

# 2011-01-21 Sutta Study The Parinibbana Sutta

## Part 3

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### SUMMARY KEYWORDS

buddha, monks, dharma, people, practice, dhamma, die, four noble truths, life, read, questions, devotional, lord, thought, stream, teacher, world, mind, devoted, buddhism

### SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Welcome back. And we saw this morning that in the last year of the Buddha's life, last months of his life, there seems to be a time of great strife. Challenge of this war between kings and countries and they're about to happen maybe happening. King kings usurp the throne from their fathers perhaps plagues the memory he came to this village where 12 of his followers are dead and is only on this pain he struggles with and this is an old man I didn't read that section where he describes himself as an old man, maybe it's worth reading.

So on to 25 he says himself.

Nanda, I am now old, worn out venerable one who has traversed life's paths. I've reached the term of life which is at us as an old cart is made to go by being held together by straps. So the thought that his body is kept going by being strapped up. It's only when the vulgata withdraws his attention from outward signs, and by the cessation of certain feelings, enters into the signless concentration in mind that this body knows comfort. So here's a person who describes himself as being old. And there's one other passage somewhere in the Kali sutras He describes himself as an old man as being stooped over and all wrinkled. You know, you think that, you know, the glorious founder of your religion, you know, you want to, you know, bring them over to your parents house for dinner. If you know this show, you know what a great religion you're part of, you know, you don't want someone who comes over stupid, wrinkled, teeth missing, perhaps. And with bloody dirt, diarrhea on top of it. And so and then, it seems like he's uncomfortable all the time, in his old age, didn't have pain medication back then. And the only way that he would feel comfortable is by going into very deep meditation where he kind of shuts down a lot of the sensory apparatus is not really connected to parts of his senses. And But otherwise, he comes back out and active and conscious is probably in pain. It's an uncomfortable And again, he's doing this long walk. He could just things being so painful and difficult to maybe just stay put in one place and meditate a lot and try to stay comfortable but no, he's walking with, you know, meditate when you walk so much. So here's a man old man in pain, difficult times. And with that as a kind of a backdrop, which I think is, in some ways, a profound backdrop because it it kind of represents or holds the human condition for many people and, and the background of everyone's lives is the suffering or the potential of it of difficulty, strife.

War.

You know, it's been very fortunate, I think I, I'm very conscious of having spent most of my life in the United States where there hasn't been any real war, you know, here, but there's so much the rest of the world is so much more and and, you know, I grew up both so in Europe, I was very conscious of war there growing up, close by. So anyway, the other stuff so into that all that picture comes the Dharma comes to Buddha. And it offers an alternative, another way of being, it offers a way of finding peace or freedom in the midst of that. So we don't have to be stuck or pressed. But there's, there's a radical difference. And the image of the calm monk, walking in the midst of his being calm, peaceful, and then dying, and peace is a dramatic contrast to the turmoil of life. And what you know, and the possibility of that for each individual is contingent upon practicing, practicing the Dharma. And that requires knowing what the Dharma is, and knowing what the practices and doing it. And so how important is this? So one way of reading this text, as I said this morning, is that it's important levels. It's really a text devoted, devoted to it. devotional Islam is trying to build up the status of the Buddha. So that the scene is really worthy and important and he's the best spiritual kind of force on the, on the continent. And, and so you know, people can honor him devotion to be devoted to Him and do their worshipping. And other way of reading it. Is that yes, all that goes on. In order to elevate the status. The Buddha talked about all the spiritual stuff, the supernatural world, but it's to make a contrast between something else. So here's it Here it is. So I read part of this before. So the Buddha comes to kusala or lays down between the two psalteries where he's going to die. And, and when he lays down there, then all these flowers fall on him. And then he says this, a nundah. The psalteries have burst forth and abundance within To an abundance of untimely blossoms, divine music and song sound from the sky in homage to lagertha never before so they've got they've been so honored, revered, esteemed, worshipped and adored. Never before as a thought they've been so honored, revered, esteemed, worshipped and adored. So this divers are worshipping them with flowers, and he's saying this is like the best This is the highest kind of they've ever received. That's a significant statement. So he's preparing you, he was getting ready like this is a literary technique is getting you ready for for this powerful thing is going to set you up to this and yet and under whatever monk nun, male or female lead follower, dwells practicing the Dhamma properly and perfectly fulfills the Dhamma way he or she honor so the thought that the reviewers and esteemed him and pays him the supreme homage. There Fernanda Let this be your watchword, we will dwell practicing the download properly and perfectly fulfill the DOMA way. So you see the contrast from all the celestial stuff and the celestial way of honoring and worshipping the Buddha. And the Buddha says no, the most supreme way of worship to me is you practice. That's what the real worship is. And that you find Buddhist teachers down through the ages have often pointed that out. Like sometimes, you know, people will go to a Buddhist teacher and say, How can I? Thank you for all the help you done. And the very common answer is this kind of answer. Oh, the best way to thank me is to practice. Continue your practice deepen your practice. This is the way you honor and worship the great teacher, the Buddha. And, and you find other places in the sutras where this kind of contrast exists, where there's one in the majima where the monks are sitting around in there. describing these amazing miracle stories about the Buddha mean, he's really built up this, you know, all these made far out miracle stories have wonderful, profound, deep, miraculous things he can do and have done and miracles connected to his life. And it just like one Wow, after another Wow, you can do that. Wow. Wow. And then finally, someone says, maybe as the Buddha says, yes. And the most miraculous thing of it all, is that when I have a thought, I can see a thought arise, and I can see it pass. When I have a feeling, I see the feeling arise, and I can feel it to us.

