

2003-08-24: Questioning Sitting and Seeing

Sat, 7/11 10:07AM • 52:24

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

buddha, people, dharma, myth, buddhism, unseen world, life, japanese culture, fast, enlightened, westerners, ascetic, enlightenment, sit, suffering, open, point, process, experience, aspect

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So, for this morning, I thought I would talk for a little while

and

encourage you to kind of engage maybe a little more than usually do with what I'm saying, because I would like you to, like kind of set up a certain topic for your consideration for your, your own exploration of this thing and see what comes out of your own thoughts and in life experience in relationship to this. And then if there's time, maybe you had to pick it up again and, and continue with some of my own thoughts. And to begin with, what I want to do is talk about a very central Buddhist myth. And myths are very interesting that you have a myth. Sometimes people can talk about other people's or that's their myth they live but that's a myth they have and they believe in all kinds of things and they say, Oh, it's just just a myth. And so that sometimes the word myth kind of is still With disparaging evil, but disrespectful. So it's not really true. And it's just a story they tell themselves and whenever.

And

it certainly some people believe their myths. And it said that here, everyone has myths they live by and sometimes we don't realize the degree to which we have myths, both conscious consciously or unconsciously and kind of believe them. But another aspect of myth is that maybe coming out of anthropology and coming out of psychology is the idea that if you have the right eye, the right discernment, you can look at a myth and see it. There's all kinds of truths there. Some people say universal truths or basic truths or some some there's something encoded in the myth about the human process, the human psyche, the spiritual growth. And so you don't take the myth as being literally true, but you see it as being figured leave True allegorically True. And this points to some aspects like a dream you interpreted like a dream different aspects of the myth might all point to different aspects of

oneself. And so the myth then has some deeper meaning as we kind of apply to our own life and has a different kind of level of kind of truth. There's maybe not literally true, but it's true because it speaks to the process of the psyche. So one of the core myths that much of Buddhism is organized around is the myth of the Buddha's enlightenment. And there's a number of elements to this myth. One is that prior to his final period of leading up to enlightenment, he spent many years being an ascetic. And here an ascetic is someone who's self denying to the extreme. It said that he lived anesthetic to the point of being on the verge of death. Apparently fudo is very confident in himself, and in his great abilities and, and he knew that if he taken it one iota further, he would have died. And so the point was, what's the purpose of living an ascetic life, it just, it just leads to death if you do it thoroughly. So he pulled back from that kind of practice of self denial, self mortification and, and wondered what to do next. And remember the experience he had as a child of sitting quietly under a tree and not denying himself not trying to do anything to actively make anything happen. And somehow the heart the mind kind of settling by itself into a state of joy. And he thought, well, maybe I could do the same thing. Maybe I don't be afraid of joy and ascetic kind of feeling joy and happiness was kind of considered taboo. So decided Do that and then he broke his long ascetic fast. And this woman came and offered him mistook him for a, a, the spirit of a tree. She had apparently promised that if her childbearing wore fruit was easy enough that she would go offer this you know, somewhat elaborate or fancy rice porridge meal to the spirit of this tree that she'd asked for protection and support from and so the birth went well and she came in and, and she went to the tree that she gets prayed under whatever. And sitting under the tree was this asset, this ascetic this monotonous renunciant and that was the Buddha and she mistook him for the spirit of the tree it somehow manifested to receive the offering. So she then offered this porridge is rich creamy rice, milk porridge, and which anaesthetics is not supposed to eat. But the Buddha ate this in order to nourish himself take care of himself. And then it's the story goes on to say that the Buddha then sat down one evening under the Bodhi tree, with a commitment to sit still to sit fast, no matter what arose until he became awakened. And then as he sat there, he was assailed by the forces of Mara, and the forces of Mars, like the Buddhist devil. And you can imagine someone has been self denying themselves for six years, their sexuality, their pleasure, their food, their you know, all kinds of things that you can imagine that once that lids been taken off that kind of repressive, perhaps lifestyle, that suddenly all the intersecting forces come in spades. And so the Buddha sat there and Mara All these inner psychic forces of temptation and fear and desire and so you just kind of came in, came pouring into the Buddha pouring out of the Buddha. And,

and the instructive thing is here is that in some way the Buddha was able to sit still, in that he's held fast. And then, at some point, the Mara came with the greatest challenge. The devil came with the greatest challenge, which is in the form of self doubt. And at the kind of point where the Buddha with Mara was going to kind of lose the battle. And Mara kind of came with self doubt and said, What right do you have to become free to become liberated? You know, you're just you know, and so the Buddha then didn't rely on his own powers, but rather reach down and touch the earth, and with his right hand, and you probably seen some times the sculpture of this very common skull of depiction of Buddha sculpture. So Buddha be touching the ground with his right hand and And what he's doing there, he calls upon the earth goddess, the goddess of the earth, to bear witness to his right to become free.

