

2007-10-12 Anapanasati

Second Tetrad First Jhana 7 of 10

Fri, 7/31 6:04PM • 40:01

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

joy, people, mind, sensual pleasure, sensual desires, meditation, first jhana, present, unskillful, concentration, secluded, happiness, stay, feel, buddhism, fall, seclusion, happen, involved, settled

SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

So so continuing our into the afternoon over anapanasati day. This morning we kind of did a whirlwind tour of the first tetrad and so now we're going to start with the second tetrad which is the first thing which involves joy. And I've often find it kind of odd, or I don't know what exactly that's the word the Pali word for joy is pronounced. Just like the English word pity. Know what a pity And so it's usually spelled p i ti. And there are a lot of places where it's understood or expected or something. In the course of Buddhist practice, a person will experience joy and happiness. delight, gladness, variety things. And right places where the path of practice involves going through a period of joy and happiness. joy and happiness is not an ordinary joint happiness. Something is not the point of practice, but it's expected to be part of it. And if a person is practiced for a long time, I don't know what a long time means, right now, but don't don't ask and don't doesn't experience some joy or some happiness. That's certainly warrants some discussion with some teacher or some, some some explorations of contemplation. Because there's some expectation that joy and happiness is going to be part of your meditative path. So sooner or later doesn't it's not a linear path, you know, as many of you know, it goes around and kind of spirals in periods of concentration for all the periods of distraction periods of joy followed by periods of despair or something. And hope we all we all hope it's probably the case that all of this is a kind of going forward in a spiral kind of way. That sometimes when we open up to new areas of our life and are settled, more relaxed, lower our defenses and stuff. We feel good for a while, but then also lowering defenses allow something deeper to bubble up and show itself and so it's not uncommon for people to have some kind of Opening experience and meditation, think this is great always be followed by some period of difficulty. So, you're going to have many different ways, but joy is expected be part of the path. Now it's very dangerous to expect to be part of the path. Even though it's expected. Many teachers will tell you don't expect it, don't expect anything to happen just kind of just be relaxed and be with what is. So but somehow we have to negotiate this that the one hand you know, as sooner or later should expect some expectation of something like joy, some sense of well being that comes to the practice. And the other hand, we have to be very careful not to get attached to it, not to be forcing it, not to be judging ourselves negatively. There's a lot of traps that can happen when we kind of trying to focus on having joy. Now, when I John Julian, who's a wonderful Thai teacher, comes to spirit rock almost every year. He doesn't speak much English, but he does know the word happy. And so everyone's sitting waiting for him to come and he finally shows up and he walks down the aisle and he goes up the be happy. So it's hard not to be a little bit happier when he says it.

But then it's also important to realize that joy is not the end result. And, oddly enough in Buddhist spiritual path, Joy is an intermediate step. That's recognized as being enough. They don't say it this way. But I'll say it this way, recognize as being somewhat coarse or somewhat

certainly less super more superficial or less, deep or less deeply satisfying than things that follow joy. So initially when people experience joy in their practice, which can sometimes be quite intense, some people who visit have arrived, this must be awakening. And then after some time, they said, this is getting tiring, you know, all this rapture was good in the beginning, but I just exhausted enough of this. So that so the idea is to move beyond that at some point, but still there's an important phase to go through. It's also very important, very respectful of where we're at. And, and when there's discussion about joy, not to feel like you have to be there. Maybe just kind of take it in kind of, you know, as information even initially or as a potential and but not not know, it's possible to kind of measure oneself against discussion of joy to I never had that or, you know, I'm just, you know, grieving the loss of someone or something horrible happened to me, and therefore I don't fit here. This isn't for me. We always want to be always the practice is always to be at ease with what is to be respectful of what is going to be how we are. And to understand the depth, the very deep importance of being present for what's happening for us. And that that's, that's the door to what needs to happen for us to our own process to some kind of whatever. And so it just happens to be that we'll talk about joy now. But if that's not your face for you, you know, don't don't don't take that as being some judgment about you what's supposed to happen.

