death conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom:

BV: Now, what this is saying, right here, is that he had already gone through a lot of different meditation, and a lot of different practices, and he still was not satisfied with them. When he first became a monk, he looked up a meditation teacher, that was practicing one-pointed concentration, and he went to this teacher, and he learned all of the philosophy, and when he sat down, and he said: "Well," ... This teacher, his name was Kālāma. He said: "This teacher has confidence, energy, mindfulness, collectedness, or concentration, and wisdom. I have these things too." This teacher had told him that if he was a very intelligent person, that he would gain this benefit from doing the meditation. So he practiced the meditation, in the way that

the, teacher told him, and he got to the realm of nothingness, with this particular kind of practice. The realm of nothingness also can be experienced in one-pointed concentration as well as the collectedness. But it's not the same, insights. It's not the same way of practice. He got to that realm and he went to the teacher, and he sat down, and he said: "Is this as far as the meditation goes?" And then he told the teacher what his experience was with the meditation, and the teacher said: "You're the same as me now. Come, teach. Sit right beside me and teach." Which was a very high honor at that time. The bodhisatta, said, that he was not satisfied with that practice and he wanted to go still higher. He wanted to look for the cessation of all suffering. So, he started wandering around, and he found another teacher, by the name of Rāmaputta. Rāmaputta, means the son of Rāma. Rāma was a teacher that, had died previously, but he had gotten to the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. The bodhisatta started practicing, and he learned all of the philosophy, and after he learned the philosophy, then he sat down and he started practicing. And he got to the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception. And he went to the teacher, and said: "Is this as high as you can get?" And this teacher said: "Yes. No one as ever gotten any higher than this realm." The bodhisatta wasn't satisfied with that, because he still realized that there was somethings that were causing suffering in him. So he went out on his own, and he did a lot of other practices that, were thought to lead to enlightenment. One of the things was cutting down on the amount of food that he took, and eating certain kinds of food, sometimes it was beans, sometimes it was papayas, sometimes it was mangos, and he cut down on the amount of food, until he was taking, just a little bit of food, that he could put in the cup of his hand. And he thought: "This doesn't lead to enlightenment, so, what if I were to, cut out taking food all together? Maybe that's the road to enlightenment." And devas heard him say that, and they came to him and said: "If you cut out taking all the food, then we're going to take the celestial food, and pour it through your pores, so that you'll stay alive." So he thought: "Well, that's not being honest, if I say: 'I'm not eating food.', but I'm still getting nourishment. So I won't do that. I'll just cut down the amount of food, that I take." And he cut down so he was only taking one or two grains of rice a day. His body,

became, a skeleton, and it talks about in some of the suttas, where, if he tried to touch his stomach, he would touch his spine, or if he tried to touch his spine, he would touch his stomach, and that's pretty skinny. Now, all of this torture that he was doing to his body, he went as far as anyone could possibly go, with these kind of practices, and other people could match what he had done, but nobody could go further, and still stay alive. So, he decided that that wasn't the way, and he saw that, he was so weak from not taking food, that it was time for him to start taking food. At the time, he had five ascetics that were taking care of him; they knew he was going to be a Buddha, and, they, were his attendants, and when he started taking food, to build up his strength in his body, they started thinking: "Well, now he is becoming luxurious.", and they got disgusted, and they left him alone, which was a good thing. After he took enough food, he started getting his color back, and he started gaining a little bit of weight, and he started seeing that he had a lot more energy to do his meditations and practice. He was still looking very deeply, at how to get of the wheel of saṃsāra; how to overcome the suffering. Then, he started investigating in this way. Now, the one-pointed concentration that he practiced, did have a lot of advantages to it. You get real peaceful and calm. Your mind is very sharp, and alert. You have a certain amount of insights that can arise, into the nature of things, but you don't really understand them completely. The one-pointed concentration, causes mind, to become very focused just on one thing, so you can't see how, mind's attention, would be able to move from one thing to another, because the force of the concentration, keeps your mind just on this one thing, and suppresses anything else that arises. Now, when he started investigating, he was one of the most advanced meditators in the entire world, at that time. Very, very few people have that kind of mental development. So, when he's talking about still being a bodhisatta, not yet fully enlightened, he was able to point his mind in the direction of aging-and-death, and seeing what the conditions are for aging-and-death, and all of these other factors, and he saw them very deeply. And that was one of, you could call it a proximate cause, for his being able to see how Dependent Origination worked, because his mind didn't waver; it didn't get upset about things. It just was

focused on, what the cause of these things was. And this is why this sutta is called "Origination".

Repeats("Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does aging-and-death come to be? By what is aging-and-death conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom:)

SN: 'When there is birth, aging-and-death comes to be; aging-and-death has birth as its condition.'

"Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does birth come to be? By what is birth conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough in wisdom: 'When there is existence, or habitual tendency birth comes to be; birth has existence as its condition.'

"Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does existence come to be? By what is existence conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is clinging, habitual tendency comes to be; habitual tendency has clinging as its condition.'

BV: Clinging is, thoughts, opinions, concepts. Also, it is the thing that really builds the: "I am that.", so you really start believing that your thoughts and feelings that arise, are you. It causes this attachment to arise.

SN: - "Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does clinging come to be? By what is clinging conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is craving, clinging comes to be; clinging has craving as its condition.'

BV: And craving, as you know, is the tension and tightness, and it's the: "I like it. I don't like it." mind that arises.

SN: "Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does craving come to be? By what is craving conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is feeling, craving comes to be; craving has feeling as its condition.'

