To take place the Four Noble Truths as one of the central keys that the Buddha was offering to penetrate into our life to some degree of freedom, awakening, to really clarify our life requires us to be very honest about suffering, and then be even more honest about our role and suffering in our world. Here, you know, is encapsulated in this term tunda thirst. So the lot of synonyms have been using for craving, clinging, thirsting, holding, resisting. Somehow we and seeing think it'd be very, very responsible, very honest about this in ourselves and then beginning to learn, where is it that I can let go? How is that I can let go? How does letting go happen? Where's what are the conditions is set into place the possibility of letting go. So there has to be some wisdom here understanding that in order to really deal with our suffering, there has to be some that willingness to look at ourselves more deeply. And to look what is my role in this and where is it that I'm holding? Where is the possibility for me to let go to Intuit that to feel it to see it directly. And some for some things, it's really obvious. You can just obvious where I'm clinging to. Other times it might take months or years of presence, study of investigation of concentration, to be able to see some of the deeper roots of where the cleaning might be. So that in Buddhism, then the task is for each of us is to study suffering and to study to understand what it it is we need to let go of. So that's me some willingness to look at this question, what is it that I can let go of even if I can't let go of it right now? What is it? What's my role was my responsibility, what can I let go? What were of useful things to look at? So I can find where is it? What is it that whatever useful to look at myself to understand what I can let go off in this issue of suffering? So it makes sense what I'm saying makes sense enough. So wherever like now we have, we just take a minute or 15 minutes or so is I'd like you to go back into the dye as you had before. And there's two people joined Kate and Kumari, maybe you can become a pair and so, go back into your parents you had before and, and ring a bell. So you know what to switch switch. But you have about six, seven minutes for each of you to talk about this very challenging teaching, that is teaching of looking at ourselves and try to understand what is it that we contribute to holding or the thirsting ourselves, and what is it that we can let go. So what is your relationship to this? If you look at yourself or explore on your own, this possibility of you letting go of something? What happens to you? What's your
relationship to that? What thoughts do you have about protests do you have? What you discover? Where do you get the news to say this way? What, what aspects of your life do you think would be useful to look at? In trying to understand how you claim or you grasp? That makes sense is a question. Where would be useful to look at, to understand where you're clinging, where you're grasping. Now, when you do this exploration, I can, I can't, I don't feel like I can never stop saying this enough. It's you're exploring this for yourself, not for the sake of the person who's listening. So if you find yourself explaining to something that you know, all too well, the whole full story, then, you know, summarize it really quickly, because you want to get to the cutting edge growing edge of your understanding to understand something new. Some people actually like to close their eyes when they do this. And just kind of so it's more internal than exploration. So why don't you go back to your partners and you decide who's going to start. And then I'll ring the bell when it's time to switch. So there's, excuse me. There's a I think I'm back. So there's a Buddhist scholar, who Pali scholar knows the ancient language of the Buddha. And he translates the expression four noble truths. He doesn't, which is usually in English. He translated all the differently. His translation is the Four Noble Truths. The four ennobling truths and so to experience our, you know, a lot of people have experienced with suffering. But just to experience suffering on its own is not the noble thing, we have to bring something into bringing certain kind of attention of presence or engagement with the suffering, that somehow we get a noble derivative, it becomes a noble activity. And so same thing with clinging or grasping or thirsty, it can be a noble thing or cannot depending what we bring to it. So, I think there's certain kind of dignity and nobility, to bringing attention to suffering and to clinging. And, I think, somewhat important to understand because it's very easy to think that this is why Buddhism is such a dour religion. You know, these Buddhists, you know, only talk about a suffering and they rub my nose, my suffering And, but the point is that this is a path to, to becoming a noble becoming dignified or becoming free. And it's a very it's a dignified or respectful a very important process, very maturing process to engage in this. And so we're not asking you to suffering for suffering sake, we're asked to meet our suffering in a way that is a noble maturing, deepening, for ourselves. So part of the practice of Buddhism is to learn how to do that what kind of presence and mindfulness concentration is needed in order to engage properly with our suffering, and then to understand our cleaning, but in a sense, this is part of the Four Noble Truths. The first two is more like the descent into the into it all. And now we're about to turn the corner and start the ascent. And, and appropriately we'll start with lunch. And so, what I like to do if you think we could have the lunch break the 45 minutes, those of you have done a lot 45 minutes enough this time, because we're a little bit late. And so let's take it until 130 and you're welcome to talk. What are you because you go out to eat clean to that. Every time you come here you so well. There are fast food joints nearby. food in the subway. I don't know. Anyway, let's try 45 minutes. Don't get indigestion. You know And, then we'll start and so please enjoy your lunch, you can talk during lunchtime, you can set up the tables inside or outside, take chairs outside, if you'd like to sit outside, just bring them back in again. None of the air conditioners on. I think as air conditioners set for too low, it gets too cold in here. Okay, now we come to the third noble truth. And the instructions in the discourse and the four foundations of mindfulness is to know the cessation of association, to know that it's the cessation the ending of clinging, grasping, thirsting, the ending of suffering. And it kind of follows, you know, directly from the second noble truth, there's clinging and there's the end of clinging.