And the earth goddess does that, and chases Mara away. And then he sits there, under the Bodhi tree. And then what happens is that the process of enlightenment is described as a process of opening his Dharma eye. And opening the Dharma is a very interesting expression, because the implication is that he sees something he didn't see before. There's a new seeing new vision that happens, something that was unseen or unnoticed or undiscovered, becomes noticed and discovered with the opening of the Dharma. And so, you know, what is this? What is this opening? You know, what it what is it? What is the unseen world that's available when the Dharma eye opens? What is the unseen world that we don't see it? Perhaps we haven't, you know, and we What is it? What is it to open the door my and see something new for the first time or see something aspect of the hidden world, the unseen world? Is there an unseen aspect to your world? Is there an unseen aspect to the to our world? And, and how does one access How does one open that I have once Dharma, that inner eye, so that we can see that inner world that or that that hidden world, the unseen world, so that it becomes seen? And it said that the Buddha then had a vision, Dharma was open and one of the descriptions in the ancient texts of enlightenment is a process of vision. Sometimes it's called darshana Marga. The path of vision is to have is to have a sight to see something. And what is it the Buddha saw? What is it what was that vision that came about? The next step of the whole process was in the myth is the Buddha's not just having a vision seeing seeing something was unseen before But then being changed by that vision, so that he his orientation of how he lived his life for the next 4045 years, was informed by that vision was, in some sense, maybe propelled by that vision. So it's one thing to kind of, you know, as difficult might be to open the Dharma eyes to see the unseen world. It's another thing then to really take that in, to allow oneself to be changed by that, so that, you know, you know, when one is changed. So the aspects of this myth that I kind of would like you to consider, but you can consider anything, but, but it's a couple of things. One is the idea of holding fast, the night of his enlightenment, the Buddha held fast he held in there, he had a certain kind of strength when he sat still. Come with me. What are what when it when is it that this there's this point to some kind of important truth for us in our lives? there that There are times when we need to hold fast. We need to hold steady. We sit still, perhaps, in the midst of tremendous challenges, difficulties against all. Maybe logic tells us this is ridiculous. Maybe some point. Is there a point in life were holding fast, with difficulties with life is what's called upon is somebody holding fast that gives the possibility of opening up to this Dharma Hi. And what is it to open the Dharma? What is it to see something unseen? What is the unseen world that becomes accessible when we hold fast? So those are my that's my question for you. What is it? What does it mean to hold fast? What's your experience of holding fast? And what is it what does it mean to open the door my what is the unseen world that's available to us when we you know Follow this process. So did I set it up well enough for you guys to kind of bounce off that. Remember that in interpreting dreams

you know you can be quite creative. So what is your What is your take on this? What is your relationship or interpretation of this? these aspects of classic Buddhist myth? Yes, maybe

reality seeing the way things really are without being

so seeing seeing how things are without mental obstructions, constructions, and good Thank you. And what's the role of holding fast, holding steady

without being still you can't

So without holding Still, we can't expect to see through these things which are always here. And so I appreciate like what you said. But it belies a certain other question. And that is, what does it mean to see things as they are? What is it that we see? What's the unseen world that is not been seen?

seeing yourself and how we react? That's good. No, and I also would encourage you in interpreting something like this, you don't have to look for the right answer. The right answer is how this kind of speaks to you in your own experience, rather than some classic Buddhist you know, meaning of this kind of myth. Three minutes yes

to say that everything we see in the world

around us is colored by ourselves. So,

maybe sort of see well as it is is stripping myself

away to

see things without. So, the idea of some aspect of self or self was stripped stripped away and that so we can see things more without the filter of self self concept self definition. And why is it important to hold fast and to do that?

