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SPEAKERS

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Okay, so welcome again to the second day of this mindfulness of breathing series. And the Buddha in a variety of places, the Buddha gave the 16 steps stages to using breath meditation as a path to liberation in meditation practice. And the most notable place we will refer to is the Anapanasati Sutta, which is an imcs website, my translation, it's also found in the middle length discourses, it also appears a few other places. Play so I'm kind of, you know, like to be touched by using my imagination is the Buddha taught this to a son. So it's one of the one of the few meditation practices actually taught his son so when your son was perhaps 14 or 15, so that's kind of nice to think of. I hope he already knows how to use his breathing in meditative ways. Some, just practice. Usually when he has trouble going to sleep for some reason or other, he has a lot of energy or pain for some reason or he's restless, something comes out so I can't sleep. And I'll tell him, use your breathing. And he said, okay, he goes, it goes back to bed and we don't hear from them again. So he needs to do something.

The 16 stages down upon a Sati. to breath meditation, mindfulness of breathing is pretty comprehensive. And also what the tradition has done the early tradition is try to show how these 16 stages correlate with other practices, in particular, correlates to the four foundations of mindfulness and to the cultivation development of the seven factors of awakening. And so, this discourse in primary discourse represent this is seen as an attempt to kind of harmonizer bring together show how they work together, the different teachings the Buddha had about meditation practice the, the 60 stages of divided in groups of four, and those groups of four, the four groups of four, and each of those groups of four are correlated to the four foundations of mindfulness. So the first tetrad is connected to the mindfulness of the body, the second tetrad to the mindfulness of feeling tone, this third tetrad to the mind michelsen the mind in the last tetrad to the mindfulness of the Dharma.

The description of the 16 stages is very brief, simply basically a sentence for each one. And it leaves a lot of room for interpretation. In fact, it's not enough information there to really understand what the Buddha had in mind. So what you find is a different teachers will take these 16 kind of telegraphic bullet points And elaborate them in different ways, depending on their particular understanding of how meditation unfolds. So in that regard, you'll get my interpretation today. As we go through the day, I was certainly trying to refer to some of the suttas. But, you know, it's my kind of little bit, my take of it. I love the breath. I love breath meditation. I've been doing it for 30 years, and I find it very useful or significant. deepening and it's something that I've used, you know, you know, right to the deepest places of the practice. It's also been said that this is the practice the Buddha most most commonly utilized. That's what Theravada tradition claims. And it said that for the night of his enlightenment, it was the mindfulness of breathing that he used to bring him to the tourists enlightenment, awakening what I have in mind Just today is primarily in the morning. To meditate. I'll do a series of guided meditations kind of going through some of the stages. And then in the afternoon, we'll do some meditation. But then

I want to present the teachings, the mindfulness of breathing in a wider context, in particular to describe how the stages correlate with the, the jhanas, the absorptions, to develop a concentration in Buddhism. So, in preparation for doing meditation this morning, I want to refer to two things. One is to the opening of the sutra. And the second is to particular teaching I think is important. You don't need to have this handy. I'll just read it to you. The opening of sutra read is called the discourse in the mindfulness of breathing opens with a description of a gathering of large gathering monks, that residing in the same place where the Buddha is. And some of the Buddha's most senior disciples, or his most senior disciples are gathered there. So this is a very auspicious gathering. And whether this actually happened or not, we don't know. But even if it didn't happen, it's still there's a kind of a narrative that's building up kind of a hot trying to highlight the value of what's about to be said later on. So the Buddha's most senior disciples are there, and elder disciples and gathered on each of them are different groups of new monks. So it's a large gathering, you know, there's like 10 different senior senior disciples. And then these groups there's groups of 10 groups of 20 groups of 30 to 40 monks around these elder monks, and these elder monks are teaching the newer monks so you can get kind of the scene and in this park like setting in the forested area, where the Buddha is residing, all these senior monks are residing, and the We're all engaged in teaching groups of monks how to meditate, how to follow the path. So it's a very intense, it's a very purposeful gathering. It's a very beautiful gathering, I imagine it's inspiring to imagine it, or to say differently, I use my imagination to let me be inspired by by the gathering, it's fair, because it's kind of useful to use your imagination to get a sense of something larger than then the kind of dry teachings that appear. So and then the Buddha looks around and sees all these gathering of monks there. And he says, He says, looking out over the silent community of monks. So as again, all these large group of people are all silent. And there's something really beautiful about people in silence when they have a lot of meditation, under their belt, when they gather together in that kind of way, there's kind of a very vital, alive silence that can exist in meditation circles. And then Buddha says to them, monks, I am pleased With this practice, I'm pleased that Hart with his practice, this is nice, the Buddha is pleased, happy, you know, what seems things are going well for these people. And then he says, Therefore initiate even more energy for attaining the unattained, reaching the unreached, seeing what has not been seen, I'll be here for another month, I'll be around for another month. So during this month, basically, you know, arouse my energy. And so they did.