So part of the process of meditation is arriving in the present moment. part of the process of meditation is training the mind or relaxing the mind enough so that the attention can just stay stabilized here now, mine is unlikely to wander off in thoughts In the future in the past, the mind is not likely to be caught up in in sensual desires or even sensual pleasure because anytime the mind is caught up, the mind is caught my eye is obsessed, the mind is kind of lost from this kind of more open meditative awareness that we're looking for. We also have to physically so big part of meditation is overcoming the forces of distraction, including thinking about other times in other places, and thinking a lot to be concerned a lot about comfort, sensual pleasures, sensual desires. And that could certainly be overcoming the desires for all kinds of wonderful central pleasures which are not here now. So central fantasies that can be wonderful people it's possible to sit and have wonderful fantasies very fulfilling fantasies. have food of massage of sandy beaches have sex, you know all kinds of things sitting here meditating because you know, the alternatives less interesting. So people go off into fantasizing and sometimes the mind for various reasons very strongly motivated to go seek sensual pleasures sexual desire. And there are certainly people on retreat to spend an inordinate amount of time lost in the world of sensual pleasure, sensual desire, fantasy. And also but also there's a kind of, kind of a strong feeling that attachment sometimes to be uncomfortable. And so he so any kind of it can be idea if I'm uncomfortable in meditation, it must be a personal failing. And if I'm successful in the meditation supposed to be comfortable, and it always looking for comfort, you know, kind of adjusting this looking to be comfortable. And that's also kind of preoccupation with sensual pleasure and Buddhist terminology. So that has to be overcome in order to develop a meditative mind. Let's be really be here, present moment. Also this kind of preoccupation, sensual pleasure is involved some degree of tension, pressure, compulsion in the mind. The mind isn't, you know, you're in something is driving you something's running you something in charge and you're not in charge, your desires are in charge. And so you've lost your freedom. And also there involves some kind of tension. If you really tune into that, well, sensitively, you'll feel the physical, psychological, emotional, mental tension or stress involved in even beautiful sensual desire fantasies. It comes at a cost. So I got to overcome that. The other thing that asked me have to overcome is what the tradition calls unskillful states of mind. So unskillful states of mind and shorthand are things that cause suffering. So, we'll come to those states of mind that

causes suffering and the shorthand for those risks greed, hate and delusion, but they include a lot of other things or five hindrances and many different things. can cause suffering for us. And so unskillful states of mind are unskillful activity, the mind has to be overcome. And here again, we see when there's unskillful states of mind when there's greed when there's hate, when there's strong, you know, anxiety is a whole range of strong unskillful states of mind can take over. The mind is involved in a stress it is a tense situation, there's pressure, there's compulsion, there's going to be driven it's going on, and which is uncomfortable, you're not settled and relaxed. And, and also, there's a filter, even if you have your present. If you're if you're seeing or relating to your experience through unskillful states of mind, then you're not really present. You're kind of the veil between you and experience. So if you're experiencing something, knee pain, and you hate knee pain, you really hate it. You know, then you're experiencing it through the To an unskillful state of mind, or if you have wonderful bliss meditating, this is great and you try to hold on to it, then that's an unskillful state of mind that grasping and clinging to it. And so that also becomes a filter when we're not really present. And we're adding stress, we're adding tension to the system to what's going on. So, in order to be present in a relaxed, open, clear way to really be present for something without a filter, and without tension, there has to be an overcoming of unskillful states of mind, this activity of unskillful things.