Very inclined to

try not to do that. Okay, great. Thank you. Yes,

I was thinking that

to see everything to see

relationships

so to see the unity of life to see our relationship to the larger picture, so often the our relationship to the to life in large sets is obscured is part of the unseen world, because we're normally what

we only see tangible. And so we think that that's the only way we can get a sense of something larger than just this physical.

Great, thank you.

I'm supposed to write a short thing for this month's newsletter about trees.

Answer this question

seems to me to create value longer. retreats is that you have made that commitment to sit without a distraction without any escape. And

in that process,

you're really forced by that commitment to start to see through all of your delusions and because the delusions that keep coming up become so empty imposters over time. And I think my experience is that constant sitting that breaks down these deceptions that we have about ourselves and the way we look at things

over here referred to

me as a projection. You can see their own projections from us.

And and what's good and an entity they can't take one step further than once you've broken through those delusions, what's the debt what is Dharma, I see

suffering.

Beautiful, thank you the mind thought and risk kind of response reaction to what you were stimulated by what you said is, is gone on long retreats sometime to say incomparable test of how well our understanding is really integrated into our whole being. There's a lot of people Have great, great sense great understandings in some of the very true very real kind of visions of how things are some, some understanding about themselves about how free they are in some way. And, and it might be true. But human human beings have a tremendous capacity of self delusion. And in retreats are one of those places where we can really test how true our self concept self ideas are ideas of our own freedom, the

ideas of our own spiritual understanding how real they really are. And so because you put on, you know, to the fire of that, and if it's not real, if it's not really somebody that you've been transformed in some deep way, it becomes really obvious in the fire of the retreat. So I think retreats is being a great test. Yeah. So it was

it's interesting to hear that self doubt was the final step. Because

I can imagine, for him being the first person ever to have been enlightened. I mean, I think what, what Mario would try to put in his head is what makes you think you're, you've got right. Other people might mushroom to something bigger, what makes you think you have the right way? And to translate that back into what are what I feel, sometimes I myself is in our modern day we were exposed and we can be exposed to lots of different kinds of teaching, even within Buddhism. And you can go to the bookstore and you see four different magazines from Buddhism. And I just read in this week there's this guy who started a company based on Eastern spiritual practices and it creates some self doubt in my own mind is, is the right way.

Maybe sadness The right way to practice. And, and that's raised a lot of doubt in my own mind. And I guess the way I approach it is,

I guess two things. One is

not to come to a conclusion.

Because I think you'll run into all kinds of corners if you try to come to, like, if you're seeking to find out what is the right way. And the way to do that, I think is important to be patient. Just not mean they go together. You don't want you don't want to come to conclusion in order not to you can't force yourself to sit,

hold fast. come to a conclusion.

Beautiful, am I doing great, beautiful, so he's gonna be hurt could hear. Can you hear that the idea that we have a spiritual supermarket. And, and not just you know, but even within Buddhism because there's so many different choices to be made you go to the bookstore in the sport, different Buddhist magazine. And all these different books and there's different Buddhist traditions and there's be passed in the under then and, and how do you know which one is a true one? It'd be nice to know. And there's all this stuff then about, you know what's true and all that and Henry right. Henry said that, in his his conclusion is or tentative conclusion is, is not to make a conclusion about which one is true, but rather be patient and and in not harming inclusion, be patient just hold steady, I guess that something will be revealed something will show itself. And there's a few things that say in response to that one is

that

sometimes I counsel people who are wondering you know, there's all these wonderful Buddhist traditions and other spiritual traditions around and which one they should they do, which one is true. And I say initially, it doesn't really matter which one you choose. Just choose one for a year or something and do that you or something and do that, you know, well, the best you can because a year of any spiritual practice hopefully there's going to open up some some different I pretty Dharma eyes some spiritual eye, where you get get have a different ability to, to see really what's being said, See what's being practiced, see what's, what's being manifested in the community, whatever. And so it doesn't you know, judicially doesn't really matter what you choose. And then after a while, then you can kind of take, you know, survey the scene again and you have a new I to understand to see, maybe you won't have as much projection because you kind of see in your, your your capacities projection so you can pick up really what's going on. So that's one aspect of it. And the other aspect which reminded me of I've told the story many times of my hallucination when I was a nuisance student. If you heard that hallucination was I was a new enthusiastic, idealistic Zen student, and I sat down to do my Zen meditation. You sit facing the wall, the wall was far away. And, and suddenly sitting there this Roman column column row rows up in front of me and is a massive kind of like you know, kind of column you have in front of the bank that shows you have a lot of banks have a lot of authority and stability and, and, and so and written down across black kind of engraved letters was the word letters z e n. And so then I went to embrace this great source of authority. And as I embraced it, the column disappeared and I hit my head against the wall. So I took that as a lesson that it should be very careful not to look outside of myself for the answer as if some tradition it had it. The Zen had it or be possible has it?

