Notes on View, Dependent Arising, and Cessation/Fruition

Letter to Dharma Overground Community

May 15, 2022

Dear Sangha

I have been asked and encouraged to teach. My teacher has confirmed and validated my attainment and my transmission of awakening and joyfully asked me to teach, without reservation. In fact, he specifically in no uncertain terms encouraged me to start a community of sorts, starting small, obviously. My goal is to spend the next few years gaining deep retreat experience, meditating as much as possible, and continuing to teach. I have a career and I enjoy, but I feel strongly called to teach and lead retreats, and I am writing a book. Unburdened by attachments of any kind, I feel a strong pull toward becoming a vehicle of the dharma. I feel like this is bigger than me.

I am experienced in the 9 stages of calm abiding, jhanas, and cessation. I have mastered Culadasa’s 10 stages, luminous jhanas, lite jhanas, the four stages of awakening, and many other meditative states and practice modalities. I am familiar with and adept at diagnosing the Progress of Insight stages, phenomenology, and I also have special talents in analytical thought, writing, physical practices, and personal mentoring. I have professional experience in supervisory roles and working with a variety of people from different walks of life. I help people develop a holistic practice that ends suffering and leads to peaceful blissful quality experiences. Most importantly, I have attained Nibbana and realized non-dual perception. I have written a lot about my experiences in my recent awake network log entries. I am developing a new type of integrated daily-life practice that skillfully employs devotion, energy practices, and tantra, with a basis in the 8 jhanas, cessation, and samatha-vipassana.  I am familiar with yoga and Zhan Zhuang, and the practices I use have always chosen me it seems. I am well versed in open-awareness-objectless samatha practice.  As such I have something I feel to offer to the world. I see hurting people and I know what worked for me to stop my suffering. I also happen to have a unique story and have suffered lots of difficult life experiences and trauma, which have played into the path in unexpected ways. I have been in relationships and single, married, in a variety of contexts and achieved the lower stages of awakening in the midst of married life. Now, my natural inclination is toward the dharma- toward sharing what I know and helping others. But I mostly want to make my life about helping people awaken to their own goodness. I want to help the world become a better place. I love people, teaching, and meditating. And I have new meditative tech in my mind that I want to share with the world. It’s all seemingly happening on it’s own and it’s exciting, there is a sense of urgency to get this knowledge out there, to find a residential teaching position of sorts, etc. I think with my qualifications I could probably get some sort of resident teacher role.

One sit dharma talk: <these are selected examples of *some* basic phenomenological aspects of cessation, mental states adjacent thereof, not intended to be a thorough treatment but an overview - did not edit this much but the book will have more practices and details>

The right way to attain cessation is to have the right intention for cessation. The mind must take Nibanna as the object and in order to do that, it must be *convinced* to take Nibanna as the object. The mind will try anything besides Nibanna because Nibanna is equated with death. The mind thinks it cannot exist without a subject-object relationship to sensations. When subject and object merge or collapse, there is no basis for the mind, sense of self, or any kind of normal perception the way we understand it to be. Before Supramundane states, we don’t recognize the power of the mind. But as supramundane states are attained, the mind learns that it has the power to craft and fabricate experiences and while experiences are usually trusted as reality, there are sometimes illusions of perception which point the fabrication activities of the mind.

During Nibanna consciousness there is no subject or object. The jhanas and other states of reduced fabrication tend toward less of a construction of subject and object. The stronger the basic impulses of mind are (more hindrances), the more fabricating and subject-object distortion seem to occur from a subjective point of view. For the mind to move forward through fabricating activities there has to be an *intention* in the mind. There are two ways to think about cessation and how intention can promote and condition states closer to cessation. When an object hits the sense door, (contact) there is a feeling, pleasant/unpleasant *evaluation* and usually craving, aversion, or ignorance arise, an intention conditions further craving and clinging to the same mental constructs in previous moments and so on. If the intention for the object is stronger than the intention to be present and pay attention to the breath, you experience distraction, and likely subject-object distortion and the sense of self. This continual play of dependently arising objects is what we experience as normal perception. At their basic nature these mental states are not inherently bad, it’s just one way of looking at experience to see dependent arising, The way intention can be used is to influence this causal chain of events, and thereby steer the mind toward less fabrication. The key is to have the right intention obviously, which is why a key skill is metacognitive awareness of the mind from a higher level. In general, the intention is to be at peace within the mind as it is right now. The mind does not cling to objects and sense impressions. This conditions further peaceful states, which lead to Nibanna. This is learning cause and effect, conditional arising, and how suffering begins and ends. Quite simple, but there is a lot of subtlety to develop. I have new ideas and ways to apply buddhist practice to modern life and that is one thread in my teaching.

But the first tastes we get of Supramundane States, we can start to see how perception is in the mind and doesn’t actually reflect something inherent about objective reality. In states of deep meditation, bodily pains can seem to be insulted behind some barrier or they just take on a different flavor. The craving links in the chain decrease, and the resultant clinging is reduced, and the actual perception of the object leaves conscious awareness. There is a reproducible set of steps you take to bring this about, and it relieves dukkha. This is considered to be a pretty advanced meditation phenomena, but this crowd is quite the talented advanced group. It is the same principle in calling cessations of everything or specific phenomena. We learn the basic causality of mental events and awareness thereof, and how to influence those subjective mental events and experiences toward less fabrication and less dukkha. This is basically Buddhism in a nutshell from my point of view.