So, this is one way of describing the process people have to go through in order to finally arrive here in the present moment, in a state mind is stabilized here in the present moment, not wandering into the past the future into thought, not reacting to what's going on, but simply here. When that happens, when we finally hear, really hear you feel like mine is not going to wonder I wonder why so much it can feel like every life Wow, this is great, you know, well, you know, finally I'm free of all this, you know, there's been years of kind of this mind's been dragging me around left and right for years into, you know, this thought and that concern and this loss, preoccupation and this reaction and this that. And I finally, I have the sense I have the upper hand And finally, I'm not being carried away in these things. I'm just here, mind stable and presence, that can be a real relief, to feel that it can also be joyful. There can be a kind of a joy that comes with that kind of delight, kind of a sense of well being kind of appreciation kind of rejoicing, not just released, but yeah, this is great, good. So the whole process of the first tetrad of coming into the present moment, and then relaxing the by relaxing the bodily formations, and coming into the present moment, relaxing, all the things that keep you from the present moment, eventually brings you a place where you're here when enough that you'll feel hopefully, some sense of relief that you're finally here. And you might even feel a little bit for time being temporarily a little bit secure even though Yeah, it feels like I'm gonna stay here for a while. I'm not gonna lie Bible to drift off into this thought and that concern. I'm just hearing the hearing thoughts might bubble up. But you've kind of see them a spot if you don't pick up just leave them alone. You say, Oh, yeah, here, thoughts over there. I'm here I'm not going anywhere. I'm not gonna react I'm not gonna judge I'm not gonna pick it up and follow this train. I'm just here. So, that sense of relief and sense of joy is called in the tradition is described by the Buddha here. joy and happiness. Born of seclusion, this words occlusions v. Becca, born of seclusion, and through the full passage, he goes this way. secluded. This is a very important word. When secluded might not be the best English translation but secluded from sensual desires, or sensual pleasures, secluded from sensual desires, and unskillful states. A person falls into and abides in a joy and happiness born of seclusion. So secluded from sensual desire means that you're safe from sexual desire. You're not going to be caught up in it. You know, you're not in its orbit, you don't use gravitational pull. You're not not being caught by nastiness. So that's being secluded, and secluded from unskillful states of mind mean against same thing, that you're not getting pulled into the orbit. You have been caught by nothing directed by unskillful states of mind that are operating. So you're secluded you're you're apart from you are somehow freed from your independent from sensual desire and unskillful states of mind. So that sense of independence tuition cost seclusion, or D deca. And and, and that seclusion is said to give birth to joy and happiness that comes from the

seclusion joy and happiness born from that seclusion or joy and happiness comes from that sense of independence, no longer being caught. And here the Buddha the rights are set the way it's worded. Once a person secluded from Central design unskillful states, one falls into an advice into joy and happiness born in seclusion, this video falling into I guess you can jump into something, but can you fall as an active verb isn't falling kind of an intransitive or inactive verb or something like as something that happens to you you fall. You don't call yourself you can even call you can you call yourself the Navy. If you

All right. But once you fall, and you don't, you know, you don't have any role anymore, right, you're just falling. So here being here that you fall into, it's not something you intentionally do so much as you allow yourself to kind of let go. And you kind of fall into kind of a little altered state, other kind of way of being than the usual habitual way in which the mind operates. So the idea of falling in my mind at least has the idea that, that it's not so volitional, how you're choosing to flip a switch, and suddenly you feel joyful and happy. It's like that. It's you have to do your part in meditation practice, you have to be present and show up and concentrate and do all the things we do. But the switch that happens, the change that happens in the system, where joy and happiness kind of starts to characterize how you're feeling that kind of sneaks up on you or kind of just appears, isn't something that you make happen per se, this is my experience, for the most part. So this makes sense. So then the first instruction for the second test read is when trains oneself, I will breathe in experiencing joy. When trains myself, I will breathe out experiencing joy. So it goes a little bit against what I just said, Here, it seems like it's almost like you're calling forth. So you're gonna begin to experience joy while I experienced this or go through this is that I can open myself up to the possibility of experiencing joy. And then it can be there and it can kind of bubble up and make space for it and it can grow. Or I can just be preoccupied with my breath or something else and not let it be there. At some point as I get more settled, Joy begins become joy or well being bubbles up. And then my practice at times, is to kind of make space and allow it to grow, to allow it to grow. So we like to come and there's a way of kind of fanning the flames. It's kind of like the bellows, you kind of fanned the flames of the joy so that it becomes stronger. And this is considered to be a classic early Buddhism a healthy thing to do. You go in some Buddhist teachers will tell you don't do anything, just be present, just be present, you're allowed to do anything. Just be present, just be present, don't try to do anything. There's a lot of wisdom to that approach. But it also it, it's a little narrow, because we also as human beings have the potential to be a little more interactively involved in our joy or happiness in our peace. And so this process of the 16 stages of breathing includes both kind of just being present in the first two stages, but also the interactive part where we can be part of the process. We don't have to be out of the process, we healthy way be part of that process of deepening and settling further. Does that make sense? Yes, very