Yes, seems to be the girl that were Talking about the place where this actually becomes a religion.

We're talking about the step before Nirvana, that step, you're enlightened, and therefore, you achieve nirvana after you die, so, and that's according to the Buddha in comprehensible. And to me, it's incomprehensible. So it's the point at which you have to take on faith. That what you see when you become enlightened, is important is a central part of your life. It's the point in which this is a, you have to have faith in what's going to happen. You can't understand it. It's just going to happen to you. Yeah. And it's important and you should do it. And so the stillness if you believe that the stillness is The way that you achieve and if you're not still you don't get there. So you can't say that's what it is because there's no way no it's just

the

So Bill brings up the question of is, is there a degree element of faith that's not really verifiable until you've been there get there in some ways involved in in a spiritual life like Buddhism. And

and

you know it you know, faith that there is an unseen world to attain or to reach or state that it's possible to, you know, open Dharma and Dharma Hi. In the particular thing that you brought up. It's very interesting because classic Buddhist teaching is that once a person becomes fully enlightened they continue living their life and With a normal normal people live their lives to, at least the way enlightened people live their lives. And, and then they, they, when they die, then they will no longer get reborn in Buddhism believes in this constant cycles of rebirth. And then the question is, if enlightened person doesn't get reborn, what happens to them? Do they get, you know, they don't get reborn in heavens, they don't get reborn, you know, as human, they don't get reborn anyplace. But what you know what happens to them Do they? Do they disappear, they become extinct. It's like just the flame goes out and it's no longer there. Just you die and that's it. And what the Buddha seemed to have said, was that what happens to a fully enlightened person when that person dies, cannot be described cannot be talked about is incomprehensible. So then bill suggests that, well, if that's the ultimate destination of enlightened person, even having a Dharma high open, even having Dharma I opened doesn't really tell you what's there next, because incomprehensible after you die. So it's an article of faith to kind of believe in that possibility, whatever. And so that makes sense. However, my my reading of the early Buddhist tradition is that a person who becomes enlightened is no longer concerned with what happens to them after they die. So it's not really an issue about you know, taking it on faith or believing or not believing it. It's just simply not you know, that's not a you know, such an interesting question. The Dharma the opening the door Am i is given a person this kind of freedom. We're then when life is settled for wins, fights wins. Peace. There. Yes.

So strange topic to talk about in his head Well, when a Buddha taught me what I call the body guide, and also said Buddha also said that you're not by the five conditions. And if you really contemplate five conditions because of the body, there's the

aspect we

automatically happens in our experience, we experience things as pleasant, unpleasant neutral, there was cold perception, which has to do with memory, that you see something like a big deal I say, like says bill. Building 31 is malicious for doing things or worse. When do I get in this consciousness that we have something after sort of six senses and we know so what else is there? And I think if you contemplate it, that's what we do as before. So for that, that is it.

So and you know, my personal opinion is both worlds as they say a thicket of views just create more confusion. And I agree with that.

Which is basically

a good thing to go after

the end of suffering, which Chapman says that's a big deal, his opinion on

enlightenment is the end of suffering, for human suffering, I think the bad translation.

So, so in the text where he talks about the Buddha, attaining awakening is freedom. It talks about him opening the Dharma Hi. So according to the your, your idea, your interpretation, your view here today, what is the what is you see when Dharma II opens?

I always do

and then returned as I always do. And so because of duga

so the end of Duke and then he saw so

for those who don't know me suffering,

that's one translation.

So, so you're saying with Jeremiah open, you're pointing to the essential thing that he saw was something to the nature of Duke of suffering or stress or unsatisfactoriness. And the freedom from that they liberation from that That's what he saw. And so the unseen world would then be the positive. This process, understanding how this process works, how dukkha occurs and how it can be brought to an end. And so in holding steady, holding fast, how does that relate to that process of that damn eye opening?

