So hello again and with this being Monday, begin another five part series of talks where these morning sits. And what I’d like to do this week is to introduce to you one of my favorite topics these days, Buddhist topics, practice topics. And it’s a concept which I didn’t have been reading the Buddhist teachings for a long time, but didn’t really see there didn’t really pull it out of the text and understand that it was there, partly because it was translated in a way that they kind of made it more obscure. On their surface, it would seem that this is, you know, pretty straightforward concept maybe when it’s translated by the word compassion. It turns out there are two words that they’re more well known translators will translate as to compassion. One is the one that is most commonly known Karuna. And the second is anukampa About anukampa in the sutas, it became quite meaningful for me and touch something very deep inside that I kind of came to recognize as kind of its own specialness in the past, I think I would have identified it as compassion and our quality of compassion, then that’s quite fine. And then the nice thing, but now it seems to be something much more fundamental and broader in scope, and then compassion in a wonderful way. So and I call it I’ve translated I tend to translate this word anukampa as care and, and, and caring for the world caring for self caring for others. And I kind of like the English word care because of a double meanings of it. To care for others means both to value them to consider them to To value them, appreciate them. But to it could also mean to actively do something for them, to help them to provide for them to support them. And these two meanings to value someone and to provide support are beautiful things to do. So, for what I would like to do today, this first day is to say something more about my own journey and the
Dharma in relationship to three beautiful qualities of heart that can grow through this practice. And that is compassion, loving kindness, and this anukampa this care. And the way that I came to me and kind of really kind of became strong in me was in that sequence what I was doing Zen practice, as I started developing to deepen the practice, to language the way I described it to myself, it was that Zen Meditation was tenderizing in the way that we tend to rise meat, that’s I guess I’d never done it. But I think that meat is going to be tough, and you put something on it that makes it more tender and something. So I kind of felt that Zazen Zen Meditation was tenderizing my heart and slowly in retrospect, I realized in retrospect after some years of practice, that one of the things that was happening for me in those early years was I was becoming compassioned. I was being attuned to and to my own suffering, and then also the suffering around me. And the salient important quality that met that that responded to it that supported it was a quality of compassion, warmth, the care, a love, an extremely caringness that was specific to suffering. And Avalokiteśvara Guan Yin, Kannon in Japanese, the Bodhisattva the great being of compassion. And I felt myself very strongly drawn to the and would draw them I would have photographs of statues on my wall. And, and I just I didn’t think about it much it was like I found these I put them up there. did a lot of this the medicine or the salve of compassion or to meet and be with my own suffering, or perhaps rather than needing it, it just was the byproduct. And one of the reasons I think, why this compassion arose for me in doing Zen practice is that Zen practice was very simple. And the way I understood it the way I practice it was a thorough acceptance of the moment as it was. And since I had a lot of suffering, it became a certain kind of acceptance certain kind of, not, you know, just being with allowing it and this allowing and the suffering to be there and being with it, is it that is a tenderizing effect to I kept all the resistance I had to at the judgments I had about it. The discursive thought that would trigger all these I would let go of them, come back and just feel and be here with what was And what was here was was suffering. And that was tenderizing. And one of the good fortunes for me and those early years is I didn’t know very much about meditation. So I didn’t have any meditation techniques to try to work with it and fix it. I just sat in the open, somewhat simple way with experience. And doing so changed me. It changed me so much that this compassion grew. And it became the orienting, organizing principle for my life. I decided at some point, that I would dedicate my life to Buddhism, Buddhist practice, maybe teaching Buddhism as my response to the suffering of the world. And I never had any sense that I was going to be so effective in doing so. But I had a clear sense that, that that’s what I wanted my life to be about. That given the work we’re doing here, sitting in the morning now, the image I had myself, you know, when I started this route of wanting to respond to the world out of compassion was I would have a little storefront Zen center little meditation hall. And I would get up in the morning and had the key, I’d open it up, and I would keep it clean. And I’ve let people come in and we will meditate together in the morning. And that would be the core kind of way in which I supported people. That was the idea. And so now, many years later, we have this 7am sitting which is kind of fulfillment for me a certain kind of goal I had many, many years ago. And the so that was very nice. And I mean, it was very nurturing, it was supportive, and this idea of compassion, and I discovered some of the ins and outs of compassion, I discovered that, to my