admit you may have said it, but I wasn't clear. What What is our part in allowing the joy to arise besides to being present in the first four steps that we talked about is there? Yes. So that they. So I think there are two primary approaches that people might make. Some people actually do something, which tends to kind of be a little trigger for some kind of joy or pleasure. And the most common one that I know is that people will make a little half smile, turn up the lips a little bit in some way. Turn up the volume. So some some people so there's two ways of invoking joy Remember I said one way it's intentional, it's like a little switch that some people have the ability to do. And some teachers give this instructions that is to make a little half smile as you meditate. And, and just turning up the lips a little bit tends to create feelings of pleasure and kind of dismay, probably some kind of connection to serotonin or what it is goes on. But it tends to kind of bring kind of sense of delight or lightness or joy or pleasure or something. And then with that turned on, then they kind of begin augmenting it, strengthening it. The other way, is just do your practice. Maybe do the first four six steps here and like go relax, calm the body and get into the present moment. And then at some point, joy, sometimes delight will begin

occurring, which kind of means zone. And then once you starting to occur, then you open up to it to experiencing more fully rather than ignoring pretending it's not there or something, you actually has a way of, of recognizing is there bring mindfulness to it, and then making space for it. So, it can grow make space for you can feel more fully and, and let it grow through your system. The instructions from the Buddha, these empty discourses is once you feel joy and happiness born of seclusion, then the person feels, pervades, saturates and permeates. This body was joy and happiness born of seclusion, so that nothing of his entire body is not touched. By staying vigilant, ardent and resolute. When gives up recollections and intentions depended on household life and given them Up, when his mind becomes composed, settled, one pointed and concentrated. And so once this joy starts bubbling up the instruction here is to somehow let it grow and develop and pervade the body. So here you see the emphasis in the body. That's why getting into the body early is very important. So the body can be kind of a channel conduit, or vehicle that can be filled with joy. So it's kind of permeates saturates fills everything you're doing. It's your body. So it's not just going to kind of abstract joy. It's not just joy. It's a little bit there. But something it's a fully embodied joy. And so there's a variety of ways of doing that. One is as as we stay, as some people can stay with a breath, for example, get concentrated on it. There's a kind of a very act of getting concentrated on something can stimulate joy. I don't know the mechanism for this. And maybe there's a physical physiological mechanism, that if you keep the mind steady and concentrated, that maybe it stimulates some kind of, you know, hormonal pathway or neurological pathway in the mind that releases endorphins and endorphins or serotonin, oxytocin or something. And so there's a feeling of well being that begins bubbling up more and more. It's kind of like you're getting a massage. They're kind of a biofeedback system where you kind of stay on the breath, you feel the concentration, you feel the joy that comes and you stay in there, you can kind of like the joy kind of like a cheerleader to encourage you on on the internet to get stronger and stronger and stronger. Another way is to kind of keep relaxing and kind of opening, relaxing, softening the body, so it kind of spills beyond wherever it's located. Some people, some teachers talk about joy. As you get concentrated. There'll be some kind of Signs some kind of symptom

of something good happening. And whenever that good that's happening is you taking begin letting it grow and spread. So some people report the feeling of a great purity or delight, or ease or peace, kind of connected to the breathing or the torso or their face or somewhere. And so began one teacher talks about when you get when you get a sense of real beauty with a breath really feels beautiful. So then you kind of get into that you kind of spread that to develop so it's a little bit strange to hear that for people doing a lot of positive practice because see positive practices just just notice what's there. Just know who they are, don't get involved. You know, don't try to make anything happen. But in this process here, there's actually instructions to do get involved. But you have to be very gingerly do that very tender there genuinely because if you bring too much ego and too much expectation too much desire to You know, getting involved, you can mess it up. So that's why these early early stages are very important to learn how to be present for things, how they are to learn how to stay relaxed, to learn to to purify your relationship with carefully the relationship you have what's going on. So, you know, striving and pushing or having too much ego involved. All this is really important so that when you start working with a joy, that you're not going to mess it up by, you know, having all this extra stuff involved. So there's kind of a purity of mind involved with it is that answer your question very enough. Sir.