So it's a literary technique where it's building up for to make a point, but to make it in the context, this is you to pay attention to this. This is really significant powerful, because if I just walked down the street and say, Hey, you know, you, you should notice your thoughts and they rise and they pass. I mean, that's not going to get much traction and But city. But if you kind of build it up for a while with all these miracle stories and then say boom. That's kind of Wow, this guy serious this is really. So it's like in Zen

they say, you know, the miracle is what does they call carrying, carrying water chopping wood. So the ordinary of wood that's really special. So again, that contrast. So here what we have what I would like to suggest another way of reading this text is rather than using the supernatural and in kind of grand devotional things as a, as a champion, devotionalism, Supernatural, it's using that supernatural devotional things as a backdrop to highlight the value of practice itself and the importance of the Dharma and to bring us back to that. So and so we find here also in 510, a similar idea And under asks, I didn't read all of this before. Lord, what shall we do with a thought that was remains? The Buddha answered you, do not worry yourself about the funeral arrangements and under you should strive for the highest goal. devote yourselves to the highest goal and dwell with your minds tirelessly zealously devoted to the highest goal. There are wise work cut the US warriors, Brahmins and householders who are devoted to Agata they will take care of the funeral. But then then the next passage I read, because in the under wasn't satisfied with that, so then he asked again, but Lord, what are we to do with target those remains? It's not a very good student and wonder he didn't get enlightened before then because then there wasn't fully enlightened. That's the whole backdrop of this too. And so, then I read the recipes, you know, then he talks about But treating him like a world monarch. But the first thing the Buddha says is don't don't concern yourself with this funeral stuff and what happens to the body afterwards. Just leave that to other people take care of your you're committed to being practicing the way being on the path, just follow the path all the way. And this is also I think, a strong time to say this. Again, the juxtaposition here is between the devotional aspects and the practice. And here, the Buddhists first says, stay with the practice. Some people have suggested this, that this is a teaching that monks and nuns don't engage in ceremonies like this. That's not their domain, their domain is practice. And so some people take that quite seriously have quite a split between that. So on to 25, just before the passage about him being old Just read a tweet or six to 24. So he's done his rains retreat, and he during his rains retreat. He was attacked by severe sickness with sharp pains was if you were about to die. Then, having recovered from his sickness, as soon as he felt better, the Buddha went outside and sat in a prepared seat in front of his dwelling. Then the Venerable Ananda came to him, saluted him and sat down to one side and said, Lord, I've seen the Lord and comfort and I've seen the Lord's patient enduring. And Lord, my body was like a drunkards, I lost my bearings and things were unclear to me, because of the Lord's sickness. The only thing there was some some comfort to me was the thought. The Lord will not attain final Ivana until he has made some statement about the order of monks. That's a reasonable assumption, you know, that the last instructions has to be some last instruction he's not going to go out. And so you know, that's so they feel a little bit reassured, but it's quite something for a non dies, you know, been with the Buddha for 20 years and heard all the teachings and all that, that even he's, you know, he's not really it hasn't really penetrated the Dharma. And, and just one thing to know the Dharma is nothing to penetrate it. And so, I had to notice it for sure, but he doesn't penetrated it. And, and so is my body was like a drunk guards. So, the Lord will not attend the final Nibbana until he has made some statement about the order of monks about the order monks were supposed to happen to them once they would die some some follow instructions, some were to succession plans.