And what it was after the month was even more pleased. So this so what I want to highlight here was this, there's two qualities that are kind of represented in this beginning of the discourse. One is a sense of purpose, or intenseness. These people are gathered together with a sense of purpose and intention, that here they're going to sit and engage in this path, they're going to try to master the path of meditation. And the second is the rousing of energy to do that. Sometimes people think that a rousing energy It goes against the meditation imitations of becoming calmer and calmer and calmer. And so applying energy, it goes against that. Also meditations about maybe letting go of having a goal of striving. And so energy is striving, having a goal and you're supposed to have that. So here are you have seen both a strong sense of intent or purpose and encouragement to arouse energy to really apply oneself to engage in this process. So how that translates for me are totally up to us, is when you come to meditate, you can also earn some of the same qualities to sit down. Hopefully you sit down to meditate. There's a healthy but strong sense of purpose or sense of intentionality that you see you're here to do something. You're not here wishy washy. You're not kind of casual about your meditation you sit down. It doesn't mean you're tense, or has had high expectation what's gonna happen, but it means you sit down with some sense of who you are some sense of purpose and have you here to be engaged, some sense of, of, you know, purpose. The second is the arousing of energy that's really going to apply. So there's something that you've been engaged in. And so, energy engagement has a lot of different meanings. It can have the kind of general meaning that each day you're going to sit up in here to meditate and you're gonna apply yourself and that arouse the energy to do that. But also when

you sit down to meditate, there is some arousing of vitality of, of effort of energy in the system. We sit down. And I think of this very much initially as something we do physically with our body. So not only do we sit down with a sense of purpose, physically, something we manifest with our body, we sit down to be here and be grounded. Because it be here, show up, they show up. It's kind of like I'm here to show up. And so we show up with our body. And then there's a sense of with energy and you sit with the kind of nuts not, you know, couch potato, but you sit here with some sense of being upright and alert. To be here in the present. So that's, that's, you know, my reading of kind of the opening to this discourse, you know, it's coming in, there's more more things I could say about this opening that kind of enforces that same kind of idea. So that's one way of reading this discourse is to use the opening as a way of kind of use your imagination to kind of set a scene that prepares you for the teaching on sit down to meditate. Then the Buddha then second thing I want to say, which is not in the discourse, and that is that meditation practice, stands on two legs. This is what I taught Monday night, stands on two legs. One leg is paying one way or other, paying attention to something in the present moment, paying attention to what's happening, especially for mindfulness meditation, noticing what's happening is really key. So not about what's going to happen, not what did happen, or what's happening now. So some ability to be in the present moment, and be present for what's happening in the present moment. That's one leg. The second leg meditation practice mindfulness practice is paying attention to your relationship to what's happening. How are you relating to that? Given that your body's sore when you sit down or aching, given that your mind is restless, giving your mind is settled, given that there's lots of noise outside, given that, you know, any kind of condition at all? How are you relating to that? And this issue of a relationship is very important in many, many different levels of a Buddhist life. It's our relationship to the teachings. It's our relationship to the practice. It's our relationship to ourselves doing the practice, it's our relationship to the Buddha, Dharma Sangha. It's our relationship to our experiences we have we meditate. There's, you know, our relationship is a really key important aspect of what's going on here. Because without there being a relationship, there is no Dharma, that they're being relationship that there's nothing going on. You know, we're not passing on dry knowledge that supposed to memorize and carry with you. You're supposed to engage everyone relationship with this material, where somehow you take this material in enough that you think, Oh yes, this is something I want to do, I want to apply and want to apply to my life and would engage, and that's having a relationship to it. And there's many levels of that relationship. And then, so one of the things we look at is what is our relationship to the, to what's happening to our experience in which relationship to Buddhism into practice, and meditation, all these different things. And some of this investigation of a relationship,