BV: That's pleasant, unpleasant, neutral.

SN: "Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does feeling come to be? By what is feeling conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is contact, feeling comes to be; feeling has contact as its condition.'

"Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does contact come to be? By what is contact conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there are six sense bases, contact comes to be; contact has six sense bases as its condition.'

BV: Eye, ear, nose tongue, body, and mind.

SN: "Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists do the six sense bases come to be? By what are the six sense bases conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is mentality-materiality, the six sense bases come to be; the six sense bases have mentality-materiality as their condition.'

"Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does mentality-materiality come to be? By what is mentality-materiality conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is consciousness, mentality-materiality comes to be; mentality-materiality has consciousness as its condition.'

"Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists does consciousness come to be? By what is consciousness conditioned?'

Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there are volitional formations, consciousness comes to be; consciousness has volitional formations as its condition.'

"Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what exists do the volitional formations come to be? By what are the volitional formations conditioned?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is ignorance, the volitional formations come to be; the volitional formations have ignorance as their condition.'

"Thus with ignorance as condition, volitional formations come to be, with volitional formations as condition, consciousness comes to be, with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality comes to be, with mentality-materiality as condition, the six sense bases come to be, with the six sense bases as condition, contact comes to be, with contact as condition, feeling comes to be, with feeling as condition, craving comes to be, with craving as condition, clinging comes to be, with clinging as condition, habitual tendency comes to be, with habitual tendency as condition, birth comes to be, with birth as condition, aging-and-death comes to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.

"'Origination, origination'—thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and radiance.

BV: Now, the next part of the sutta is called: "Cessation". We'll get into what each one of these links, according to the suttas, what it's talking about.

SN: (ii. Cessation)

"Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what does not exist does aging-and-death not come to be? With the cessation of what does the cessation of aging-and-death come about?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by

wisdom: 'When there is no birth, aging-and-death does not come to be; with the cessation of birth comes cessation of aging-and-death.'

"Then, monks, it occurred to me: 'When what does not exist does birth not come to be? With the cessation of what does the cessation of birth come about?' Then, monks, through careful attention, there took place in me a breakthrough by wisdom: 'When there is no, habitual tendency, birth does not come to be; with the cessation of habitual tendency comes cessation of birth.'... 'When there is no clinging, existence, or habitual tendency does not come to be; with the cessation of clinging comes cessation of habitual tendency.'... 'When there is no craving, clinging does not come to be; with the cessation of craving comes cessation of clinging.'... 'When there is no feeling, craving does not come to be; with the cessation of feeling comes cessation of craving.'... 'When there is no contact, feeling does not come to be; with the cessation of contact comes cessation of feeling.'... 'When there are no six sense bases, contact does not come to be; with the cessation of the six sense bases comes cessation of contact.'... 'When there is no mentality-materiality, the six sense bases do not come to be; with the cessation of mentality-materiality comes cessation of the six sense bases.'... with the, 'When there is no consciousness, mentality-materiality does not come to be; with the cessation of consciousness comes cessation of mentality-materiality.'... 'When there are no volitional formations, consciousness does not come to be; with the cessation of the volitional formations comes cessation of consciousness.' ... 'When there is no ignorance, volitional formations do not come to be; with the cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations.'

"Thus with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes the cessation of volitional formations; with the cessation of volitional formations comes the cessation of consciousness; with the cessation of consciousness, comes the cessation of mentality-materiality; with the cessation of mentality-materiality, comes cessation of the six sense bases; with the cessation of the six sense bases, comes the cessation of contact; with the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling; with the cessation of feeling comes the cessation of craving; with the cessation of craving comes the

cessation of clinging; with the cessation of clinging comes the cessation of habitual tendency; with the cessation of habitual tendency comes cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth comes cessation of aging-and-death.

BV and students: sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

SN:

Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

“Cessation,cessation’—thus, monks, in regard to things unheard before there arose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light.”

BV: Now, that’s pretty easy and straight forward, right? Easy to see. Ok, now we’re going to go to another section in this book called: The Analysis of Dependent Origination.

SN: 12:2 Analysis of Dependent Origination (page 534)

At Sāvatti. “Monks, I will teach you dependent origination and I will analyze it for you. Listen to that and attend closely. I will speak.”

“Yes, venerable sir,” those monks replied. The Blessed one said this:

“And what, monks, is dependent origination? With ignorance as condition, volitional formations come to be; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness comes to be; with consciousness as condition, mentality-materiality comes to be; with mentality-materiality as condition, the six sense doors come to be; with the six sense bases as condition, contact comes to be; with contact as condition, feeling comes to be; with feeling as condition, craving comes to be; with craving as condition, clinging comes to be; with clinging as condition, habitual tendency comes to be; with habitual tendency as condition, birth comes to be; with birth as condition, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair come to be. This is the cause and origin of this whole mass of suffering.

BV: This is the cause of it, because we don't see this. And every time you hear the word "ignorance", it means not seeing, understanding, and using the four Noble Truths, to be able to see these things.

SN: "And what, monks, is aging-and-death? The aging of the various beings in the various orders of beings, their growing old, brokenness of teeth, greyness of hair, wrinkling of skin, decline of vitality, degeneration of the faculties: this is called aging. The passing away of the various beings from the various orders of beings, their perishing, breakup, disappearance, mortality, death, completion of time, the breakup of the aggregates, the laying down of the carcass: this is called death. Thus this aging and this death are together called aging-and-death.

"And what monks, is birth? The birth of the various beings into the various orders of beings, their being born,

BV: Now, that little statement, right there, "their being born", can also mean, born of ideas, born of opinions, born of concepts, born of craving.

