So Good day. And we'll continue here on the fourth talk on the first noble truth, the truth of suffering. And nicely today is the day of we commemorate the Buddha's awakening, awakening from suffering or freedom from suffering. That great momentous experience. That was the beginning of the Buddhist setting in motion, the practice of teaching that has come down to us that momentum has continued from that night that the Buddha sat under the full moon of May. And this myth of the Buddha is that he encountered sickness, old age and death. And that inspired him to go for a search, the noble search, it's called. And this idea of sickness, old age and death to represent all human suffering, kind of the most kind of epitomizes the world of suffering that we're in. And that rather than continuing to suffer more, just let the suffering continue forever. That there's a search there's a deep inquiry creep. Search for freedom from suffering. And when people encounter suffering, in all its many forms, and are troubled by it, there are two directions that can take us It can either take us in some ways to suffer more, or to suffer less than towards freedom of suffering and ways that we suffer more is by reacting to suffering. Our own suffering and distress and sorrow, grief, disappointments with either fight with flight fighting against something flight, they say running away or freezing. That's the kind of three categories often used to represent an unhealthy way of responding to challenges. For someone who's a practitioner, there's the opposite of that there's a different direction than that. Instead of fight, one response to suffering is compassion, to approach and help, to not approach to fight but to approach to support and help and help alleviate suffering wherever we can. And other healthy approaches
called some big some Wagga. It’s a Buddhist word that I think of as the urgency of practice the inspiration to practice to engage in the search for freedom from suffering. And instead of flight running away, it is a turning backwards into oneself, not to run away from suffering, but they get to the bottom of it to really resolve it and be honest about it and really look at directly and become free of it. And then, this idea of freeze, instead of freezing, there is a kind of becoming still and quiet, that’s possible in a very healthy way. And that is to be still and gaze upon everything kindly. Gaze upon everything with care. So which of these directions that we take and the Dharma direction is to, towards the alleviation of suffering towards compassion, towards practice, towards looking upon all things in the moonlight of our kindness and our goodness in our care while being still having certain equanimity and peace. And this noble search this deep practice is what Buddhism specializes in, to really kind of get to the bottom of our own distress or own attachments or own clinging. And to do that one of the first tasks at emphasized is to really understand suffering really look at suffering deeply. And to recognize it and really be present to be still and look upon it kindly look upon it non reactively with equanimity the Now, one of the things that are seen When we stop and really look at suffering, learn to be mindful of it. And this is the value of learning mindfulness is that we start seeing, being aware of things without so much of the filters of our stories, our interpretations, our commentary, and some of the generalized concepts by which we see things. But mindfulness takes us into the world of the present moment for sure. But even more than the present moment, to the direct experience of the present moment, direct experience means the experience that’s much more not immediate, without being filtered through stories and commentaries and preferences and all this other all this layers of stuff we can add on top of it. And the and so as we go into seeing suffering, seeing our pain or sorrow or grief, allowing it to be They’re not being in conflict with it, not fighting it escaping it, freezing, but really learning to gaze upon it deeply. We see that in a moment to moment experience of it. It’s unfolding, it’s flowing, it’s moving, it’s in constant, it’s arising, it’s passing, it’s shifting and changing all the time. And what holds things into some idea that it’s permanent and fixed, is not the immediacy of experience, but rather is the way the mind interprets it or holds on to it or reacts to it. And so that’s one of the values of calming the mind settling the mind from its reactive mode is that we start kind of being in the flow in the stream of experience in a deeper way. It’s phenomenally respectful, I believe, to allow our distress or sorrow or grief or anger or fear, rage, to allow to really just to be in, especially in meditation, to lead a course through us at the level of just letting it course letting it just flow, letting it just be there. And then a certain kind of way to get out of the way of it. Not getting out of the way. So we act on it, or collapse into it. But rather we get out of the way so that it just flows without our active involvement in it. And this is one of the reasons why meditation is such a powerful arena for learning and being because it’s very few places in our human life, where it’s safe and appropriate, to really let what’s going on inside of us to have its full permission to be there, to help whatever’s in there to feel safe, to be present to be there to flow. No matter what the gang No matter what the fear, no matter what the sorrow, whatever the pain, distress, stress there, we have to hold it in an unkind gaze kind of awareness to be still and look upon it kindly, to help all that’s inside of us, whatever is inside of us, whatever is