Well,

requires that

requires effort,

effort,

practices, but it just doesn't come naturally. Natural graph. Yes.

Is it your experience that people that

follow the Buddhist path in other societies, particularly Asian societies have an easier time holding fast

That's a hard it's a hard, hard question to answer. And it's fraught with danger to start making cultural comparisons and things like that. It's people have noticed, I mean, there's there's number of things that I've noticed culturally different the eastern West kind of I noticed that Eastern teachers are amazed at the tenacity and the, the strong effort that some Westerners can make. I've heard Eastern teachers say something like, boy, my Eastern students practice as hard as these Westerners. they'd all be enlightened by now. Because, you know, there's this work ethic or whatever it is, if you know we bring and so you know, there's a there's an ability to westerns bring this great, you know, ability sometimes to hold fast sometimes. Another observation I've seen about the difference is that all this sooner really strong effort and holding fast by the Westerners with a practice in Asia doesn't bear as as much as the more relaxed approach that some of the Asian people have. Sometimes the Asians You know, when they go to you know, Burmese goes to a Burmese temple, it's like a homecoming for them. You know, it's I feel at home because they're kind of religion of birth, and they grew up in city, kind of going to the temples with a family and it feels very comfortable. So they go there and they kind of relax in a very deep way. American goes to temple and bear in mind, they bring with them their parents and justify themselves to their parents and you know, and why aren't you getting a job and you should go back to school and you know, they don't feel at home there. They just relax. It's like the hills all the anxiety that comes up. So the pet maybe, you know, if it's fair to make cultural comparisons like this, then it maybe depends on what particular areas of one's personal life one looks at maybe some areas one culture has really great capacity to hold fast. Another another other aspects other cultures have great abilities to hold fast.

The reason why I asked comment was

if I was to receive it,

calling fast, at least in my own experience, or holding fast to the extent that I can, in the face of temptation of a store requires real real clarity insight relative to the futility of life as it's ordinarily live. And it's also my experience that in this society and our society whose job is to immediately convince us that there's always call that a matter of how things look Find out other relationships, lose weight, there's always something on a life level that makes life doesn't ordinarily live worth living. And therefore, Tim, temptation becomes more difficult to resist. I was just curious if you can get into less sort of pseudo culture, or people are fewer such images. They might give you a sense of futility about life as it's on your lips. And that was a trigger that again, you're right. It is pretty pretty. I like to generalize. And yeah,

it's hard to hard to know. Please.

You talked about mythology and I was seeing it not only Buddhist, but also as a universal transformation. Whether it's a retreat, we face the difficult parts of ourselves and for me, the first few days are usually extremely hard and then there's just a total opening

The same experience on a vision quest, and I was thinking, just facing any hardship, any healing, like vets that are able to heal from that trauma or, you know, anyone going because they're the last group.

I agree, I completely agree. So being hospitalized for a while, you know, being on my deathbed and all kinds of stuff. And it's almost as if the greater when suffering is in different situations, the sums of money almost a direct relationship between the strength or the strength of the suffering. I say this way, suffering has a lot to do with our values, our priorities, our view of ourselves and the world around us. And the greater we suffer, the, the stronger are the views and the priorities and values that are feeding into that suffering. So suffering becomes for many traditions, a entry point to spiritual life, because because it's a place where we can really kind of grapple a deal with the values, the beliefs, the attachments that are part of the soil for that suffering, and the greater the suffering, the greater the opportunity there is to see what's going on there for us. And all kinds of situations provide that you had to hand up earlier.

Being able to

diversion or see it as an opportunity to

correct in that path or maybe a series of vignettes

or that you're using

Thank you. Yeah. Yes, please,

just to kind of connect with the idea is that it seems that is this process. And when we hear about the Buddha's enlightenment, what happens at one particular moment, but he went through many different lifestyles to try and find that state. And then it may not even happen completely at one point. But my own experience is that over time, that's the golden fast that this Dharma high, which we're calling today is a process of opening a

link open. Ah,

but it's a little bit.

Yesterday, I saw a woman that I haven't seen in years, so we've been very close to that time. And just in the conversation, I realized how much can happen in our lives. spiritually and we'll certainly likeness

sufferings and its joys. And that both of us had the sense that there was coming over and opening up to something greater through the life itself, and that it didn't happen.