SN: descent into the womb, production, the manifestation of the aggregates, the obtaining of the sense bases. This is called birth.

BV: So, he was not only covering the general form of birth and death, but he was also talking about how, when birth doesn't happen, there is no aging-and-death. In other words, if there is no birth of concept and ideas, then there is no death of those same concept and ideas. That's going, the next step deeper. You begin to see this more and more plainly as you practice. But you might not necessarily see it, real clearly, until, you've had the cessation of perception and feeling. That's when you really get to see, very, very deeply, how all of this stuff, actually does work. But you're going to see all of these different links. You might not be able to recognize them very easily, until you get to, the six sense doors, and the contact, and the feeling, and the craving, and the clinging, and the habitual tendency. But if you don't let go, and relax into these things, you will get caught up in them, and that means the birth of more

ideas, and the death of those ideas. So,

SN: "And what, monks, is habitual tendency?"

There are these three kinds of habitual tendency: sense-sphere, habitual tendency, form-sphere, habitual tendency, formless-sphere habitual tendency this is called habitual tendency.

BV: We have habitual tendencies in the sense-sphere. We're in the sense-sphere right now. The form-sphere is in the deva locas. When you die and you're reborn into a heavenly realm, that would be a form-sphere. If you die and you didn't lead a good life, that means you could be reborn as an animal, you can be reborn in the hell realms. And that's what this form-sphere is talking about. These form-spheres means that you still have a body. The formless sphere, they happen only through deep meditation, and getting into the formless realms of your meditation, that is: infinite space, infinite consciousness, nothingness, neither-perception-nor-non-perception.

SN: "And what, monks, is clinging? There are {...} four kinds of clinging: clinging to sensual pleasures, clinging to views, clinging to rules, and rites and ritual, clinging to a doctrine of the self. {...}"

BV: Now, what is clinging? Thinking about. Taking everything personally. Taking your concepts, your ideas, your thoughts personally. And making them yours. And when somebody doesn't agree with you, now what happens? There's an argument, at least, or, fighting.

SN: "And what monks, is craving? There are these six classes of craving: craving for forms, craving for sounds, craving for odors, craving for tastes, craving for tactile objects, craving for mental phenomena. This is called craving."

BV: And that happens ever time a feeling arises, craving comes up right after that, at one of the sense doors. Now the thing with the craving, the reason that it becomes the weak link, in Dependent Origination, is because it does cause this tension to arise, and when

you see that tension start to arise, and you relax, now you're letting go of the craving. It is the weak link because it's easy to recognize. As you go deeper and deeper into your practice, the amount of tension and tightness that arises can get less and less, and the amount of movement caused by the craving arising becomes less and less, until it gets incredibly fine, and it manifests not as tension and tightness anymore, but something else, but you have to tell me what it is, I won't tell you. Sorry. But when you see it, you'll go: "Wow, that's really subtle stuff that the Buddha was talking about."

Now, there's all these different levels of your understanding, when you first start your practice your mind is flip flopping all over the place. Going here, going there, doing what ever it wants to do. As you see that and let go of that gross tension and tightness, it's still fairly subtle, and allowing it to be and relaxing and smiling and coming back to your object of meditation, your mind stops moving quite so much, and you start staying on your object of meditation, for longer periods of time. Even at these early stages, you are beginning to see some of the links of Dependent Origination and how it works. You're teaching yourself. And you teach yourself best when there's a hindrance that arises, because you get to see this hindrance, and it really hurts and you really want to let go of it, but it's not the hindrance that's the problem. The problem comes up because you're not being clear enough in seeing how the process works. You still get involved with: "I don't like this feeling, and I want it to be different than it is." In gross ways, in the bigger ways of looking at things, you say: "I'm mad. I'm depressed. I'm sad. I'm upset." And when the: "I am that", arises, the craving is already there, and you have a tendency to get involved in the story about why you don't like it, and why you want it to be different than it is. The content of the thoughts, that arise, doesn't matter at all. You need to let go of the content of the thoughts, so you can see how the process works more clearly. So the first thing you need to do, when your mind becomes distracted, is to let go of the thoughts, about the feeling. Allow the thoughts to be there without trying to control them, or push them away, and relax. Now, you're able to see that there is a feeling there, and most often, it is a painful feeling. What do you do when a painful feeling arises? Immediately, your mind grabs on to it and says: "I

don't like that. I don't want that that there." That's the craving. The tension and tightness. Now the truth is, when a feeling arises, it's there. That's the truth. You don't need anybody to tell you about it; you see it. It's really there. What you do with what arises in the present moment, dictates what happens in the future. If you get caught up in the story about why you don't like feeling depressed, and how you hate it, how you want it to be different, and you mentally try to fight a feeling, the feeling naturally, gets bigger and more intense. That is the cause of suffering. And actually, that's your choice, to do that. But because of our habitual tendencies, we've been acting like that every time this feeling comes up, so we always act like that. That's re acting. You have a choice to either allow that feeling to be there, and not be involved with it, or to try to squeeze it to death. It's up to you. But, I think you'll find that when you try to squeeze the feeling, it doesn't make the feeling go away. It doesn't make it feel any better. It makes it feel worse, by a lot. When this painful feeling arises: "I want to control it. I want it to be different than it is. I want it to stop and leave me alone." Do you hear all the "I" in that? The identification with the feeling, is the cause of suffering. As you start to realize that you're causing your own pain, by trying to control the feeling, with your thoughts, then you start looking for some way to let go of that painful feeling, and a lot of people, will go to a doctor and they'll give them drugs, because they don't know any better than that. You don't need drugs to overcome, depression. You don't need drugs to overcome anxiety. You don't need drugs to overcome a very thoughtful mind. What you need to do is realize that you're identifying with that, as being: "This is me. This is who I am. And I want me to be different than I am." So we have to let go of the thoughts about...You have to let go of the story. We have to let go of trying to control the feeling with the thoughts. As we let go of the thoughts, and we relax, then we see the feeling, and it's really there, and it's really hurt. Ok so it hurts. So what? It's only a feeling. Stub your toe. Tell your toe not to hurt. Doesn't work. Get mad at your toe for being stubbed. Makes it hurt worse. Allow the feeling to be there without resisting, without trying to change it. Just allow it to be there. How do you do that? You say: "Ok, it's all right for this feeling to be here. It has to be all right, because that's the truth." — "It's really there. It really hurts." Ok, so it's really there and