to go together. And this is the kind of the good news of Buddhism and to chew to use the word cessation as the expression for the Third noble truth, hides the fact that this is good news. I mean cessation doesn't sound like a big word. We don't use the word very often. And what does it mean after all, but this is the happiness, the peace, the awakening the freedom and liberation that the Buddhist path is pointing towards. So this is really the good news. And the, in terms of cessation, there's a number of freedom. There's a number of ways in which that can be understood. One is, there's two two major ones I would like to mention now. One is that as we experience something like our suffering, we can bring a kind of presence to it, and awareness to it, that the awareness itself somehow is spacious enough, accepting enough allowing enough open enough that we're not suffering because of the suffering you get it is a shift of perspective. And we start possible to, to, in a sense, identify live in the perspective that could hold the suffering without being identified or caught or living in the suffering itself. Does that make sense? shift the perspective of like thinking outside the box. So it's like sticking out, you know, being outside the box of your, of the maze of suffering and clinging and all that and stepping out and saying, oh, there it is. And that shift can have a visceral felt sense, feeling to it. of places of space, spaciousness, ease, peace, calm, little bit sense of healthy remove or distance from the suffering and all that and, and that ease it can be sense of ease, and that that's very important to have some sense of that because if you don't have some sense of a place of calm, removed from the suffering from the fire, then you think the only option is to get rid of the fire, the pain, the suffering. Right. But there's the you don't necessarily have to get rid of it, it's possible to have this clear knowing, of suffering of clinging. And in that knowing itself, there's something about the knowing when it's very pristine or very clear restabilized with the knowing itself has a quality of freedom or awakening or relief or release in itself. So again, repeating myself is very important. Because if, if you don't know that, then you keep attacking. The problem is that the problem has to go away. And it is there is a certain kind of maturity and freedom that can be had not to make something go away, but becoming bigger than it or stepping outside of it. That's one kind of freedom, one kind of cessation, this ending of being entangled with what's going on. There's another kind of freedom or the kind of liberation Nurses Association, and that is that the very problem the suffering and the cause of suffering itself. Is comes to an end. So is it simply that we accommodate the suffering by having this more spacious kind of presence, but actually, there's somehow the root suffering for this, the rich clinging for that suffering is somehow let go of, and doesn't arise again. Now, that can be relatively short term, if you are clinging to having dessert after lunch. And you begin suffering because, you know, where's that dessert? I guess there was some cookies, right? But, you know, you're, you know, we're suffering I'm where they want dessert wise, you know, this and that. And you see that, Oh, just dessert and I had my fill and basically content and happy. You know, there's, you know, probably just gonna get indigestion if I have that. So I'll just let go of the desire for dessert. Maybe it's relatively easy until the next meal. And then it arrives again. There might be Certainly clinging to wanting to be seen in certain ways. And so you see that, Oh, I'm trying to prove myself and show everyone else, wonderfully profound my understanding of Buddhism is so I'll ask the most profound question I can think of is stump Gill. And now you see, oh, I'm just trying to show off. And so you see that so I don't need to do that. And you can let go, that could be pretty easily. So I'm showing you how some things are pretty can be pretty easy. And then they realize later, and sometimes it's possible to somehow
penetrate or settle certain kinds of clinging, so maybe never rises again. And I'm thinking of a woman who came to retreats with me a series of retreats. And she came back one year and said, you know, after last year's retreat, before that retreat, I was very judgmental of always judging people judging people negatively or critically, was constantly going to retreat. It was outside my my normal life. It was like a kind of a constant theme with this gentleman. And I don't know what happened at last retreat. But since that last retreat a year ago, I've stopped judging people. So I don't know now, it's been many years, I don't know if it's come back. But that's, you know, a year, you know, something that's kind of deep in a person and a personality to have kind of come to an end for a whole year. It's pretty dramatic, I think, you know, so a lot of things that can kind of come to an end, certain