Thank you. When it is, you know, after four steps, when the joy occurred or anything occurred, how can we be banned. So once the joy occurs How to develop it, how to develop it. So one way we develop is by just keep focusing on the concentration, staying on the breath. And just staying on the breath by itself sometimes will let the joy grow, just natural things can happen. You don't have to do anything. And so it's important to know sometimes you don't have to do anything, just let it just grows. But also sometimes we let it grow by recognizing it's there. And feeling we're in the body that joy is experienced,

so local localizing it in the body. Some people feel it screams sometimes strongly in the face sometimes. Now, they can feel it sometimes the vibration in their forehead, sometimes tingling in their chest, sometimes tingling in their arms. If giving up lightness, a feeling of warm, there's a variety of symptoms that come with that joy and concentration. And once you localize in your body, that can be a relaxing or opening or softening around it, just to make space for to grow and develop to expand or higher sensitivity to Feel, there's actually as much it's broader, it's much wider in the body in which first when you first localized it, kind of like kind of glows beyond or something. It's like a tuning into it and kind of relaxing, relaxing opening, allowing it giving permission to kind of grow and develop. And sometimes that can do it. For myself, I've had the most luck with in terms of developing greater concentration of joy is just staying on the build most of you're staying with the concentration the object to staying really carefully with it. And, and then just making room having a sense of allowing give me permission to sense for something else to happen to the side almost was like a, almost like I'm staying focused, but I kind of imagined that I'm creating a huge open container field all around that, that allows something to come to come into that space, and then this joy begins to come in. That's bubbles up from the concentration. Now initially, it doesn't have to be very strong. So some people over Look at because I think we're supposed to look, dramatics was these rapture in it, you know, bliss. The I think I've sometimes just sense a relief, you know the relief that comes from being secluded being independent from the old habits of the mind, secluded from Central desire and unskillful states of mind. So hopefully that's something you can all experience someday or other, you'll come to that place with you. Oh, look at that. I'm not caught. I think they should be caught by a car at all. I'm just here. Wow, this is great. And you might feel a sense of relief. And that's enough, that's good. Or you might feel a little bit too light. And that's beginning experiencing that joy, the delight. And then you can just allow that to be there. And it doesn't have to be very dramatic. You don't have to kind of get to know them through requirements to kind of make it into something dramatic, big or shaking kind of rapture. Just Oh, here it is. And this is good. And you can allow yourself to be nourished by it. The idea being nourished by the sense of well being, I think it's helpful, it's good. It's nice. It's not a it's not a sin, to feel joy in meditation. It's not that you know some it's not something that you have to worry about that somehow you're going to get attached or you know, it's your indulging or you know taking life seriously now it's actually possible to be nourished by this feelings of well being that might start might happen sometimes. And allow yourself to be nourished is one way to learn to grow. Yes, no.

Am I assuming right that like strong sensations in the body and body pain have also sort of mellowed for joy to the generally when you have the minus occluded from generally from These other forces, generally there's not a lot of pain anymore. There can be some, there can be strong joy, there's actually a strong rapture, even with pain painting to the object of concentration. And it's kind of odd, you know, to conventional minds, that you can have strong pain and have strong joy, same time because you really focused on it. The mind doesn't have to be caught up in the pain, they can be independent of it in a sense, the joy can sometimes arise. So, yes. Is this step different from the first jhana as far as energetic quality of the joy and that sort of thing? This is a description of the first jhana that I read. Okay, this is the description. secluded from sensual desires and unskillful states. A person falls into and abides in the joy and happiness for seclusion of the first jhana which is accompanied with thought and consideration, person feels pervades saturates and permeates this body with the joy and happiness born in seclusion, so nothing the entire body is not touched with it. So, one of the qualities of this first absorption is that there's there's something called vitakka and the Chara and be Taka Chara, you there's a tremendous debate in meditative circles, of how pitaka mycharge be translated into English. And the big divide is some people say it means initial and sustained attention, silent awareness on something and the other school says that it's the initial and sustained as a Thinking and consideration. So when people say we can't involve any thought at this point, you know, thinking, and the other people say, yes, it does involve a kind of thinking, you're not thinking about something else. Your thought your

