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SPEAKERS

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rated Buddhist teacher from Thailand. COMM basically said that Buddhism is all about food. And what he meant was by food what he meant was food of the mind Dharma food. And that the food we take in the Dharma food we take in conditions are mind and we can make our mind conditioned your mind so that it becomes suitable for both number practice, but more importantly, what he said make our minds suitable, so that we can be a benefit for others the benefit for ourselves and benefit for others. And so it takes some care than what we take in. And it also involves taking some responsibility for what conditions are mined. And that was kind of the topic today was I wanted to

His idea of taking responsibility for what conditions our mind our hearts is a big part of Buddhism. And it's built on the foundation of insight that the Buddha had the insight that our experience especially our inner experience, is dependently arisen or dependently co arisen that our, our psychological life or inner life or spiritual life, our fundamental happiness or suffering arises because of causes and conditions. And as those causes and conditions change, the our suffering or happiness can change as well. And that part of emphasis in Buddhism is that we can take some responsibility for those causes and conditions for ourselves. And we're not necessarily just the victims of fate victims of what happens around us. But we have huge say, in taking responsibility for the, the stream or the flow of conditions that impact or shape our happiness. And as the monk said last night, not only our happiness, but our ability to then to be of service to others to be bring benefit to others.

What I'd like to do is to go back to the time of the Buddha and contextualize this teaching that he came up with, in the times that he taught

the

and do it with a story of sorry, put up, sorry, Pluto was the Buddhist kind of senior most student and disciple sometimes said to be as a right hand monk and Sometimes called the general of the Dharma. And the second to the Buddha, he was probably the person who had most most influence in shaping what Buddhism has become down through the ages a lot of teachings are set or preserved by sorry, Buddha. And the story goes that, sorry, put ahead, a best friend. They were born in the same town grew up together. And at some point, they went to a festival, multi day festival, and they participated the first day or so with the festival. And then the second day, they took a break from the festival and went kind of across little Dale or Valley, I suppose. And we're kind of from a distance watching the festival happening. And it's very interesting sometimes to be a little bit removed from something that we were kind of in meshed in. If you ever had been on a gun out in a balcony and closed the glass doors when the parties called running inside are the arguments going on inside, you can see what's going on, but

you don't quite feel like you're, you're entangled with it. So there's 100 different perspectives that can happen. So they were across the valley looking at the festival, and they both had their understanding that in 100 years, none of this would exist. All the partying and celebrating and all these activities were, are were ephemeral. They were there temporarily. And perhaps, to put all your invest all your interest, all the motivation, the activity of your life, on some things that ephemeral beyond 100 years, they sought as being maybe not such wasn't really worthwhile wasn't really a worthwhile pursuit. So for these two gentlemen, it was it was an insight that changed the direction of what they were interested in doing with her life. And I think most people, not many people will find at some point in their life, there's a turning point. Where what interests a person? What motivates them? What seems really important? No longer is that case. And people then turn towards something else. What else is what what's really meaningful in his life and bars, what's really is deeply important to do, maybe for myself, or maybe for the world around me. And so then became interested in something else besides partying. It's kind of besides going to a festival or I don't know what else they did. And so they went around to visit some spiritual teachers of your time and they became a disciple of a particular teacher. And at some point, a Buddhist monk came to town, and they'd never seen one. And so one of sariputta went to the Buddhist monk and said, you know, who are you and where are you? What's your game? And what's the teach? What is your teacher teach? And the monk said, I'm a new monk. I'm not really qualified. To say what the Buddha teaches. And sorry, Buddha said, Well, you know, I'm kind of smart. And why don't you just give me a little kind of hint or little summary of what the Buddha teach? And maybe I'll kind of get a sense of it from that. And so the monk said this, he said, of those things that arise from a cause. The Buddha teaches the cause. And the cessation of that cause that's it.

That was the hint.