cravings and addictions, I need to have that need to be a certain way. I need, you know, can you can kind of see through it, and it's, you know, we no longer interested. So there's a kind of freedom that's can be called kind of stepping back and accepting or allowing or accommodating what's going on. And then the kind of freedom that can happen when something actually disappears, actually finishes and settle down, settle down. And then and then for the kind of kind of freedom that comes with things come to an end the is a kind that is temporary, just as good for a little while. And then there's that which is much more permanent and abiding. In any case, one of the things that Buddha is asking us to do here is to know cessation to know what it's like and like know, places he talked about, know what it's like to be without the hindrances. Know what it's like to be without attachments. So, it's one thing is to kind of look at clinging, look at attachments, look at suffering. And some people then we'll kind of once it's done with it, we'll forget about it and go on with their life into something else. But my reading of the Buddhist teaching is it's actually very important when something has come to an end, some suffering or some cause of suffering, to spend a little time getting a visceral felt sense of sense of what is like the absence of that clinging, that's suffering. And that has a number of advantages. One is that it thank you Gives you a reference point of what it's like to be without clinging. And it kind of reminds the body kind of, well, this is a good place to be, this is a nice thing. And so it strengthens that place. You know, by appreciating it strengthens it, and maybe even defensive a little bit and becoming familiar with it, it's maybe easier to let go into it in the future. Because I know this place. This is a place of, you know, it has benefits, there's advantages in this place, I can feel a sense of well being I can feel the sense of compassion, the sense of creative thinking, I can arise in a place where I'm not caught up in things. And that's a really good thing. And so, in the future, when you realize you have to let go, you're clinging to something more willing to let go. Because you know, that place of letting go unless you let go into is a great place. It's a nice place. Makes sense? So there's clinging and then there's the ending of clinging the release of it. And as I teaching this week, there are two General senses of letting go, there's letting go of something. And then there's letting go into something. And so, if we let go of clinging we let go into a sense of ease or openness. If we let go of hate, maybe we let go into friendliness or loving kindness or compassion, we let go of confusion. We maybe we let go maybe let go into into clarity understanding maybe not release we like go into a sense of, you know, maybe ease or peace, just kind of letting go into something. And so the idea of so When we when we talk about the cessation as the third noble truth, it might for some people hide the fact that
there is the cessation of one thing is kind of like the arising of something else, or say a different way, maybe a better way when something seizes, it allows something else to be revealed. And I like the word reveal, because it's not up to you. Like I have to figure out something here, something shows itself. So when you let go of clinging, what's the opportunity there? What's the learning there? What is it that gets revealed and shown to you? What is it that's really good, that happens as a result. And having some sense of the benefits of letting go are really important because without that, some people are unwilling to let go. Because you know, that's the only thing I know is holding on. And but if you feel like letting go actually is a really good thing, and maybe a trustworthy thing. Some people are afraid of letting go because they're afraid have the sense of defensive lessness, or the sense of surmounted, that there might arise when you let go. And so you know, I'll be vulnerable that if I let go, then I'll be vulnerable and people take advantage of me or this or that. But if you have some sense of something really good that it comes with letting go, it not only was maybe place a piece, but it might also be a place of strength or a place of greater understand better understanding of how to take care of yourself in from that place. So it's important to get some sense of the benefits of what it's like to the good side of letting go of cessation. And I'd like to suggest that each of you have had lots of experience of this. Even though you might not realize this yet. I apologize for telling you what you should be what you should be like. You forgive me, I hope, but, but I say that all of you have had some experience of letting go of ending of cessation certain degree of clinging, holding of suffering. And don't underestimate the value of what you've done already you experience you've done already. So now the question is, on the other side of that, what do