And the Buddha says, but Ananda, what does the order of monks expect of me? I have taught the Dharma the Dhamma Ananda making no inner or outer, no esoteric echo Tarik, nothing, nothing hidden, and nothing public. The data has no teachers fist in respect to the doctrines. Teachers fists means. You say some things to people but you keep some things hidden, you know, private secret only you're going to tell that to your most theorists, disciples, are those of you who want to pay me the most. I'll tell you what's in here. So he has no teachers fist. If there is anyone who thinks I shall take charge of the order, or the order should refer to me, let him make some statement about the order. But that the tie betta does not think in such terms. So why should the thought that make a statement about the order? So he's saying he's not going to make a statement he's not going to make a successor is not going to

support someone take over the order after him that he doesn't think that way. He almost doesn't think of himself as a leader. And so if he's not appointing someone, it's not gonna be someone or arbitrary. Whether it's what is the Dharma? how, you know, how are people going to do it after he dies? Are they gonna know what the Dharma is with if disputes arise? So then he goes on says how sick he is he's dying. And then he goes on and says, kind of the follow up. So why should you talk to make a statement about the order? They are Fernanda. You should live as islands unto yourselves. being your own refuge with no one else as your refuge with a Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as your refuge with no other refuge. And how does a monk live as an island unto himself with no other refuge. So this is a very important statement. And it's often quoted, it's often referred to it's a very significant one that you should know about, and appears here in this text. And, and some people will say that in tera, vaada Buddhism, there are four refuges, just like in in Tibetan Buddhism, sometimes for refugees as a Buddha Dharma Sangha and, and then there's a fourth refuge refuge meaning the primary values orientation, commitment, place of safety support that a Buddhist will have. And so in Tibetan Buddhism, sometimes it's the Buddha Dharma and Sangha, and your guru in Theravada Buddhism from the statement here, it's the Buddha Dharma, Dharma and Sangha, and then yourself and that's quite something. And filma confusing to some people who misunderstand the teachings of not self. What now, the me I'm not here, so if they refuse interest, not here. So and how does a monk live as an island unto himself, with no other refuge? here and under a monk abides contemplating the body as body earnestly, clearly were mindful, I think put away all hankerings in threadings for the world, and like likewise with regard to feelings Mind in mind objects that now knows how a monk lives an island onto himself. So he's dying. Yes. What's the plans for the order says I'm not going to make any succession plans or appoint anyone. Let people do what they want to do. But I'm not going to get involved in this. But what you should do is an island unto yourself. rely on yourself rely on your own practice. Island is a place of safety in the middle of the floods, the flood of life, it's destroying villages and people, you find an island where you're safe. So here, we think you should be you yourself should be an island. So there's a kind of very strong, individualistic streak in the early tradition, were individualistic in a sense that there's a pointing to rely on yourself for the Dharma. No one else can do it for you. And so the way you do That here is you do the four foundations of mindfulness, the practice of mindfulness. So this is, again exists in this text in contrast to the devotional things that appear. And so how do we hold these two together? And certainly they could be integrated. I think for many Buddhists, they were integrated. They didn't, those two weren't opposed to each other, that people who are completely committed to the path also could never have very devotional side where they went to stupas and bowed and offered flowers. But it's still interesting to look at that contrast as it appears in the text. And it seems to the Buddhist playing that contrast because for the monks, he's saying, you know, you guys practice that's what you should do. He doesn't say and by the way, you should go down to local stupa once in a while to them.

And then I read to you already the section of subrata, who when you heard that the Buddha and died said, Great, this is a good thing because now we're not gonna be trying But that guy anymore telling us what to do or not to do, and we could do whatever we want. So, this is a raises concern about you know, that people are going to kind of create their own Dharma create their own belief system and have the Dharma have their practice or have monastic life, be self serving rather than liberating. And so, how to how to how to protect the Dharma, how to protect this powerful path of liberation from being just another vehicle self serving, you know, way of being comfortable or bleeding with you believe or you know, has it really challenging and get uproot? What needs to be uprooted. So there has to be understanding what it is what is the Dharma. So at 349 the Buddha has declared himself that he said that he's going to die