it really hurts. "When I stub my toe, the pain is really there and it really hurts." And it's ok for it to be there. It has to be ok, because, that's the truth of the present moment. As you, allow that feeling to be there, you let go of the craving, of the: "I don't like it" mind, of that tension and tightness, wrapped around that feeling. It doesn't matter if it's a physical feeling or an emotional feeling. Feeling is feeling. It's either painful, pleasant, neither-painful-nor-pleasant. Your choice what you do with it. When the feeling arises... Say you stub your toe, which is something I've turned into a master at doing, and I've broken toes all over the... I think every country I've been in, I've broken my toe at least one time. Now when this pain arose, there was the shock, "It hurts, and I don't like that", and then I start watching my mind about how it starts thinking about: "This is not a good situation, and I don't want it to be there." That's the polite way of saying that; I was being a little bit harsher at the time. So, I let go of the feelings and relax, and I saw that pain, and it's real and it's there, but it's ok for it to be there; it has to be. So I let go of the craving. I let go of the tension and tightness around that, and allow that sensation to be there by itself. Now, what do I do? I come and I start practicing Loving-Kindness. But where do I direct that Loving-Kindness? Into my toe! My toe says: "Hey, I'm here, and I really need some love. I don't need your anger. I need your love." That's what pain, does. It's trying to tell you: "Pay attention to me. I need love, right at this moment." So you start radiating Loving-Kindness into that feeling, and allowing that feeling to be, and relaxing into that. And your mind grabs on to it again, and starts thinking about how you don't like it, and it's easier to see and let it go and relax, and allow the feeling to be there, and relax, and start radiating Loving-Kindness back into it. Put your smile into your toe, into that pain. And before long, that pain doesn't bother you so much anymore. And, you kind of hobble around for a little while; at least I do when I break my toes. But what can you do with a broken toe outside of put a bow on it to remind yourself not to do that again? You know, you have to let it do what ever it's going to do. That means you have to learn how to lovingly accept what ever arises in the present moment. Don't resist, or, push. Soften, and smile. That's an acronym (DROPS) that I found a long time ago, when I was reading some spiritual book or another. And I really like that

acronym. It doesn't matter what the pain is when it arises. Don't resist, or push. Soften your mind. Allow that sensation to be there. Allow that emotion to be there. "It hurts." Yeah, well, welcome to real life. Sometimes things hurt. You're not going to be very smiling and happy, when, somebody dies that you love a lot. There's going to be a lot of pain, there's going to be a lot of resistance to that kind of change. There's going to be sadness, and all of those feelings; it's all right for them to be there. You open up, and give them the space to do what ever they want to do, and relax into that, and come back and, when that sort of thing happens, you can send Loving-Kindness to yourself; you can send Loving-Kindness to the family, and other people. But love that person, you can send Loving-Kindness to that person. It doesn't much matter. What matters is what are you doing with your mind in the present moment. Are you resisting the present moment and trying to make the present moment different than it is? Or are you accepting the present moment, and putting love into that? You want to overcome grief? So it doesn't hurt so much? Fine. Start putting Loving-Kindness into it. Give yourself Loving-Kindness. Give all the people around you Loving-Kindness. As you soften your mind and allow the space, for that pain to be there, it doesn't hurt anymore. It's only this pain. It's only this sadness. It's only this grief, however the grief manifests. And it's all right for it to be there. It has to be all right, because that's the truth of the present moment. The more you can allow the present moment to be, without resistance, without trying to control it, without getting so involved in your thinking, that you don't even know that you have a body any more ... You don't indulge in the sadness; you don't indulge in the pain; you allow the pain to be by itself, and relax into that, and then come back to your object of meditation. When you're practicing Loving-Kindness, guess what? It's come back to the Loving-Kindness. Loving-Kindness to who? Who need Loving-Kindness most when your dearest friend or family member died? Well, I do. The rest of the family does. Person that died. Let them have Loving-Kindness. And then, it doesn't hurt as bad. You're not trying to control the feeling anymore, you're allowing the feeling to be there. And you will remember, that it was a painful time, but you didn't suffer, because of the pain. The only time you suffer, is when you allow the craving and the clinging to take over, and then your habitual tendency, and then, the birth of the new