surprise, that compassion can feel really nurturing really sweet. Wonderful, pleasant feeling it can come with pure compassion. And then at some point I started doing Vipassana practice and and in April I started doing the pasta especially when I did it here in United States. The teachers would do a teach loving kindness practice metta Excuse me. And, and being kind of from Zen background, this loving kindness practice just seemed too sentimental, too artificial to me that when I was a young student, and so I would simply tune out the teachers that they did, did a guided loving kindness meditation. But in the course of sitting long retreats, especially the three month retreat at the insight meditation society, at some point, something Started sweetness and warmth than to give maybe as tenderizing, something began to open in me that had a kind of joy to it and delight or happiness part of it. And then when the teacher starts to talk about loving kindness, loving kindness meditation, I said, that's it. I know what they're talking about now. And then this idea of loving kindness, loving kindness, meditation had such a wonderful meaning for me and value to me, that had a very different flavor than compassion. It still had to do with caring for people, and caring for oneself. But it was more of a came with a sense of delight or happiness and wanting them to be happy. And it's a very different effect for me to have this more open, relaxed experience. And I wondered for a long time whether it was something about Zen versus something like the past no one compassion, one loving kindness, or had to do with a particular phase of my life and what was you useful and what this kind of tenderizing and opening of the heart came. Certainly the living kind of started to come and I didn't hadn't didn't have so much suffering anymore. I'd become freer and freer a bit and had real moments of it dropping away. And sitting there and practicing without this suffering as a reference point. Maybe that's when made possible that loving kindness could be the expression of this, you know, caring heart. And then as the decades went along, at some point, I noticed that there was a shift in my experience of care when I take care of, you know, respond to the world or the certain kind of love or that I felt, I started to become simpler and simpler. And it became simpler in a way that it didn't equate associated with compassion that I could call it compassion, but just seems so simple. And I didn't quite associate with loving kindness because that seemed a little bit more active to me, but more energized. And a little bit more kind of relational and some more. I don't know what to say complicated way. But there was a simpler thing that I associated a lot with it. Not with a sense of freedom, a sense of ease, a sense of peace that had come with a practice. And this idea that there was a very simple, caring responsivity wanting to support and help and work for people, but it was clearly connected to a sense of peace, a sense of well being a sense of ease, and it just seems to be almost part and parcel that ease. And it just as soon as I kind of would refer to it as loving kindness or compassion, it seems like it got a little bit more activated, a little more conceptual, a little bit more, more involved. Nothing wrong with that at all. But I like the peacefulness and their time so I struggled with that. Especially if I struggle a little bit, you know, conceptually, is it okay to stay that simple? Shouldn't I be more actively concerned or worried or, or, you know, be more actively compassionate or actively loving kindness. But it just felt so right this way. And then I started studying the suitors around this idea of compassion and how compassion is talked about in the sutas. And I started seeing there was a distinction in the sutas
between compassion and discomfort. And the big difference is that the word I know compa is the primary word the Buddha uses for actively doing and caring and serving other people, teaching others, working with others, being supportive of others, being generous to others, that's in a suit that's asked over and over again described as being out of anukampa it's never described as coming out of Karuna. Karuna has a very different meaning and the suit dose is certainly different than what it's come to mean by a new compose the active verb and, and emotion for caring for others. And that primary cut is not defined in the suit toasts, but over and over and over again. It's it's a when someone has anukampa they're concerned for the welfare of others. And this idea of welfare of others is broader in nature than compassion. It's broader and ancient, because compassion is about, certainly about the welfare of other but specific around not wanting to suffer to alleviate suffering. And loving kindness is more about letting people be happy and can be a lot of compassion there too and concern for people suffering but its more specific. And what I came to understand is in the suttas anukampa is the broad feeling that encompasses all the Brahmavihara's encompasses compassion, loving kindness, sympathetic joy and equanimity. And so, so, you know, that's it's more like the this is this is the broad term for being involved with a care of the world. And so the So, you know, this is not from the Buddha but my own sense of it, then, is it anukampa is the foundation for the other forms of love, and being and that then associated with this feeling of something very deep and peaceful, from which my care came. I've said, Oh, that’s probably anukampa. And having a word for it really made a difference for me. It kind of brought me delight, Joy kind of freed, it freed it up, to be there as its own thing and And I've come to translated now as care. And so the fundamental capacity to care that is can be very simple, uncomplicated, coming from a sense of ease and peace and freedom, that that can be the foundation. And then as appropriate, we that gets expressed in different ways. So that's what I want to talk about this week is anukampa. And I hope that offering my own story of how I came to it sets the context for what we'll do for the next four mornings. So thank you for listening and I look forward to tomorrow. Thank you.