maybe should happen on a walk, or to happen with a friend going for a walk. You know, just, you know, much more contemplative thinking about your relationship to the Buddhist teaching your relationship to teachings of some other teacher, you really shipped to me all kinds of things to actually look and see how what do you bring into it? Because you're always bringing something What are you bringing? You're not a neutral party in this. So what are you bringing? It might be you're bringing relationship of hesitation. I don't know about this Buddhism stuff, you know, I'm not sure I want to do this or Or, you know, I'm gonna do with my way. And this, you know, you know, I don't know what Gil's gonna say today, but I just listened a little bit, I'm gonna do it my way regardless what he says, you know, there's, there's you bring it up, bring some always bring something with it with us that I'm calling now the relationship. So taking some responsibility for what we bring who we are when we show up and what that relationship we're forming is very important, and you're always gonna have something. It might be that you're, I think that everything that Buddha said is, you know, his absolute truth and you're kind of this thing you know, with, you know, rapt attention, take it all in. That's a relationship. That's a relationship. It's a belief, it's an attitude, you bring a certain kind of rapt attention, some kind of fundamentalist beliefs to this. There's always something going on. And unfortunately, until you attain Nirvana, Nirvana freedom. You're always going to be bringing something to the experience some

relationship And it's really helpful to look at that and take responsibility for it. I've known a lot of meditators who have been turned a blind eye, to their relationship to Buddhism, teachings themselves, to how they practice to what's happening in meditation practice, their relationship somehow is somehow doesn't count. It's not part of this thing. And so, they've kind of walking on one leg, given that the two legs are what's happening in a relationship to it. So when we look at our relationship to our experience or to meditation, one of the really important teachings, I believe in Buddhism is the Four Noble Truths, which I would like to interpret here now, as teaching encourages us to be relaxed, to be at ease, to have a relationship of being at ease with what is what is happening, to not cling to not, not resist, not push something to happen, but to keep coming. I can see Can we have a relationship where we somehow relax in relationship to what's happening? Or we're somehow allowed the mind to be at ease? Regardless what's happening even if you feel uneasy? Can you be easy with that? And so there's a there's a kind of a constant, ongoing, kind of checking in with oneself, and seeing, how am I relating to what's happening here? Am I relating in some way? That's tense? Am I relating some way to striving and pushing? Am I relating, hesitant, kind of uncommitted to the breath, Americans holding back, you know, magical thinking, thinking, well, if I you sit here long enough, something magical happened. You know, so what's that relationship and is there some way a healthy way that you can relax the mind open the mind, soften the mind, that's in relationship to our experience. So this is a very important part of the practice. And you can be neurotically looking at your relationship all the time. And then you're only standing on one leg again, right? And then just kind of become self defeating. If you're always looking, you know, there's nothing you know that the relationship but but periodically to kind of check in and it becomes a safeguard, very important protection that your meditation practice doesn't go down a wrong path of excessive pushing, clinging, tensing, resisting, that can happen. And even very good meditators can be pushing too much in meditation can be kind of focusing too hard. in meditation, it can get into that foreign focus can attain altered states of concentration, various things and because it can seem like this is the way to go. But I think that in the bigger picture, attending altered states of concentration when there is a kind of pushing and hard kind of striving and trying to make something happen, is counterproductive. And so finding some way to relax and costly relax and maintain the energy and maintain a sense of purpose is a variable important task of meditation practice.

So in the discourse so the mindfulness of breathing, the Buddha says and gone to the wilderness, a foot of a tree, or an empty building. person sits down with legs crossed and body and body erect. Establishing mindfulness, always attentive when inhales with mindfulness and exhales with mindfulness. Breathing in long windows I breathe in long breathing and short windows I breathe in short, breathing out long, when most won't breathe out long breathing out short windows. Breathing out short. Breathing in, I experienced the whole body, breathing out, I experienced the whole body. Breathing in, I calm the bodily formations, breathing out, I calm the bodily formation. So those are the first that's the first tetrad. The first instruction is to be aware of your, of your in breath. Whether it's long or short, be aware of your breath, be aware that it's long or short, then be aware of the whole body when you breathe. And what that means is, you know, up for interpretation by different people, and then at some point to the fourth, the fourth aspect of this, first cetera, is then begin to relax what's called the bodily formation. And one of the big themes today this morning will be this bodily formation thing to understand what that means, and how to relax it. And then hopefully today, we'll also move into the beginning of the next track. tetrad where the point is to use the breath, help use it with the help of the breath of meditation. Have the bring on joy. So those people weren't content with contentment. We'll, we'll get into that. And but you can't really move into the joy part, unless you're sufficiently tranquil can't relax at ease. Without things are in fact, the joy, meditative joy that arises arises because the mind is at ease. So then this initial beginning, it's beginning to learn to be at ease with how things are. It's not an easy task, but that's kind of where it makes sense. So if you'd like to stand for a minute, you've been sitting down for half an hour, so stand and then we'll start with a meditation

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Take a little bit of a purposeful posture, posture that somehow maybe not through the posture that you you finish here you're going to show up as if your presence counts. Here you are sitting upright. unapologetic