Just before that,

so he's told Ananda, he's going to die the whole peace story there, skip that for now. He's the analysis gonna die. And then he tells him to bring the monks together gathered them together. And so they did. And they meet in an assembly hall. And the Buddha enters the assembly hall and sat down in a pair seat. And then he said to the monks, monks, for this reason, those matters which I have discovered and proclaimed, should be thoroughly learned by you practice developed and cultivated, so that this holy life Mandir for a long time, that it may be for the benefit and happiness of the multitude out of compassion for the world for the benefit and happiness of devils and humans. So I think this is significant because he's it's now announced to his community, he's dying. That's a significant time in anybody's teacher's life. And he gathers them together. And they just heard this news. He has their attention, and what is the most important thing he wants to teach? And he's going to teach something about what allows the continued continuity of the Dharma. So this holy life, the practice of the path may endure for a long time. And why shouldn't there for a long time, so that it can be a benefit to other people, and have compassion for others? And he said it so he's going to talk about he's going to talk about what he discovered. What was it I discovered? These are things you should learn what I discovered. So this is very interesting status about dice is really important time is going to be in some sense, a very succinct way said this is what I discovered. And so he says, What I discovered Are these the four foundations of mindfulness the four right Efforts the four roads to power the five spiritual faculties, the five mental powers and the seven factors of awakening the Noble Eightfold Path. These are known in shorthand as the 37 wings of awakening. So what stands out for you? When you hear that the Buddha has a chance here, and it was life succinct way to his monks, he's going to tell them maybe what's most important. And this is what he says he discovered to them. This is what he wants them to learn and cultivate. What stands out about this to this list.

Laura can get the or someone the mic ready for someone. I can just I can just pass it to someone. Just it's

all practice.

It's all okay. What else you noticed by that list give it to Diane and see what she says.

I was thinking that it's nothing new. We've heard all these. Well, we don't always talk about the five places the five words to power.

But we know these things.

Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait for the mic to Dawn's gonna speak and then

yeah, I was just gonna say that it's nothing personal to a guru or even to one individual. So it's a process by which anyone in any culture in any

CIO is involved with the process. Universal some way. Oh, great.

Did it have the four brahma vihara, isn't

it? No Sorry, I jumped on him. He also knows he didn't say anything about Vinaya



which is a code of conduct for monks which you might not have expected him to since he was talking about monks

did he touches into it later on and ask a question, but But yeah, I mean Vinaya as you know, a way of organizing communal life, and as much as it is about the path, but the you know, this is these are universal, the Vinaya is not universal, because it only applies to monks and nuns. And so this is universal. So anything else stands out? Please.

He mentions these

different factors, and he mentions the Noble Eightfold Path, but he doesn't actually say the Four Noble Truths themselves.

The Four Noble Truths don't are not listed there. So it seems Lloyd Wright says the Four Noble Truths are sometimes seen as being the heart of Buddhism is not pointing to so can you Just maybe why?

It just seems that the practice that he's describing

creates the reality of the Four Noble Truths, it creates the separation from suffering and the perception of their separation or cessation of it. And the, the way of doing it's all outlined in those 37 seems.

So the difference is that this is the tribes This describes the process, the practice and the qualities of mind that come into play, that allows you to have that insight. But the insight is a result of the practice. It's not the cause of the practice. So what he's focusing on here is practice. Okay, Rick in the back.

It feels a little bit like he's trying to separate himself and saying, here's the practice, you know, don't make it me, here's this and kind of removing what he learned, and setting it out here on the table. And that's, that's really what it is, you know, you can look at me and be inspired because I did this. But if that's all that you do, this over here on the table is never going to happen. So it's really not me. It's you. You know, eating feasting at the table. What, what I've been talking about, and he's kind of renaming the important factors that will that will get someone there and kind of I feel like he's removing it away from himself could be

Yes, so he's pointing back again another instance where he's pointing back to practice to people's own practice and the qualities that they need to have. And so here, you know, this very important junction seemingly important, you know, when he's announced he's going to die. And he's going to say his last words, last teachings. This is what he points to. And one of the one of the things that stands out to me is that none of these are a belief. And so he's not saying I discovered a particular tenant that you have to believe or this is, this is not saying this is what's true in terms of some belief system, but rather again, he's pointing to practices. Now, the backdrop of these practices, of course, is kind of a belief and that is the belief that liberation or enlightenment is worthwhile and possible. Then he go, but then he goes on to say in the next one next thing he does say is kind of like a teaching. Then the Lord said to the monks, and now monks, I declare to you, all conditioned things are of a nature to decay. Strive on untiringly Dakota's final passage will not be a long delay three months from now legato will take his final Nibbana. So this idea that all conditioned things are impermanent, impermanence of things, we appears repeatedly in this text, and just the whole text itself has to do with impermanence of life with the Buddha passing away. And, and, and the what follows if you understand that all conditioned things are impermanent, what follows for the Buddha is practicing strive entirely to really devote yourself to practice.

And I think that's six five is a very interesting little piece Yes.