And with that hint, sorry, put those Dharma I opened is a some kind of deep insights, deep understanding. From that hint. He went back to his friend Magliano, because they'd admit they made a pet After the festival, the minute Pack saying, if one of us discovers the truth First, we'll come and tell the other. So he went to the piano, his friend, and he said, there's this guy's teacher who teaches that whatever has a cause, he teaches what the cause is an association and that costs and his I opened up. So what why? Why would their eyes the Dharma eye, their eye wisdom open from this little hint of a statement. And for that, I think we have to look at the religious world of the time of the Buddha, these smart takings, these two smart people who are deeply embedded in embedded are engaged in the reflection of what it means to be involved in the spiritual life, what it means to be a human being that exists in India at that time. And I like to think that that maybe the centuries before Buddha was one of these, some point there was a time when he For the first time started to become self reflective. When we were when we were back when we were monkeys, there wasn't that much self reflection. At some point in the process of evolution at some point, humans got increasingly self reflective. And at some point that self reflection brought people to start realizing that, that I'm aware of myself, I'm aware I've thoughts aware of history, I have aware that I have choices I can make. And this ability to be self aware, to the degree to which humans are is very unique to our human life. And so many people, many spiritual traditions point back to this capacity for self reflection as being extremely important for the path for the teachings. So as people started looking back, they realized that they became very concerned about what is it that makes us happy? What brings welfare What brings us the best conditions for our life? And in this in this, so then there was a range of explorations and answers that were given to this question. One of the most ancient Indian answers to that question that we're aware of, is the idea that our happiness and our welfare is dependent upon the gods. So we, we pray to the gods make sacrifices to the gods, please the gods, if they're pleased with us, they'll provide us with boons, they'll do something good for us, the crops will grow nicely or whatever. And so, sacrifice was a big part of this ancient Indian tradition. There's a place the gods not many of us sacrifice Gods anymore. sacrifice to

the gods. We sacrifice the gods. But But many of us I think, still Look, not to God's for happiness, but sometimes we'll look externally for happiness, we'll look to sometimes people look to the government's up to the government, people get very angry or upset because the government is not doing what they're supposed to do. Or they look towards family members, or your friends, or to employers, or to society or to whatever, it's something else out there is the cause of my unhappiness and is responsible for making me happy. And if only the people in the world would participate, cooperate better, then things will go well for me. And I would suggest that that kind of approach is like trying to hope that the gods will take care of us. So then there was a movement of people who started becoming more even more self reflective and wanting to say, you know, maybe there's some is there some personal responsibility, not just the gods but other avenues or channels. For causality for cause and effect, and, and a number of different ideas arose. One idea was that, no,

whatever happens to us, is pre determined. And there's nothing we can do about it except let it play out. So if we're suffering, we're suffering because it was predetermined back in the beginning of the Big Bang, or whatever. And we just have to, you know, hang out there with a suffering until that particular spraying on wines. And then hopefully, there isn't another suffering spring that that's done wine. You know, who knows why things. So that was one one theory that existed. Another theory was that the things weren't are not pre determined, but that they are random. And so again, you can I can't have any impact on your life which seems to happening randomly and you're just kind of the victim of this random throw the dice. Another theory is that things were predetermined to some degree, or maybe not predetermined, but set in motion the past maybe by your past karma. But then karma, once a karma once you once you set the momentum going by how you act, then that that action has to play itself out. So if I you know, if I do something really terrible, that sets in motion assert that said motion certain caused chain of cause and effect that has to play itself out. So, if I steal, then perhaps maybe I'll have to go to jail if they get caught or maybe I have to kind of live with a bad conscience for the next 30 years or something or perhaps I get reborn as a Word

blue J. and Blue Jays are good.

And trying to steal people's lunches.

So,

so it has just play itself out. And there's nothing you can do about it except not add any more karma to it. And so there was one there's one theory so people had that idea, try to do as little as possible activity literally, and so they would, they would go around, if they walked around, they would have brooms, they would sweep the road in front of them. So they wouldn't step in any insects, because that was creating bad karma. And it would add to it rather than let it kind of dissipate. And they would screen save their water so there wouldn't be the insects in the water when they drank and eventually they would be the highest people. highest, took us to the enth degree we actually starve themselves to death. Because the eat would be to somehow be involved in creating karma. And so a variety of So, you know, so the question here is, what is it that brings suffering? What is it that brings happiness? What is it that's beneficial for us and for the world and whose responsibility lie. So when sorry pusa heard, the Buddha teaches the cause of things and the cessation of that cause. What how he interpreted was that in this bigger context is that Oh, things are not predetermined. Things are not set, it's they are things are not kind of, you know, stuck in the way you are, but things arise because of particular causes. And those particular causes have an end and in If a card has an end, then the condition that caused brings about will also have an end is kind of the way it was taken. So, so, this is called the law of dependent co arising. And this is one of the key teachings of the Buddha that would that things arise independence