happening in our mind or hearts, to let it feel safe with us. So we’re not fixing it, changing it, interpreting commenting on it. It’s a phenomenal process of just allowing it to be. As we settle down this way, we see how inconstant things are, how things arise and pass and rise and pass. In the English translations of the suit does. There’s a statement quoting the Buddha that would ever is impermanent is suffering. And so I’ll say more about the translation in a moment but Whatever is impermanent is suffering. So here we are dropping down quieting the mind, dwelling in the deepest wellsprings of the flow of life, the stream of life. We’re seeing the inconstant arising a passing of phenomena. And the Buddha says that that’s anicca. It’s impermanent. And whatever is impermanent is suffering. So in a sense, this impermanent world that we live in the changing world, in constant world, there’s something about it which has a nature of suffering. However, the important point to really appreciate here is that this deep connection to impermanence, the deep flow and the changing and constant nature of reality, that is also the medicine. That’s also where we discover the freedom from suffering. It’s kind of like the illness is the medicine. That if we really there’s the over and over again that Buddha talks about is that deep insight into impermanence, it’s only possible for really present for it, really still looking upon unkindly compassionately. And only seeing that just really dropping into that flow of things arising and passing. Only then can we appreciate how much that suffering dukkha, but also how that is liberating at the same time. If we only see the suffering, then we’re standing back from it and not really entering into that flow. And, and so this word, anicca translated as impermanent, it might be not quite the best translation impermanent even though it’s the most common one and it’s a very important One to understand because of its connection to dukkha to suffering, to distress, to unsatisfactoriness, to stress, to pain. And the word is in Pali is anicca. “Nicca” does not mean permanent, but rather means constant. And the “an” is the negative. And so it’s non constant in constant. And the difference between the word English word in constant and impermanence is some people see impermanence as being, it’s going to end sooner or later, it won’t be here. It’s not permanent. eventually it’ll die or fade away or be broken. In constant means that it comes and goes. And it’s in the deepest insights of the personal practice. It’s not just recognized That things disappear once and for all, and that they will die and mountains will decay and all that. But rather it’s to be aware of the inconstancy, of moment to moment experience, the flow and the stream of momentum of experience that comes and goes and comes and goes. And and things are there and not there. things appear and disappear, where whether they actually disappear, like completely gone, they disappear and experience how we experience them. experience itself is magical, special location. That is how we perceive the world around us And the world within us. That perception, the way we take it in and perceive that perception is in flux and changing. And in Buddhism, that perception of how we experience the world is the fundamental fulcrum of our life. It’s kind of like the, the neck of the hourglass. Everything goes through our experience of things, our perception of things. And that and, and so Buddhism sits right there at that door of it experienced door a perception. So it’s right there at that, in the middle of that neck of the vast world outside of us and the vast world inside inside of us. And just watches what happens in that world of experience. That is where the Genesis is of suffering and freedom. Not in the vast world
out there and not in the vast world inside in a certain way, but rather, right there in the moment to
moment experience. And, and so there is where if we can see suffering there. See stress, see
tension, see dukkha. See unsatisfactoriness see the painfulness of things there. That is what is
liberating to recognize that. And one of the ways it's liberating, is that when there's very clear
recognition, the recognition becomes a lucid awareness becomes lucid. When our awareness
becomes spacious, lucid, clear, so much so that we know we're aware. We really know this. Wow.
The amazement of being conscious, where what we're conscious of what we're aware of in the
flow of experience becomes almost secondary to the our capacity to be aware of it when Lost or
sunk or preoccupied by what we are knowing, we still know clearly and lucidly, but it's the lucidity,
the clarity in which we know there is freedom, a certain kind of freedom, a certain kind of just like
the vast freedom of the moon full moon to float in a cloudless sky in the middle of the night. It just
floats and is there and it's lucid and clear. So with a clear, lucid, full moon of our mind, we can
really as we recognize, with great clarity and peace gazing upon all things kindly, there we can
find a degree of freedom and there is the path to full awakening. So thank you, and for this
reflections about dukkha, the first noble truth and one more talk tomorrow and, and tomorrow
when we're done I'm applying, as I'll take a little bit of time for some questions, if you have any on
this topic. So thank you very much