Why the Four Noble Truths weren't named. There's a few different thoughts or theories I have. One is that again, the Four Noble Truths are insights or views are generally when it's called what most people don't realize is that when the word noble appears the word Noble. It translates the word *Aria*, *Aria sucha*. And the Pali grammar allows for that to be translated different ways into English or B. There's two different ways. And it's allowed, it's allowable to understand that the way we usually translate into English, the noble truths, but there's another way the grammar allows another way to structure the word. It can also work with a different way, and which I'll tell you in a moment, but before I tell you, the terrifying tradition recognizes that that There's different ways of understanding the grammar. And the way I'm going to tell you is the way that's preferred by the tradition, even though we don't translate it this way. So instead of calling it the noble truths, it's that the truths of the noble ones. And the noble ones are those who have attained some degree of awakening. And so this is not these are not the Four Noble Truths are not tenants to believe. And you don't find very often the sutras that the Four Noble Truths are taught as something that a new person comes to Buddhism comes to teaching, and this is what you need to learn. But rather, they're more often pointed to refer to as the insights the realizations that someone who's enlightened has. And so, you know that that's that's where they're going with a practice is to the Four Noble Truths, but it's not meant to be a belief for you know, something you study in a textbook. It's the insight that an enlightened person has It makes sense. That's one theory.

So you with me still? Okay. So then I like this one to look at was it I was gonna do here. When I say I was six, five, yes, I'd like this 165 and it's very simple. So the Buddha is dying. And he has some last little words that he says. And then he says this. Then the Lord address the monk saying, it may be monks, that some monk has doubts or uncertainty about the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, or about the path or the practice, ask monks do not afterwards feel remorse, thinking The teacher was there before us. And we failed to ask the Lord face to face. At these words, the monks were silent. The Lord repeated his words a second and a third time. And still the monks were silent. Then the Lord said, perhaps monks, you do not ask out of respect for the teacher, then monks, let one friend tell it to another, which still, they were silent. One of the last things that would have done is before he dies, is to ask for questions. Do you have any questions and he really tries to pull them out. He has three times, and they're all gonna have questions. And then he says, well, ask a friend to say for you. If you can't say, write on a piece of paper, anonymously send me a letter or anything. Give me a question. And, and I love this, that this invitation you know, I kind of read into it a lot. Probably I probably more than was meant, but that's part of the value of reading the texts like this is reading things into it. It's okay to read into text and be inspired. And so I'm inspired by this, what I read into it, which is, and maybe there's some truth to it, that the idea of that the Buddha really open to questions open to inquiry open to being challenged open to not kind of putting it down. This is what you know, in the last breath. She's not gonna say this is the truth. memorize it. Right? Please ask, ask ask. And, and, in fact, you see if you read the many the suttas that seems to be a characteristic of the Buddha, that he was often not necessarily asking for questions, but very open and receptive to receiving questions. I've known people who in the religion they were brought up with, they ran into big trouble when they started asking questions, and some people actually had to leave their religion because they were kind dismissed, you know, that the you don't come to Do school anymore, you know, you're causing too much trouble here. So this idea that you know, willing to ask questions, you know, kind of kind of points again to some some inequality with the Dharma is

so I think oh then there's one more I want to do here before kind of having some discussion on to nine.