and other things. And when those things that arise in dependence on stop, then, so, if x arises in dependence on y, when y disappears, x disappears as well. So, these are things that arise in a conditioned way. When the cause and conditions dissipate. The result dissipates as well. This is so important that the Buddha said 1.2 See the Dharma is to see dependent co arising to see dependent co arising is to see the Dharma. So to see if you really want to see what the Dharma is, you have to see this principle see how it works. In another place, he said, Yeah, so I'll leave it at that. So dependent co arising. So, in a place where the teaching of dependent co arising is most highlighted, most emphasized is around the Four Noble Truths. The Four Noble Truths is is a is a is a is a is a application of this teaching of dependent co arising. So there's something the suffering and suffering has a cause or a condition out of which it arises. It arises together with a condition and what is that condition that suffering arises with? It arises out of the condition of grasping without grasping without some kind of strong desire, there would not be suffering doesn't say that desire causes, viscerally suffering, but without the strong desire, thirsting or grasping, there would be no suffering. With the cessation of that grasping, there's a cessation of that suffering. So what it means if you look at our suffering, our suffering is doesn't cause a not caused by the gods. Whether it's the ones in heaven are the ones that we assign divinity to the government or anybody or anybody else, our mother and, but rather there's something it's not caused, it's not pre determined. It's not something we're stuck in. It hasn't always been that way. It arises out of causes and conditions. Until we can start seeing this cause and conditions, and then we can gain this is the important thing. It's possible to gain a degree of mastery over those causes and conditions.

That we can become a player an agent to effect the nature of those causes and conditions. And a big part of what Buddhist training is, is beginning to get some kind of mastery over these causes and conditions. So that the responsibility is with us, not anywhere else. And we can make a difference, we can make a big difference. So the suffering so it's little, it's a quite a challenge to hear this teachings because some people's suffering and happiness, you know, when we try to understand it often in the context of a very busy active mind or life and it's hard to see the cause of conditions when Everything's spinning really fast. But if we, so part of what Buddhist training is to get mastery over this is to slow down enough so that we can see clearly the nature of this cause and the conditions as they arise and pass. So we can see see clearly enough. And this is not an unusual thing for humans to do to slow down so we can see more clearly. If a friend comes to you, he was troubled and wants your counsel once you're, you know, to talk with you. You don't continue cleaning your house furiously, you know, you know, and then kind of you know, and answer the phone and listen to them at the same time. you slow down and stop and listen. There's certain times when we can do a lot of different things are the times when if you really want to give your friend due attention, you really want to slow down and really be present, and give them a lot of time and presence. So something like meditation practice is doing the same thing for ourselves is slowing down in a deep way. So that we can really pay careful attention and really see what's here. And the way that we can if we keep being busy and running around. And I've seen in my own mind, I've kind of wondered, why am I suffering? Why am I unhappy? Why am I going on and on keep being really busy doing different things and kind of figure it all out. And I keep it, I'm perplexed by it. And then I sit down to meditate, and I calm down. Oh, that's what's going on. Now I see what it is I'm attached to what I'm grasping at what I'm preoccupied with. And then when I couldn't when I was so busy. So, part of the process then, of, of understanding dependent co arising requires something of us, requires us to slow down enough or become short, strong enough with our attention to see and one of the things we start seeing is how things arise. And how things pass, how things arise not because they and how they arise because of causes and conditions. And the most important thing that we want to see as Buddhists is the arising of suffering, of stress, psychological discomfort, to really take this in in some deep, deep way, just like you would for your friend who is disturbed, and you really want to be present for your friend in a deep way. And then, and then you start seeing what is, as you

start, start slowing down and seeing, can we start seeing the momentum, the movements of the mind activities of the mind, and to see what kind of activity of the mind is useful and what is not useful. In order learning take responsibility for our inner life. taking personal responsibility is one of the key qualities of Buddhism, I would say And it belongs, it's a lot of things in life, we have to take responsibility for ourselves, can't expect someone else to do it. You know, if you need to pee, you don't have someone else up for you. It's you know, it's pretty basic, but you got to do it for yourself. If you want to exercise, you know, you don't pay someone to exercise. You know, it's a lot of work to exercise. I'm not going to bother. But you know, it's a good idea here. So I'm going to pay for someone to exercise, you know, does it work, right? Yeah, you got to do for yourself. And education, you have to educate yourself. So Dharma practice belongs to that realm, where we have to kind of something requires something of us. And without understanding that requires something of us, I think there would be no Dharma practice at all. It's not just wishful thinking. It's not just being inspired. It's really turning the mirror and really looking deeply. And then, so but so then looking deeply at all this stuff. What goes on started to see what goes on. And then we started seeing how we relate to what's happening. So