In all these states the mind is moving toward more peaceful experience. There is some intuitive knowledge that perception itself is faulty somehow, and when you get to that basic sense of perception itself being stressful, that is the level of subtley you need to see to get cessation. In equanimity-like states, there are lots of variations, but there will be sudden moments which are missed conformity knowledges. You are in a subtle state, and any object that hits the sense doors, it comes with a chain of fabrication. You get these moments where there is a collapse that starts to happen- very quick, but there is a reservation in the mind preventing cessation and fabrication suddenly increases in that split second. You viscerally feel this as some kind of fundamental perceptual process. Then, after that synchs up, there is an object, craving is truly zero, and in that moment of zero craving (i.e. perfected, authentic, effortless, forgetful, in the moment, equanimity with all factors of awakening present)- that’s when the 3 doors phenomena can be seen.

It’s often in the split second before cessation, you move beyond objects and the object perceived is the characteristics themselves. It’s hard to see because it’s quick and it’s authentic and forgetful and in the moment, and like walking into a glass door that you thought was open. It sort of of sneaks up on you in a way. It sounds paradoxical because for something to sneak up on you kind of aren’t in control of anything, it just hits you when you’re least expecting it. That’s right. There is a knowing faculty of mind that does this and that’s why it can seem like it comes out of the corner of perception or catches you by surprise. Cessation hits the moment you forget about the last moment and the next moment. There is some element of a basic knowing that conditions what is in the field of experience. Develop forgetfulness of past and future- bring more mind to the immediate. Then with this clear perception, no craving, conditional reality collapses, and you get cessation.

To encourage the type of mental state that leads to cessation, I’m working on the induction of that state, but it is a type of deep surrender – like experience, but once your mind has this experience enough, it seems to become a natural refuge for the mind, the mind just ceases to release pressure it seems.  I have a template for that state in my mind and I can go into that, and just basically know cessation will happen.

I don't think the emotional experience can be faked, but if the person is asking about cessations, they likely have already crossed the A&P, and therefore the gut-level knowledge of emptiness is there, what is missing is .. the mind giving up hope basically. Hope is always an adharmic word because it implies a result in the future as inherently "better". But that’s a skill developed over time and with lots of repetition. It has dependent origination at its basis.  It feels like “fearless acceptance” Imagine how you would feel if your biggest aspirations were crushed. There was a portion of that aspiration that was pure dukkha, driving you forward endlessly toward an imagined future where everything would fall into place. And then, it’s crushed. Like, if you've ever been laid off, or humiliated at work, or overwhelmed, or so hurt emotionally that your entire chest is sore? There is this thing you can notice if you’ve ever suffered – it’s like when you are really having a hard time and your body hurts and you’re sick and nauseous and you have dreadful scenarios going through your mind and you just give up resisting what’s happening. You *give up the clinging and fear*, because this is as bad as it gets and you're still breathing, you're still aware. ***You lose all fear*** – and then..  …  …    It’s a momentary sense of “I don’t mind what happens” but at a deep, deep level. This is called “conformity knowledge” – no objects elicit craving or clinging – and it’s precisely due to wisdom- for once the mind does not react to an object with one of the three poisons-  and perception as we know it collapses. It is possible to get the direct experience that craving is a link in a chain of mental events that make up perception, and without  craving, there is only Nibanna. This is quite clear around cessation. This moment can last a couple seconds it seems, where, depending on the door, and what the sense contact was doing usually has something directly paradoxical about it – one time I had a fruition with my eyes open standing in a Zhan Zhuang posture, I was gazing at a ball in my field of vision and conformity knowledge was seeing this ball go from two (eyes defocused) to 1 (eyes focused) and then it spit me back out. I think it was no self but there was a 2/1 thing.

You may experience weird phenomena like that before a fruition- often there is a sense of clearly perceived confusion and that comes right before cessation in the split-second instance confusion is a non-self door indicator, for example. Because confusion implies something specific about the relation between the mind and objects – there is confusion when the mind has moved beyond objects of the senses and can take it’s own qualities as an object (metacognitive awareness) This is almost always good- when mental states are clearly perceived the content often is lost, or not registered. The way one can tell if it was an experience of the doors is if there was either something visceral (pulled into something) or paradoxical (confusion, with a later crystal-clear memory of it and the paradox, without the content. These pure door experiences are so distinct because they involve taking fundamental building blocks of perception as objects (the 3 characteristics). You experience them viscerally or with more fundamental notions because they are a clear perception of the basic elements of consciousness. I am working on more writings and a book, a list of retreats, and I am teaching.

SigmaTropic
23SigmaTropic@mybodhisattva.com
[www.mybodhisattva.com](http://www.mybodhisattva.com)
Sam Bartko, Ph.D.