So the idea is, you know, emphasizing here is, be an island unto yourself, practice yourself here. So he goes to this village where these 12 people or so have died followers of the Buddha and, and people there ask what kind of rebirth had they taken? What's happened to them out there died The Buddha goes on and tells them kind of what happened to these people. Then the Buddha basically says it's kind of tiring for me. You know, if every time someone dies, I have to tell them tell you, we know what happened to them kind of tiring. You know, it's you know, it's kind of waste of time, it takes a lot of people die. So it takes a long time to get through them all. And also, maybe it's a little bit psychic work to kind of like, you know, search out the skies and figure out what happened. I don't know how easy it is, that never having done it. And therefore are nunda I will teach you a way of knowing Dhamma called the mirror of Dhamma whereby the Aryan disciple, if he or she so wishes, can discern for themselves. I have destroyed hell, animal rebirth, the realm of ghosts all downfall evil fates and story states. I am a stream winner and capable falling into states of low certain with The banner. So there's a couple of interesting things here. So, there are four levels of awakening and spiritual maturity and in this early Buddhist tradition to rather than kind of, you know, you know, all or nothing kind of pop, you know, the spiritual explosion, there you are. There are four levels. The first level is called stream entry. And there's still much more work to be done for persons who mature more fully. But the first level stream entry and advantage of stream entry according to this early tradition, you don't Is that you, if your stream enter, you will no longer fall, get reborn in unfortunate states of birth, like you want to get reborn in hell, you won't get reborn as hungry ghosts or as an animal things that are kind of unfortunate. And so a certain kind of way you're saved. And there's a plenty of focus in Buddhism sometimes. Let's get people saved at least to the point where they're not going to go to hell. It's a little similar to other religions but And so stream entry does that. So one of the reasons why people naturally I think will ask about loved ones who have died. People want to be reassured that they're loved when they die, you know, are not going some terrible state. And so the Buddha reassures them in listing these people saying, in fact their stream enters and so they're basically safe from that kind of rebirth. But now the Buddha is going to say this is how you know for yourself. If you're a stream, enter, if you've reached the first stage of awakening, and what is this mirror of the Dhamma by which one can know this, that when is the stream enter so one could know for oneself. here and under this Aryan disciple, is possessed of unwavering confidence in the Buddha Thus, this blessing Lord is in our hearts fully enlightened Buddha, endowed with wisdom and conduct the welfare Knower of the worlds in comparable trainer of the To be tamed, teacher of gods and humans enlightened and blessed. He is possessed of the disciples possessed of unwavering faith in the Dhamma. Thus, wealth proclaimed by the Lord is a Dhamma. visible here and now timeless, inviting inspection leading onward, to be comprehended by the wise each one for himself or herself. He's possessed of unwavering confidence in the Sangha, thus, well directed as a Sangha, the Lord's disciples of upright conduct, on the right path on the perfect path. That is to say, the four pairs of persons to eight kinds of humans, the song of the Lord's disciples is worthy of offerings worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts worthy of veneration and unsurpassed field of merit in this world, and he or she is possessed of morality, the heir to the noble ones unbroken without the effect unspotted without inconsistency, liberating uncorrupted and conducive to concentration so the idea here is that the Buddha implies that you can look at yourself and decide for yourself that you have attained a certain degree of spiritual maturity. So a little bit goes against later in Buddhism where there's usually kind of a kind of sometimes a shyness, or the tradition has a kind of emphasizes the kind of reluctance, of self

validating one's own level of practice. I think there's a lot of wisdom in being shy about it. But there's tends to be a shyness of it. reluctance to do that. But here, through these criteria, the Buddha says yes, this is something you know, for yourself, and be confident yourself. And a lot of that has to do with confidence, confidence, rather than a liberating moment of meditation. Great, you know, some big thing happening your meditation, but rather some kind of confidence. And so what sweat, wavering confidence and how does that unwavering confidence occur, that really kind of change changes the



course of the mind stream of person, the mind stream being the habits of thought the direction in which they orient themselves what they do with their body speech in mind. And how does that confidence grow? That kind of transformation in a person? is an interesting question. So if but if a person feels that confidence is real confidence in the Buddha, the Buddha represents the possibility of real liberation, that the Dharma is something that's available, clearly available here. And there's a sangha here, first of those people who have experienced liberation, who have the least least one of the four stages of awakening, and then the first criteria the person really can look at themselves and recognize that they're ethical, that they live in ethical way. They possess the morality dear to the noble ones, unbroken without the effect unspotted without consistency. liberating uncorrupted conducive to liberation. One of the things that's very interesting about this list about morality, it gives a little bit the function of morality as well. Part of the function of morality is that when you're living when you're having moral integrity, that's supportive of concentration. It's also the supportive it's liberating it supports liberation. There's without inconsistency. I don't know what that means, but maybe it means that that there's certain kind of integrity in a person. Yes.

Can you explain that what the four, the four kinds of people are the stream enters the ones returners, the non returners, and then our hearts and the eight and the eight are, those four categories are divided into two kinds of people. Those who've attained the fruit and those who obtained the path. It's two stages in that experience. And then later Theravada tradition. It's not really explained here. But later for our tradition basically, basically holds those two all happen almost simultaneously, but it's a little bit different. So in order to be really exact, there's a few moments where someone has attained the path, but not the fruit. And then a few months later, you experience the fruit of that, that process of liberation. So that's why there's eight people because of those few moments in between.

Okay, do you have one without the other?

We have to wait a little bit to see on patient then it's a long wait, but thank you. So that's Um, so what do you think of this as the Dhamma? What are your comments about our questions? You see a pattern and all these kind of pointing towards the Dhamma Towards the Dharma with different How do you define it? What do you what is that pattern? What is that? What's the commonality and all that?