our relationship to our experiences a big part of the conditions that bring about a cause of suffering or happiness. So if I relate to my experience with generosity, that creates a different inner life than if I relate to my experience with greed. If I relate to my experience or my world or to people with kindness that creates a different inner landscape, then I find relate with hostility. If I relate with confusion, that creates a different inner landscape than if I relate with clarity or understanding. So as the as as we start learning to pay attention more carefully to the internet, Escape what goes on? We can train ourselves to notice how am I relating to this right now? So if you notice we're relating with greed. What do you do about that? You only you can decide what you do about that. You can decide, well, no, thank you. I think I'll let go that movement of greed, I let go of that hostility, or at least I'll set myself on a course of practice, that can lead to me letting go of it. Or you can decide, you know, it's not so useful to be greedy. But it is useful to be generous. I'll just wait until I'm struck by lightning, or struck by the inspiration to be generous. I just wait. That's one approach in other approaches. Why wait? You know, I can be generous. Please. Let me try to move make move exercise have muscle As we begin to getting a sense that we can take have some mastery some choice over how we relate. We can start relating in wiser and wiser ways. And we can start to relate relating in ways that are not doesn't cut, don't cause doesn't cause stress or relating to ways where we don't cling or hold or resist as much to our experience. And the tenant or the axiom of Buddhism, is that the suffering that we're interested in addressing is that suffering that arises out of how we relate. The condition, the cause, for the suffering we're interested in, is that it is this, we're interested in the cause and the cessation of the suffering that arises from the cars make some sense so so we look at what is that cause what is the way we're relating? Some of the most difficult suffering we have in our life takes a lot of patience and a lot of care, a lot of compassion, a lot of time and dedication, to develop the kind of still inner stillness and inner compassion and kindness that can help us to see what it is our clinging to self, to self identity, or clinging to comfort or clinging to our opinions. It takes a lot of dedication to be able to come to a place where we see Oh, it's not to my best interests anymore, to hold on to a self image to cling to that it's not in my self image, to hold on to anything at all. So the part of the process of practicing Buddhism is a graph usually Consider a gradual process of slowly learning to understand what goes on to see clearly. And then learns, take some responsibility for this, and learn to let go of those things that we see are unbeneficial for us, and pick up those things that are beneficial. So we started letting go that which is not beneficial. And what's what's beautiful about that statement, that idea is that we're not asked in Buddhism, to let go of anything, until we see for ourselves that this is not useful. It also means that it's a gradual process means that we're allowing we're weaning ourselves of clinging. Some people have the idea that the Big Bang approach to Buddhism.

You know, if I just kind of it must be this key, this moment of insight, this moment of awakening is mine, and then I'll be happy Happily Ever After just take care of everything, and magical thinking that just there's this magical experience that just, and then on, it all be taken care of. Sometimes enlightenment is the Buddhist God, you know, just pray to enlightenment enough. It'll do it for me. But I think generally in Buddhism, the idea is that it's a slow process. And slowly, we begin to see the relationship we have, we see the relationships we have that aren't useful, the way to live. And we begin having some mastery or some choice over these causes and conditions that we live in where we live in a sea of causes and conditions, is not random. And it's not out of our control, we begin helping to shape those causes and conditions to some degree. And as we shape those causes and conditions, we check them for so that it improves our life improves our heart, our mind we improve it so we can see more clearly had to calm and stillness enough to see. And when the mind gets calm and still enough, and we're no longer caught up in our usual attachments and concerns, not caught up in self identity, then it's possible to find the core clinging

which,

out of which so much of our character, personality, experience of life life is born or is shaped by. And then an amazing thing happens where we see that let go. And it's remarkable to have an experience where we see clearly that it's to our own best interest, not to cling to anything whatsoever. Do you really see that Wow, it's to my own best interest and only my own best interest. It's probably the best interest of my friends to wider world not to cling. And rather than clinging, being letting go of clinging, being something frightening, and become something that is very inviting, very meaningful. And in fact, to have this experience of letting go of clinging so thoroughly, that it becomes somehow a deep impression on the mind. It's not really possible to go back to investing our happiness in the world of clinging again. Like, that's, you know, you might there might be a tendency there, but when we think about realized, you know, I'm like, are they gonna invest in clinging anymore? The return is not so good.