pain. And then that will fade away and die. And the whole process starts again. See, this is Dependent Origination. Every thing I've been talking to you about this whole retreat, has been about that, even when I'm telling you to smile, and to laugh, and don't be serious. I'm telling you this is another way of looking at Dependent Origination. This is another way, of being able to see how mind's attention moves from one thing to another. It's another way of sharpening your awareness, and mindfulness, of what's happening in the present moment. As you, start sending loving and kind into a situation that is painful, you're allowing the space for that situation to change. And the more you can focus on, sending that love, and that kindness, the more compassion you have for yourself. The more compassion you have for yourself, the more you're able to allow, the pain to be there without taking it personally. See how it's all interconnected? So, the whole point of learning how to do this meditation, is so you won't suffer, so much, ever again. You sharpen your awareness now. You keep your meditation going, all of the time. Practice your six Rs. See you're walking from here to there. Don't let your mind just take off and start thinking this and that. Smile. If you see your mind is getting serious about something, laugh. It changes your perspective. It changes from: "I am that.", to : "It's only, this pain, this sorrow, this lamentation, this grief." So the more we can learn to carry the meditation with us, no matter what we're doing, the less, we suffer. And it really sounds kind of odd, that smiling, and bringing up joy, is the way to become more aware, because we're taught, especially in Buddhism, the way it's being taught today: "Life is suffering. So grit your teeth and bear it, so it's hard." Well, it doesn't have to be. Nobody wrote the rule book of life saying we have to suffer. We can, respond. Respond by being more aware of what's happening in the present moment. Respond by having, that softness of mind, and developing that loving, sweet attention, to what's arising in the present moment, and when your mind takes off, and goes on one of its tangents, of "poor me" s, or "I don't like this", or "I'm depressed" or "I'm so agitated", it's much easier to recognize and let it go, when you practice smiling, when you practice not, taking life so seriously.

There was a man that I talked to over the internet, that he was in a mental institute; he was taking heavy drugs. He'd been practicing

meditation for six years; he had very, very strong one-pointed concentration, but he wasn't satisfied; he felt like he reached a plateau, and he wasn't able to get any deeper with his meditation. So he started writing to me. So I said: "Well, ok, you want to do some meditation, that's good." I didn't know the he was having all of these kind of mental problems, or that he was taking drugs for these problems. He just wrote and started saying: "I want to learn the way you're teaching meditation. It seems pretty good," So I said: "Ok, you're doing mindfulness of breathing, so just continue on with that, but relax on the in-breath, and relax on the out-breath. Your mind gets distracted; let go of the distraction; relax; come back to the breath and relax." And after a couple of, well it was about a week and a half, he, wasn't progressing at all, and he was starting to tell me about how peaceful and calm it is being in meditation, and what the pits is of life. So I said: "Well, this isn't working. What I want you to do is change your meditation. I want you to do a different kind of meditation, because you have old habits, and they need to be let go of. So we'll start doing the Loving-Kindness. So I gave him the meditation. Gave him the instruction, and he can't understand the instructions very well. "Well, how are you supposed to feel Loving-Kindness? What is this that you're talking about? Smiling is nonsense." These kind of things. So finally, I got to a point, when Khema was telling me: "Why don't you get him off of our list? We don't want him on the list, anymore." And I kept saying: "No, he really wants to do this. He wants to let go of his suffering, so we have to give him a chance. But finally I got to a point where I said: "Lookit, you're not getting this at all. You're not following the instructions. You're not smiling. You're not uplifting your mind at all. You're just caught, and you're analyzing, and trying to understand, but you're trying to understand intellectually, So this is what I want you to do. I don't want you to sit in meditation at all. I want you to smile, all the time, every day, and any time you see your mind getting serious, then I want you to laugh. That's the instructions. I want you to do this, all day, every day, for seven days, and then let me know how it is." So I didn't hear from him for seven days. And I'm thinking: "Well, I'll probably never hear from him again." And he wrote back, after seven days, and he said: You know, I want to tell you what my experience was of smiling, and not being serious with

my thoughts and feelings. When I first started out, I would start smiling, and then I started noticing my mind was a little bit more uplifted. And whenever I walked anywhere, I always walked and I was kind of hunched down. and I was in my mental haze. But when he started smiling, I started noticing my body posture started changing, and instead of looking down all the time, I started looking at people around me when I passed them. And, you know, it's odd. I smile to people, and they smile back. Nobody ever smiled at me before. And, even the times that I didn't feel like smiling, I smiled anyway. And I felt my mind, become uplifted. And I became more alert, and my mindfulness really started to be very alert, and clear. And I started watching how all of these thoughts were coming in, and I'd start to get serious, and I'd kind of chuckle, and all of a sudden, I wasn't attached to that anymore. And I'd go to where there was groups of people, and I always stood back away from them, and now they're starting to come towards me, and actually talk to me. Nobody ever talked to me before. No strangers. And oh, by the way, I stopped taking the drugs I took." — "What?" — "And the doctors don't know what to do with that." — "Where are you, friend?" — "Well, I'm in this mental institute. And the doctors don't quite know how to handle this, because I'm walking around being happy, and I'm not taking any drugs, and they think there's something wrong with me." And now, somebody writes and they have a question, and they're having problems with the Loving-Kindness, and he's the first one to write back to them, and explain how the Loving-Kindness works, and how good it is, and he's encouraging all these other people with: "Really, you got to smile. This stuff is good."

And I've told this story a few times, but before I became a monk, I was in business doing construction. And I wanted to be successful. So, what I did, was, I got a mirror, and I put it on my desk, and any time the phone rang, I would look at the mirror, and I would pick it up, and I would start smiling. And the reason I had the mirror there was to see whether I was smiling or not. When I wasn't smiling, then I started smiling again. And I used to have things happen like a wrong number would call, and we'd wind up talking for ten or fifteen minutes, because they felt that Loving-Kindness coming through. And

if somebody would say something on the phone that wasn't particularly nice, I really made sure I smiled all the more, because they don't know what they're saying; it's ok. It doesn't bother me that much. I got a lot of business that way.