Yes. One commonality do it do it yourself. What else you see?

humility on the part of the Buddha. Okay? Can you say a little more what why was it humility?

Then he was saying I don't have any further great insights to give you I've already given to you and you can do it.

Do it yourself. And it's not about him in a certain way. It's about you doing it and don't honor me honor me by honor. Well, honor me by practicing, do it your way. Don't focus on me so much

and

The reference to ethics even though he hadn't didn't specifically give the monks Code of Conduct at the end, but what you were talking about there about the

stream injures and so on.

Great. Thank you. Someone else? What is what's what's a common thread that runs through all these kinds of pointing to the Dharma? looked at? We looked at this afternoon so far.

JOHN, where's the other mics? Just one, Where's the other one? Okay. Keep it in there. You do say something soon.

Well, one thing that strikes me, it seems so complicated, so complicated. There's so many efforts and so my lovelies and powers of mind Then the twos and the fours, and there's all these analysis of all the different stages you could be when you die.

And

ultimately, I guess what draws me to the practice is the simplicity of it.

For you, it seems very complicated. What's in common is what the commonality of all these different things being discussed. It just seems like so much.

Yeah, I think I can say this very quickly. But I was traveling in China actually, and met some Taiwanese. And I was saying how I really love the Buddhist path, because the Christian thing has so much going on there and the Buddhist path, you know, you sit and you pay attention to your breath. What is and the, the Taiwanese person said, Oh, that's why I believe in Jesus.

Because, oh my god,

the all the ghosts and deities and the rules and stuff. It's just, you know, you're saved by grace by faith alone. Beautiful.

So at any rate,

there is simplicity underly, all this stuff,

perhaps? Yes.

I was reflecting not so much on what he was saying. But he was surrounded by a committed monastic community at the end, that all of those 500 or however many truly was, were already strong mentors. So lots of other people came to revere him during this process, but the folks he spent the time with were the ones who were farthest along and being able to understand what it was he had to teach.

Yes, I know if the further along. I mean, there was a mixed bag among the monks who were there. So maybe we'll see after this nice little break that some of the monks Pretty economist about the Buddha dying. And some of them were pretty upset. And then the implication is those who are upset had no had no enlightenment. Yes, please.

I was just thinking, how compassionate he was being that he was acknowledging that people worked in different places. And I guess, I mean, one definition of a teachers, you know, they create that sacred space where you reflect back to you your true nature. And so, people who have been around a teacher or around the Buddha got used to that, you know, having that reflection and that was going to be taken away. And even though he had taught them to go inside, you know, I think he was really saying, Come

on now you have it all inside of you. Yeah, don't get lost when I disappear. Yeah, it's you have it all and i think so compassionate. It makes it so clear, great,

beautiful. Kinda reminds me of the story that's told that Ananda who was with a spy aside, supposedly for 20 years has attended the one who memorize many of the pseudos had not experienced enlightenment by the time the Buddha died. And how could that be? How could someone you know, have so much contact with the Buddha and not get it? And, you know, many theories but one theory is that it's so easy when you're in the presence of someone like the Buddha perhaps, of just kind of being enthralled by it or devoted to him or, or you know, sidetrack from your own practice being in the presence of something like that. And it was only after the Buddha died that the Ananda got on with it.

Yes, so I feel like the

theme we just talked about faith in the triple gem. And then before that we summarize the most important teachings, right? And I feel like I feel the same way about this as I feel about the Eightfold Path. It's basically different ways of saying live with integrity, cultivate integrity, actually, although, you know, the powers and faculties, etc, that were listed before. They're all just ways of cultivating integrity in your own life, and they've already been presented. So it's beautiful. And then, you know, it's interesting. The thing that's standing out is not being said here, and I'm seeing it in the sutta is to have integrity, it helps not to claim I see a lot of clinging in the suttas especially from the disciples, or I'm getting that feeling the way it's rendered. So I those are the themes that are standing up for me integrity and trying to claim.

Great, thank you. Yes, today. I mean, no.

I'm what I'm getting out of that. The theme is not only cultivation, but it's the diligent practice that he's kind of under underlining is you need to do this practice yourself. And be very earnest in practicing. Because he's, he's laying it back on on his whole community of monks to practice.

Yes. Good. Back

It's essentially saying the same thing but I'm relating to the fact that this discussion was sort of foreshadowed by his not naming a successor is not identifying the authority for this Dharma going forward and then in detail laying out the authority for the diamond going forward in the practice,

the practice and the Dharma being authority rather than a person,

and more specifically the experience, that the authority of this is not anywhere else but in your experience or realization, of the ways not to be found, you know, accepting Your own investigations and then realization

isn't found in a body of teachings like in a book.