Yeah, a lot, a lot of wisdom can happen through just a life experience and aging. The joke I make about that is that Buddhism is accelerated aging speeds up the process. But I have another question I'd like to ask all of you before we end here, in that holding fast might be a very important part of the spiritual path of practice or life wisdoms. Just staying alive and going through it all, you know, is a big deal for some people. But what are the qualities we need to bring? What are the qualities what are the what do we need to bring to bear what's have personal qualities we need to call on or call forth in order to have the ability to hold fast to hold steady. We could you say we just do it you sit down and you know, take your stake into the ground that hold on tight. But But what you know, what are some of the qualities that support and make it possible for you to hold fast hold steady? Yeah. vision and vision. Vision, your freedom. So having a vision, having some confidence in the possibility of freedom, that there's a point you're you're involved in a process and that process has an end in freedom makes it possible to hang in there and hold steady. Okay. Thank you. Yes. So a willingness let go whatever comes up I'd

like to use the word surrender,

to be able to surrender.

You're not pushing or pulling, you're basically just be in your ability to,

I guess just let things go through you as opposed to getting stuck on

his analogy that I, I like to use.

So the idea of surrender the deal being rather than doing an idea of letting things move through through you, rather than letting things get stuck

with it doesn't mean you're lazy.

It doesn't mean you're lazy. It means you know what you're doing, you're know that you've made a choice to surrender to the process, the process of awakening, you're not forcing anything, you're not trying to achieve anything. You just know that this process is, is working and you're not getting in the way. That's what I mean by surrender.

So surrender is not being lazy. Right. Good. Yes, Jen,

slowing down.

Slowing down good. Yes.

No, you're not running away from yourself. Good. It face it. Good. Yes. It's

just a matter of prioritizing, because we put so much pressure. I can't really indulge myself I do think it is important

in the long term is more important than anything else in our society. So many things can be pressuring us to actually particularly create something that a lot of people around me Don't even

call myself out of here and go away. At times difficult.

Okay, thank you. So prioritizing. Yes. Sorry. deep belief. Yes. The word discipline, discipline having a sense of discipline. Yes.

Right. Thank you. Good.

Go. Seems to me that you're balancing all these things on the panel on the one side that nobody's mentioned yet is there's gonna be a tremendous amount of courage internationally. Yes, you have to sort of

take all the money. Make yourself Sit down and do it. Because if you get like this too much, then the balance falls out and you have to relax. You have to do all of these things simultaneously or

Yes, was

good. And that's what the Buddha discovered, you know, he's reminded of this childhood experience that was filled with joy. And, and it was it was a childhood experience of not trying to make anything happen. Not trying to avoid anything from happening and just kind of resting. And some people would say resting in the nature of mind. And then in that doing that all this stuff comes and the Buddha just stayed there. He wasn't tempted he was thrown off by it and all these illusions deliver illusions and temptations and emotions all kind of swirled around him, but he stayed in that relaxed mode. And I liked it sometimes I, since this is the reason I was reminded of his childhood experience he had, I sometimes like to think of it as learning to sit with a childhood childlike openness, but with adult like stability. So that balance of the two childlike openness by itself maybe doesn't really work with guilt, like stability by itself doesn't work. But the two together, this is without, you know, balancing these different factors. And there's a couple of other factors that I thought of that haven't been mentioned. And one is respect and classically many different traditions having an element of respect for for

yourself, what you're doing for the tradition for the teachings is often considered to be a prerequisite for being able to go in onto the path of doing the work that is holding steady. And,

and

there's a, you know, in Buddhism and probably in other religions, some idea that this person is not supposed to actually teach the Dharma to anybody, unless they feel that the people are coming with some modicum of respect for what's happening. The other I thought of is compassion. That I think it's helpful to have a tremendous amount of compassion for oneself and for the world around one. And often is compassion that gives the strength and the courage to hang in there for whatever it takes.