The more you practice smiling, in all situations, the more uplifted your mind becomes. The more uplifted your mind becomes, the easier it is to see when your mind starts to get heavy, and then, it's easy to let go of it, because you start to recognize, with this heavy mind, it hurts. It hurts me, and I wind up saying things to other people, and I hurt them, and quite often, I didn't even know them, but they said something that made my mind, get heavy all of a sudden. So, when I was smiling, that didn't happen anymore. The more you can smile with your daily activities, the more uplifted your mind becomes. The more uplifted your mind becomes, the sharper your mindfulness becomes. The sharper your mindfulness becomes, the more fun life becomes. That's part of the Dependent Origination. It really works.

And, you know, in the Kalama Sutta, it says don't believe anything if it's tradition, and don't believe a teacher whatever he says, and don't believe the scriptures. So, I'm going to tell you the same thing. Don't believe me. Try it. Smile more. The more you can smile, the more you'll see whether I'm telling you the truth or not. The Kalama Sutta ... A lot of people don't know this, because they just take the first part of the Kalama Sutta that says don't believe this and don't believe that, but when you get through with that first part, then it tells you how to practice the Brahma Vihāras. It tells you how to practice this meditation that I'm teaching you right here, right now. You want to affect the world around you in a positive way, then smile, and give that smile away to as many different people as you can. "I don't feel like smiling." That's what this guy said. "Even when I didn't feel like smiling, I smiled anyway, and it had a positive effect." So, when you smile, you become much more aware of tensions and tightnesses in your mind and in your body. And when you're aware of those, you relax and let them be. Now, you've seen me do this a lot. You see? My hand just kind of opens up and becomes at ease without any tension in it. That's what happens in your mind when you relax.

There's tension and tightness wrapped around your brain every time there's a thought that arises. Let that thought be and relax, and it's just like a flower opening up. And you'll notice something else that's very, very important. Your mind is clear. There's no thoughts in it. Your mind is alert. Now you take that kind of mind, and bring it back to your object of meditation. That's what you're learning how to practice here right now, and all of you are starting to see the benefits of it. So tell me what, does it work? I think so. It's not a philosophy. This is real stuff. And it takes practice. And you're going to forget sometimes. And you're going to get caught sometimes. But you're not going to get caught for as long.

I had one student that, this was in Malaysia, she was a Chinese lady, when she walked into the monastery where I was at, sat down in the same room with me, I wanted to get up and walk out. That's how much negative energy she had with her. But she came to see me. So I couldn't get away from her. So I said: "Well, how's it going?" And she said: "Miserable." — "Why?" — "Well, my husband got mad at me; I have three children; my husband got mad at me and he said he's not going to talk to me, anymore. And he doesn't." She can come up and talk to him about something; he turns around and walks away. And she said: "I really hate that." I said: "Yeah, I suppose so." So, my question to her was: "How are you going to overcome this problem?" She said: "Honestly, I don't know; that's why I'm here. I'm suffering so much, that I have to find a way to let go of this, or else I'm going to kill myself." So I said: "Well, I want you to start practicing Loving-Kindness meditation. And she said: "Fine." So I gave her the instructions, and then I sent her home, and the next day she came back kind of complaining, because she said: "Didn't affect my husband at all." And I said: "Yeah, ok." I said: "When you get mad, how long do you stay mad?" And she stopped for a little while, and she said: "Well, you know, some of the things that he's done in the past, he got me so mad, that I stayed mad for two weeks." And I said: "Whoa! You really cause yourself a lot of pain with that one!" So I said: "You have to be patient with this; you have a lot of old habits of thinking, and you have to learn how to let these go, so you can develop new habits." So, as she began to practice the meditation, she says: "I can only practice very early in

the morning, before the kids get up. The rest of the day, I'm running, because I got to take the kids to school, and all of this, and they go to different schools, at different times, and I'm really busy for the rest of the day. At night, I can't do any meditation because I'm exhausted. So I said: "Well, can you get up a few minutes early and start practicing your Loving-Kindness?" — "Well I can try to do that." So she got up fifteen minutes early. I had her only sending Loving-Kindness to herself, because she really didn't like herself very much. So, as time went by, he would do something else to make her mad. And instead of being mad for two weeks, she'd only stay mad for ten days. And of course, I got to hear about all of that. But, then she kept doing the practice, and I was going to be giving a weekend retreat, and she came for part of one day, so she got to practice for a few hours. And the next time he did something that was incredibly nasty, then she only stayed mad for about seven days. And then it got to be five days. And then it got to be two days. And then it got to be just one day. And then he would start doing things, and she was starting to progress in her meditation quite nicely by this time, even though she was only practicing fifteen or twenty minutes a day. She was progressing, but it took awhile. It didn't happen as fast as doing a weekend retreat, or a week retreat. It took her a few years. But she was very persistent, and she kept on coming and asking me for more tips on how she could handle the situation with her husband, because he was very stubborn. He just kept saying: "I'm going to not talk to you." I started telling her that it's time for her to start smiling more. I started telling her that she can't take anything that he's doing to her seriously. And as she started developing her sense of humor and her smile, her meditation just took off. And she was able to experience being in a jhāna. A jhāna is your level of understanding. Her understanding was starting to improve, a lot. And the length of time that she would get mad, got to be less and less. It went down to a few hours that she would stay mad. And by the end of the time I was at that monastery, he would do something like, he would take her to a store, and she said: "I'm going to run into this store. It's going to take me two minutes, and I turn around and come back. And she would go in the store, and he would take off and leave. And she'd come out, and he wasn't there. And she would have this anger come up for a moment, and then she would look at that