In a book or personality, again, you know, this question of devotion that is obviously so charged is a question of where's the authority in your life? Where is it? Is it in your in your psychology? Is it in, you know, a beloved individual or a deity or is there something realized through the practice in which there is devotion?

Great, great. Thank you all. That was great. And so the last piece for this section I want to end with is there's something called the Maha knee Desa. And this is called the For great criteria for great authorities for ascertaining what is the Dharma. And this is this is, this is where I didn't, I didn't write down where it is. And this is after the Buddha died. If someone comes along and says, This is what the Dharma is, I heard this from the Buddha and this is what he taught, then you don't just accept it, because someone says that this is what the Buddha said this is what the Dharma is, but you have criteria reference points, in order to ascertain whether this is this is you know, the Dharma and let me see if I can find it. Here it is. So four eight. So po suppose a monk were to say friends, I heard it received from the Lord's own lips. This is the Dhamma This is a discipline. This is the Masters teaching, then monks, you should neither approve or disapprove his words, then without approving or disapproving his words and express his words and expressions should be carefully noted and compared with a suit dose, and reviewed in light of the discipline, if they in such comparison review are found not to conform to the suit dose or the discipline, to conclusion must be, for Surely this is not the word of the Buddha. It has been wrongly understood by this monk, and the matter is to be rejected. But we're on such comparison review they are found to conform to the suttas or to this discipline. The conclusion must be surely this is the word of the Buddha. It has been rightly understood by this monk. This is the first criteria. So as it says the same thing over again, but the first one was someone claims I heard it directly from the Buddha. The second one is, I heard it from a distinguished teachers or elders in the church. addition. The third one is I've heard it from many elders who are learned. And the fourth one is, you heard it from one elder, one person someplace said this. So then you compare it to the suttas in the media. So this process of comparison, and but this is a very interesting thing. It says here that if it conforms, then accept it as the word of the Buddha. This opens the door. Big time for bringing in a lot of other things to be the words of the Buddha, which might not have been his literal words. Because one of you could go around and say, you know, the Dharma really is

having a mind that's like Teflon. realizations like Teflon, nothing sticks, you don't grab on to him. unliberated mind is Like Velcro. So, you know, it's just the Dharma. Let's go back and look at the sutras. The Buddha never talked about Teflon and Velcro. But you know, this really is in line with what he's talked about. You use different language clinging and release from clinging, a mind which is open, free. You know, this really works in harmony. So this works for the Dharma. So there's this therefore, this must be the words that the Buddha does have I heard once in Redwood City, the Buddha said, have a mind like Teflon straightened out those Velcro hairs. And so what it did was this statement here, opened the door, so that the tradition could import bring in a lot of things claimed was the word of the Buddha and not actually be literally his words. Like the tradition never says this is actually the case, but it can be read this way. And that explains why perhaps there are so many suttas that had been composed and attributed to the Buddha. It isn't that someone was actually trying to fabricate something, but rather, there was a kind of understanding that it's as if the Buddha said, we can say it's the word of the Buddha. And, and, you know, it's pretty clear that a good number of the Pali suttas that probably are composed after the time of the Buddha, and people say, Well, how can that be? How could they fabricate things and put things in his mouth? I think the ancient world didn't have the same idea of attribution and copyright this we do. And, and also the Some people say that monks didn't want to think that they were so special or highlight themselves as a composer of it. So the way of being more humble is to say this is what the Buddha said, and take them out of the take themselves out of the picture. So you have a lot of texts then the sub i heard, and not all of them come from the Buddha Yes.

I have a question in that citation

at that time where they're actually recognized suttas?

That's a good question. And so we don't know whether this was actually the Buddha actually taught this. Or if this is another example of interpretation from later, because later after he died, I'm sure what the monks and nuns were struggling with this issue. And they needed some kind of criteria. So someone came up with this criteria, it was good enough for someone that someone slipped it in. And this gives it a greater authority, because it's in here. And it's a good question because a lot of the expression suttas does appear in the sutta those but it's kind of not that common. And these are the other other words that are used for this for these words for this, these texts. And the time ladles of soup does that during the Satiputthana Sutta . There are I think the earliest reference we have that of a lot of these texts being titled that way is from like 1000 years after the Buddha. So, it could have been earlier, but, but it's a fair question. So I suggested this later in relation. Okay, let's take a break so we have enough time for the Buddha to die. And so should we can we do it in about 10 minutes. And if you have questions, I'll be up here and you can come up and