And someone talked about, you know, how these things happen in small steps and increments. And I think the degree to which our Dharma eye opens little bit, it gives us the possibility of trying to, you know, take the next step or to hold steady even more. Learn how to receive what's going on. Next with As much spaciousness and, and freedom as possible, and then that opens up another eye or opens the eye wider. And often it's not just like Big Bang, Big Bang kind of theory, but rather, it can be incremental along the way. And I'd like to end with this. And I'm going to talk about my experience of being in Japan. And I apologize for talking about another culture that maybe I don't know so much about. But it's not so much about Japanese culture, but about the experience of the Westerners, the Americans who went to Japan and live in Japan. And I saw a relatively common pattern. Many Westerners, many Americans would go to Japan and fall in love with it firsthand, just it was also very romantic. It was very charming was very, you know, so all these wonderful, beautiful qualities of Japanese culture that you see when you first get there. And then the ones who stayed and stayed for a while with me live there about for, you know, for an extended period of time, after about three months they would suddenly see Wait a minute, there's something going on here that doesn't meet the eye when you first get there, and many of them are going to be quite disturbed by what they saw in Japanese culture after the first three months and they saw kind behind, you know, their social relationships and how people relate to each other and the hierarchy and the status and you know, it's very complicated Japanese culture is very stratified and very complex in many ways and, and the very unAmerican terms of equality and an American made me Americans be quite disturbed. Some people would leave Japan after kind of looking under the surface and seeing what was there. But then those who stay longer, those who stayed maybe more than six months, their eyes would open even further. And then what I saw was that then they would find this deeper appreciation of Japan Jeff Nice culture. And again, they feel very happy being there. But there's this transition period of about two or three months, where it was very difficult to be there because they saw certain aspects of it, but not others. And so, you know, I don't know if I don't want to make this a comment about Japanese cultures as to how people observe Japanese culture, from Westerners who were there. And, but obviously, just just the same, same process. So it was important to kind of hold steady to stay there long enough to see it through the part where the Westerners kind of didn't understand what's going on or didn't appreciate what's going on. So the same thing occurs, I think, with any spiritual discipline, that there is certainly

with Buddhism, that initially the first period, three months, three years, 30 years, I don't know how long depends, you know, individual, but it just great. You know, just fantastic. You know, it's a wonderful world religion, it's inspiring, it's great, and it's kind of Beginner's luck, you sit down to meditate that's so exciting and people get settled and concentrated. easily because it's so great to be, you know, to be inspired and do this wonderful thing. And, and it can be said that initially as many people are enchanted by the possibility enchanted by the great teachings and charmed by the great teachers, and there's a kind of, you know, sense of hopefulness that gets kind of projected on and, and, you know, like I did when I was young students projected onto this great Zen tradition that I was going to hold on to, and it's going to save my life. And I was enchanted by it right in this hallucination. And then sooner or later, people involved in Buddhism get disenchanted with Buddhism. And I would suggest that this is actually a very healthy we look, we're looking for this to happen. We love it. When people get disenchanted because you're supposed to, if you're enchanted, it's you're in trouble. And so, to be to be disenchanted in some way it needs to happen, but they were disenchanted English kind of has a connotation Have it kind of dismal, you know, kind of like you know, disenchanted means you kind of go into some kind of blah you know, but disenchanted means you no longer and charmed no longer. And the truth is almost another word for being in illusion. So if we could get get disillusioned by Buddhism, isn't that great? If because the alternative is to be an illusion about it. And that's, you know, Buddhists don't want to live in illusion. So you have to get disillusioned by Buddhist with Buddhism even.

And then, at this point, many people will leave and then they'll go to some other great practice or religion or, you know, do folk dancing instead or something and have great you know, hope and great projection onto that. And then they'll do that for three months or whatever long it takes until they get disillusioned with that. It's not acute. So a few people will go through a process where they, they only take a particular tradition, to the point where they get disillusioned. We're no longer has a great lawyer or whatever. And then they leave and they go somewhat something else Sooner or later, I think in order as someone said, you know, you take yourself with you everywhere, as sooner or later, it's better just to kind of, you know, hold fast. And the experience that people hold fast with the Buddhist tradition that I've seen, if they hang through that period of disillusionment, and at some point, it opens up to a whole new dimension. And that dimension, I think, is in some ways, then freed of Buddhism. And some of the comments people made about the Four Noble Truths, I think are very, very profound teachings that the Buddha and Buddhism has to teach that arises out of that phase of Buddhist practice. Where is we're wanting to begin to see the alternative to any kind of illusion, living in illusions, and about life. So, now you've been forewarned. Those of you who need to be forewarned And those of you who have gone through this just reminded of something that you've already experienced. So, with that, I hope that those of you who are still in illusion and as you're still enchanted, we'll all be properly disenchanted and disillusioned and be a lot happier because of it. Thank you