consideration is about the breath. Oh, what's happening here now, in a way that's helpful and supportive and gets you engaged. And there's no real way of anybody deciding is going to fall away with the moment. But it's possible to be very present, to still have some rudimentary kind of thinking very simple thinking, that connects you to the breathing and then keeps you there, keeps you there looking at it and engaged in it present for a little bit in the very simple kind of kind of reporting almost, kind of, this is how it is kind of reporting a very simple kind of thinking that keeps you there. Generally, the people who say that this kind of very rudimentary thinking, that helps you be present is part of meditations part of jhanas Let's say that that falls away in the second or third jhana as you go further has to fall away. But that didn't the first jhana is still there. And why am I talking about that? Oh, you could you asked about Jonah first. The way you're talking about sort of the softness of joy or happiness seemed a little in contrast to the way I sort of been taught about the first jhana, which has so much energy with physical match. That's why it was so so. So those of you who might not know, there are in Buddhism, these four absorptive state sorption states, when the mind gets really concentrated. And this is the first one described here. And just as in this debate, they're not just like, there's this debate about what this be taught on HR. I mean, there's a much bigger debate about what constitutes an absorption state. with jhana and there's different there's john alight people, john a heavy people, you know, and in the genre of heavy people say, john, a lot of people don't know what they're talking about not really john. And so it's you know, it's it's endless sacrimoni and Barclay, there's no real authoritative basis to really make a final decision once and for all, can't go back to the suit doesn't say, definitively, this is what it means. This is what it says. They're all pretty good. So just be sure to celebrate the fact that this good stuff is happening to people. And, and I prefer to say, for the most part that,

that there's a range of intensity that each of these jhanas can be experienced in. And I'm content to allow there to be a range from being relatively mild to being very intense. And when it's intense, there's a lot of energy like when the rapture is strong, especially in the second jhana. You know, there's it can be, you know, there's beautiful, beautiful descriptions Description of five different kinds of joy that can arise. And I don't memorize the five but exactly. There's momentary joy. There's cascading joy. There's pretty good, right? Because cascading joy, you know, and remember once I was on retreat, and I was having a lot of joy, very concentrated. And I went into a dining room to have lunch. And I was sitting there, I came late and it was mostly sitting there alone. And I had the food in front of me. And, and so I would, you know, pick up the fork to take a bite, and just that the movement of my arm just sent these waves and waves of intense joy rapture to my body. It was so intense that to put the fork down and I can ask you after after a while, how can I try again so I can be that way, you know, and also can be really quiet and peaceful. And the data is supposed to be a certain way. It's a little bit dangerous, you know, so it's like, you know, then people are pushing and some people try to push and pump up and get it going some big way. So we just so anyway, so now you know, those of you don't know now you know that there's this there. There is controversy in Buddhism. The case you thought that Buddhism was all harmony? Just a very simple straightforward teaching that everyone agreed on. Yes. Once

once you experience it as a come every time every time you meditate, no, it's like on and off the time. No, it comes together for there's a lot of causes and conditions for it, so called the cause and condition has to be there to kind of allow to happen. So, if something really difficult in your life has recently happened, the mind then is dealing with those strong emotions and feelings and thoughts. It can't get settled enough to make it happen. And so or maybe you haven't, you're sick or maybe you know this and that so there's a right or maybe the clay concentrations are strong enough. So for example, if if you experienced it on retreats and people experiences, joy or various things on retreat, they got made, and they go home and sit every day and they sit every day and first day they sit, you know, for half an hour, it's a second day wasn't a strong third day, he starts to fade away, because not sitting enough to maintain strong enough concentration. The concentration has to be strong, stay stay strong and

concentration is like a muscle. They can get weak if you don't use it. So a lot of things can affect it. And remember, a friend of mine told me he's very good in getting into the jhanas and he said he spent one six months for nine months, unable to get into it, because he was angry with someone that you know that anger took us that long to kind of work through. And then he was able to go again.

So

there's a saying in Buddhism that just like the rain falls in the forest, and the different plants, different kinds of plants, trees and bushes and flowers, they take up the water they need. So in the same way, the reign of the Dharma falls in all of us. And each of us takes it in. We need what we need. So let's maybe sit now, I'll do another guided meditation around this. If you'd like to stand, you've been sitting around for quite a while. So Stan stretch finger up.

So it certainly can cause all kinds of unfortunate consequences to talk about joy, as you know, something comes with meditation because people aren't expected to look for it and judge themselves negatively. They don't have it. So there is a risk. But the benefit of talking about it is that then people are more likely to open up, be sensitive or allow it to come if it's there. If you know that it's going to help you think to happen in meditation, then you make space for it. If you think it's if you don't know it's part of the process, then you might overlook it starts small hints of it begin bubbling up