and go: "Oh, jeez. There it is again." And she'd start smiling and say: "Well, yeah, it's a nice day for a walk. I'll walk home. Ok." And she enjoyed her walk home. Ok, this is how it works, when you practice smiling. At first, it's going to be difficult, and you're going to forget, and you're going to get caught, but as you turn this into a habit, then the amount of suffering that you have, gets to be less, and less, and less. And, life starts to be a lot more fun. Now, near the end of my time at that monastery, she would come into the monastery, and someone would come in and they were suffering very deeply. And they would go to her, and talk with her. Didn't want to talk to me. (Laughs) But she'd gone through hell. Literally, she went through hell, and found out that heaven was on the other side. It's your choice. You want to get involved in the pain and suffering? You can do that, or not. It's all up to you.

One of the things that attracted me to Buddhism, so very much was, learning about the self responsibility. Nothing out here causes my suffering. I cause my suffering. And when you get to a certain place, you start going: "Well, what do I want to do that to myself for?" It's not worth it. Let it go. Relax. But it takes persistence. It takes, continual practice. It's like, you have a wheel that's running counter clockwise all the time. And this is the way you see the world, in a counter clockwise way, and when you start doing this practice, you slow down that wheel a little bit, and eventually it will come to a stop, and start turning the other way a little bit, and then it will go back to it's old habit. But as you practice more and more, you start having, the clockwise motion, the happiness motion, arise more and more, until finally it becomes a habit, and then the suffering, doesn't, affect, and you start becoming more and more aware of how you cause your own pain and suffering, and how to let that go. What I'm teaching you on this retreat, is not just for retreat. I'm teaching you a new way to live, a new way to act, so that you can respond to everything, instead of re act, the way you always acted. That's what the meditation is about, learning how to change old habits into new habits, taking responsibility for what ever arises in the present moment, and making the choice of what you're going to do with that. The more you respond, the happier, mind, becomes, the happier more contentment you have in your life, the more you want to help

other people. See the whole thing with the Loving-Kindness is it's very important to give it away, but you can't give something away if you don't have it yourself. When you practice Loving-Kindness, you make a wish for your friend's happiness, you have to feel that wish. Only when you really feel it, can you give it away. Right? So, the more you feel the wish, and radiate that feeling, the radiation is giving it away. Put your friend, right in the middle of that. Give them the biggest heart hug, that softness, that, open acceptance, no matter what. And the more you do that, the easier it gets. And the more you want to, practice your generosity in other ways, you want to help other people to become happy, and, the smile is the way to do that. Did I kiss your mind? You turn into a joker, like me. (Laughs) You start laughing with things, and not at them anymore, and it just kind of bubbles out. It's shocking sometimes to see: "Where did that come from?" I hear somebody say something that's true, laughter is the first thing that comes out of my mouth. And then, quite often it's a: "Yeah, that's really right!" So the more you can practice smiling, the more you can practice not being serious with whatever arises in the present moment, the clearer your mind becomes, the less the craving will take you away. That's what the six Rs is all about. It really works. And don't believe me. The more you can do this, in your daily activity, I don't care what it is, I've had people in business that tell me that this is serious stuff, and I have to be serious with it. Well, if you're not having fun with it, why are you even working at it? If you can't have fun, and smile and laugh with what you're doing, than it's time to consider, doing something else, that you can do that with. Ok, I've been on my high horse for a long time. Does anybody have any questions about what we were talking about, about Dependent Origination or the practical aspects of the Dependent Origination?

S: ~

BV: Volitional formations are body, speech, and mind. Ok, that's what they are. These are the potential, of these different things arising, just like consciousness right after that is the potential for the consciousness to arise. Don't see that real clearly, until, you have the experience of seeing it automatically, seeing Dependent Origination

automatically. But you need to know these things. And as you get more and more calm, more and more peaceful in your mind, get more and more balance, you'll be able to see more and more subtle aspects of each one of these links.

Now there's one other sutta that I wanted to pull out, and that is, one of the more important suttas. It's not really very long, but this is talking about Dependent Origination, too, and this is number fourteen four. It's called Ascetics and Brahmins. It says:

SN: 12:14

Ascetics and Brahmins (Page 543)

At Sāvathī. "Monks, as to those ascetics and Brahmins who do not understand these things, the origin of these things, the cessation of these things, and the way leading to the cessation of these things: what are those things that they do not understand, whose origin they do not understand, whose cessation they do not understand, and the way leading to whose cessation they do not understand?"

"They do not understand aging-and-death, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation.