you know about the benefits or the well being or the positive aspects of having done that letting go? I'm making sense. That's the question. And so it might be you know, something really simple. The fact that you know, why this comes to mind is an example but you're driving here today. And of course, you were in a hurry to get here because it's so important. And see, and so you came to a stop sign. And you came to people came to the same stop sign, you know, intersection, same time as you literally you had the right away, but you see the other people kind of chomping at the bit to get through and so so you let go of your sense of needing to get get to IMC two seconds faster, and sees like, oh, and but the other person go by. And it can be that simple. So what it was like to let go of, you know, need to get here so quickly, it was two seconds, you know, and, and then, you know, letting go of that and allowing expression generosity perhaps to someone else. What's that like to appreciate that take a moment to appreciate the value that even though it maybe was so such a teeny thing. The teeny, teeny things add up to things begin reconditioning the mind and make it easier and easier then to let go of the big things. So to train yourself in the small things, so that when it gets really big, that you have the muscle letting go muscle stronger, and you have the wisdom understanding of what the, what it entails and what can come out of it. So I think you all just had one Is it safe to meditate? Because, I mean, one way of letting go is to sleep right? You know, we can all if I put you off if you're asleep and they say that Nirvana or sleep is a poor man's Nirvana. So, is it safe to meditate or should we do something more energizing? No. Okay, so why don't you take a meditative posture and you might have to sit with greater sense of, you know, Diamond dynamism. Strong, alert. noble person. Maybe, you know, there's ancient light and especially in the ancient times, we don't use it so much nowadays. But they use the language of being a warrior and, and bring out the warrior usually tired, maybe part of the reason was they had only one
meal back then they really tired after lunch. And so they have to really muster themselves up. So, the warrior language really made sense. I don't know. I'd like to the point is bring some energy into the sitting here and if you need to open your eyes, so if you if sleepiness becomes begins taking over. So, but for now, close your eyes and take just a little bit bigger breasts than usual, not just a little bit, teeny bit more than you bigger, deeper breasts normally would. But as you do a little bit deeper breaths. See if you can kind of appreciate the uplifting quality, the energetic quality of breathing. In breathing in more detail than more deeply than usual, can you feel the uplift in any kind of uplift sense in your spine, maybe especially your upper spine, between the shoulder blades write up into the vertebrae of your of your neck Your breath returned to normal letting your breath breathe itself. As you experience your breathing as you experience the bodies as you as you feel how the body experiences breathing, imagine that you're breathing is at the very center of your being. And then everything else that occurs is peripheral to that. And you're not going to deny or ignore push away anything. It can be in the background or it can be in the periphery. Very much be present to everything else. But you stay right at the middle of it all right at the center with the breath. Breathing, like the breath, kind of undulate like waves perhaps up through everything. There's no sense of denying anything or pushing anything away. Whatever way you're feeling your body or your mind or your heart. whatever's going on in the room is all fine. But at the center of it all, you have your breathing. Stay there with a breath. Ride the breath. float on the breath. The End breath and the out breath. Feel the sales of your awareness. I'm going to now give you a very important piece of instruction for the city For the next little while short while I want you to completely stop paying attention. don't notice anything. Penny effort to be mindful. Let go of paying attention. Anyone ISIS suspect is that a good number of you can't do that. Unless you race off into your world of thoughts, quickly lose yourself there. In fact, for some of you imagine that the very attempt to let go of attention makes you more attentive. Attention. Awareness is not something you have to do. It's a natural functioning. Experiment over the next couple of minutes. With letting go into awareness, rather than trying to pay attention, let go of everything that gets in the way of being attentive, natural awareness that go into awareness, the natural awareness, which is here. Every time you exhale perhaps let go into awareness Now, as you exhale, see if you can extend the letting go into the very core of your being into the marrow of your bones. core of your heart. As you exhale, see if you can let go a very deepest level that you have access to. Maybe then letting go which has a sense of softening around or easing up on. Feel your way into the core of your being sent your way into it. Feeling it? As you exhale go, relax. He's up. into whatever degree you can let go, easily ease upon soften Can you also experience some good some sense of peace or joy or happiness or well being. See if you can notice the other side of letting go and as you let go, let go into that well being into the joy or the peace whenever the qualities however with the quality self for you As you breathe See if you can breathe with the other side of letting go. You can breathe with whatever sense of well being or joy or peace or calm and might be there. As if the breath is like the wind fanning the flames of fire. Somehow strengthening it, letting it grow that will be experiment a little bit to see if you can relax into some well being. sense of freedom or peace. Now there's this a cycle or a spiral where the more we let go, the more we relaxed or ease. The more sensitive we can be to more subtle forms of suffering and clinging. And then we can address those more subtle forms of suffering and clinging and perhaps let go of them and move into a deeper level of peace or well being And then that can
really reveal something deeper, deeper clinging or suffering something maybe subtle but very deep, very tenacious. Even fundamental to who we are our personality making this wonderful cycle. I think go being more at ease and at ease revealing more places to let go. Letting go of everything so one of the things that one of the opportunities are the one thing on the other side of letting go is the ability to see more clearly and more deeply. And so there's a wonderful cycle or spiral then of letting go, being still or being able to see I have more me more clarity and greater clarity, being able to like go more deeply, it goes on and on. And then ultimately, awakening with a capital A is when the deepest root of clinging in the mind, let's go. release from all clinging This is no clean, no clinging at all, characterizes or shapes, the mind or the heart. Mind hearts are influenced by any kind of clinging at all. That kind of ultimate freedom, ultimate release. It's a very radical transformation of a human being to have that happen. And one of the ways that the Buddhist tradition talks about that is they talk about that happiness or that freedom as being unconditioned. And what that means is that it's not shaped or conditioned by anything. It's not dependent on anything. It's not. Most most things in life are conditioned or shaped or manufactured of causes, conditions come together to make it happen. So many forms of happiness as we have our conditioned happinesses I feel happy today because my boss praise me. I got a raise. I'm happy today because I got that hot date that I wanted. Or I'm happy today because I won the lottery. And happy today because good weather. Maybe some of those are all reasonable forms of happiness, but the but they're all kind of conditioned about things in the world being a certain way. Freedom or happiness is not dependent on how the conditions of the world. So there's very deep and radical letting go that can happen that the Buddha was pointing to when he's talking about cessation, it is pointing to the possibility of letting go and letting go into happiness freedom a piece, which is not dependent upon anything being any particular way. That makes sense. And along the along the path towards that, it can be a lot of small letting goes that build towards that deep and like a spiral or cycles that kind of go further and further closer towards it. But it's very important to have a setting that know that letting go is not just the probation, you know, just letting go and deprive state of being and go. In the in the teachings of the Buddha. He was very reluctant seemingly to do Describe what you let go into when you go into ultimate freedom. He seems to be happier to describe things as the via negativa. The absence of clinging, the absence, the absence of something, letting go. And some schools of Buddhism focus more on the positive description of what you'd like go into when there's freedom. And describe that quite a bit. The danger with both kinds of descriptions, the negative description in the absence letting go letting go and go. It can just seem like it's some kind of annihilation. The positive scription that is wonderful thing you like go into gets gives you the sense that there's something which is it some condition, which is it, I got it there, I'm trying to get it there. You know, and it's neither annihilation, nor is it something which is it that you got. So for whatever reason, the Buddha seemed to err on the side of just saying, not that not that like go that go or that people err on the side. It's this. Maybe, but in some sense both are true. There's a middle way between them. So some of you look sleepy, I suppose. So, what I'd like you to do is if you could please quietly gather into groups of four