BV: Now, let's stop right here. The aging-and-death, is suffering. The origin of aging-and-death, the cessation of aging-and-death, the way leading to the cessation of aging-and-death, that's the four Noble Truths. That's how the four Noble Truths are intertwined with the Dependent Origination. The four Noble Truths are, a form of, deductive reasoning, of seeing how this process works. And you're able to do that, every time a hindrance arises, your good friend, your best friend, your teacher. Anger arises. "Now I was sitting here, and I was peaceful and calm, and I was very balanced, and my mindfulness, skipped a beat, for whatever reason. It doesn't really matter, And then, all of a sudden, there's this anger that arises. 'Oh, where'd that come from?' Is that my anger? Did I ask that anger to arise? Can I control that anger?" The truth is, that anger is part of a feeling. And it's a painful feeling. And then there's the craving. And then there's the clinging and the thoughts, and then, the naming of that feeling, and the concepts behind that feeling, and then there's

the habitual tendency of whenever this anger arises, "I have to point it at somebody, so I'm going to point it at somebody, just like I always do, and I identify with it really heavily. This is me. This is mine. This is who I am." That's the birth of more anger. And eventually it will cease. But when you are aware, you'll see that that anger, that feeling came up by itself. You certainly didn't say: "Well, I'm going to give up this feeling of being peaceful and calm, and be angry now, and then figure out somebody I should point that anger at." You didn't do that. Nobody's crazy enough to do that. It happens because the conditions are right for it to arise. What are the conditions that cause the anger to arise? Past attachment. Something happened in the past. But you don't remember what it is. It's just this feeling that's painful, now. So, how do you handle this? By the time you got to be angry, the craving had already arisen and passed away, now the clinging is starting, and now your habitual tendency, to point it at someone, starts to, kick in, unless your awareness is such, that you say: "Oh, look at that. Wow, isn't that something." And, you allow the feeling to be there without trying to resist it or change it or do anything to it. Just allow it to be and relax into that, and then you come back to your object of meditation, whatever that happens to be. But just because you've let it go and relax into it doesn't mean that it's going to go away right away. It's, there again. Ok. This is why it's your best friend. Now we get to see how this really works, how it came up, and, you do that by first seeing the anger and letting it go, and relaxing, and coming back. Now you start paying closer attention to how this arose. And as you start to see that, you're seeing the links of Dependent Origination. So this hindrance, which most people they hate them when they come up, it comes up because it says: "I want to teach you something. I want to teach you how you're causing your own pain. I want to teach you how to let go of this, so it won't come up again in the future." Now you only have to do this, oh few hundred thousand times. We are slow learners, aren't we? But you see, when the Buddha figured out Dependent Origination, he still had to apply that to what ever arose, until, he finally truly understood it. And when you finally do really understand the Dependent Origination, from experience, then that's when, you have nibbāna arise. But every hindrance that arises, is there for one reason, to show you where your attachment is, and

how you've been identifying with it for, how many lifetimes, who knows? And how to let it go. And how to let it be. Relax into it. Come back to your wholesome object. That's right effort. An unwholesome object arises. You recognize that unwholesome object. Let it be and relax. You bring up a wholesome object. Smile. And you stay with that wholesome object. So it's smile and Loving-Kindness. And then keep the smile and Loving-Kindness going. That's right effort. Takes practice. The more you practice, the better you get at it. The more you practice, the deeper you go in your meditation. The more you see how your old habitual tendencies don't work anymore, so you don't need to do that anymore. There is incredible relief, from doing this. You want to affect the world around you? You want the world to be peaceful and calm? Start number one. The more peace and calm you have, the more and deeper your understanding of this process, the more you affect the world around you in a positive way. Other people are going to see your peace and calm and they're going to come up to you and say: "I want some of that. What are you doing? How do you do this?" And they'll walk away shaking their head when you say: "Well, I smile and I don't take anything seriously." — "Nothing's that simple."

Anyway, this particular sutta, it says when you don't understand the Dependent Origination,

SN: {...}

These are the things that they do not understand, whose origin they do not understand, whose cessation they do not understand, and the way leading to whose cessation they do not understand.

"These I do not consider to be ascetics among ascetics or Brahmins among Brahmins, and these venerable ones do not, by realizing it for themselves with direct knowledge, in this very life enter and dwell in the goal of asceticism or the goal of brahminhood.

BV: Which is nibbāna. That's the way you experience nibbāna. I like that sutta very much. Ok. (Sighs)

Does anybody else have any questions, comments? Yes?

S: ~ about mentality-materiality ~ ?

BV: I didn't finish that part, did I? Sorry. Mentality-materiality is very interesting, actually. Ok –

SN: back to: 12:2 Analysis of Dependent Origination (page 535)

{...}

“And what, monks, is name-and-form? Feeling, perception, volition, contact, attention: this is called name. The four great elements and the form derived from the four great elements:

BV: Earth, water, air, fire.

SN: This is called form. Thus this name and this form are together called name-and-form.

{...}

“And what monks is ignorance? Not knowing suffering, not knowing the origin of suffering, not knowing the cessation of suffering, not knowing the way leading to the cessation of suffering. This is called ignorance.

“Thus, monks, with ignorance as condition, volitional formations come to be ...

BV: And then so on and so on. So. The importance of Dependent Origination can't be over stated. And it's amazing to me that there are so many Dhamma talks given by so many Buddhists, that don't even, give a glimmer, that Dependent Origination is so important. It's kind of like it's a forgotten formula. It's a forgotten thing. And in this particular section in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, there are eighty-four discourses just on Dependent Origination. That gives you some idea that this is really special stuff. It is the core teaching of the Buddha. When I was practicing in Burma, the teachers there, when anytime I would ask them about Dependent Origination, they would say: “Oh, it's very difficult to understand.”, and let it go at that. And I don't

know if it was because they didn't understand it, or they didn't want to talk about it. But they were much more interested in seeing impermanence, suffering, and not self, or the impersonal nature, then they were that you saw and understood Dependent Origination. Just difference of philosophy. 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 . . .

Sutta translations (C) Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000. Reprinted from The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya with permission of Wisdom Publications, 199 Elm Street, Somerville, MA 02144 U.S.A, www.wisdompubs.org