So, the teachings and dependent co arising here Consider the most profound teaching in Buddhism. Because it's it's teaching, that things that things arise from a cause. With association that cause those things pass away. And that's applied to suffering. Suffering has a cause. When the when when the conditions for that cause, fall away, then the suffering goes away. To complete kind of to restate is this in a way for the Four Noble Truths, suffering as a cause or condition, which is in grasping

and happiness as a condition and that is following a path of practice, they fall back. Usually the third noble truth is called the cessation of suffering. But the flip side of that is happiness. So happiness and it's cause suffering and it's caused happiness and its condition is what the Buddha taught. So, we have about five minutes. If anyone would like to ask any questions for clarification or for protests. You're welcome to do that. Yes, Pat.

You use the phrase of, if you relate to the world through ill will or hatred. And there's a way to do the opposite of that.

And the opposite of confusion was clear seeing at that point, I lost it because I don't understand. I understand if you're feeling ill will then you generate compassion. But if you're feeling confusion, I don't understand how you can just yeah, just generate, understand.

Yeah, you you do touched on one of the Achilles Heels of my talk. And

so it is possible

I guess the Millionaire's parently gave a talk on delusion prank last week. So you missed it. And it is possible to know you're diluted. But part of the problem with delusion is often we don't know it. And, and so then it's hard to kind of call it clarity. But sometimes there is foolishness, and there is wisdom and sometimes it's possible to get a sense you know that motivation of mine is pretty foolish. It's confused, it's diluted. You know if i think that my happiness is going to come from winning the California Lottery Or my happiness is going to come from getting a peace of mind to my neighbor. You know, there can be some enough for self reflection to realize, you know, I think that's maybe kind of, I've heard that there are other teachings, the wisdom teachings say differently. Maybe I should question you know, the wisdom of, you know, maybe I'm diluted or maybe need to question more deeply. Why? You know what my motivation is?

Yes, please,

when considering the

work on letting go of clinging to avoid suffering.

I struggled with taking that to the next or going taking it too far perhaps, and getting to the point of not caring and not having an investment in an outcome. And I keep bouncing between those two because it seems like vectoring in itself about an outcome and using that to engender a focus becomes a bad thing as it as well as because it's an investment in or a clingy investment, just interested in your comment on that.

It's possible to have desire for things without clinging to the desire, it's been possible to care for things without clinging to the outcome. So to not care can often be a form of aversion. So it's not necessarily doing nothing, not having no desire at all. But often not caring about something is a distancing activity of the mind that has a version in it. So we have to be very careful that in letting go of clinging, we're also not taking up our version because then you're in danger. You know, so big in difference for example, sometimes as a version as part of But my my belief, my expectation, my experience is that as we let go of clinging or attachments, that it gives a pure expression, to our, to our compassion, our pure desire to be helpful be of service and it makes us more capable of caring rather than less. And if the if you letting go of clinging makes you a less caring person, look more carefully at it. Now, there might be there might be some conventional ways in which you might care less. The monkeys monkey was here yet last night. He couldn't care less what we thought of him. And, you know, it was you know, it was quite, you know, he was most the normal social ways in which people kind of connect to each other and are nice to each other. And you know, feats show that they care for each other. He wasn't interested one bit in that. But I think he cared a lot, otherwise he wouldn't have been here. And you wouldn't have talked as much as he did. He was really trying to make it to be helpful and connect. But he wasn't playing a lot of the usual social games that we kind of often do. So in an inadequate way what I'm trying to say is that what caring looks like might change as we cling less and there has to be some kind of maybe some readjustment and it might look for a while that to some of your friends that you're not caring so much, because they're used to you always relating a certain way. But they have to learn that you're carrying a different way now, maybe not as demonstrative Lee or maybe not like some people show their care by worrying you know, instance you know, some people some families You know, that's how you show you love people you worry enough. You know, he's all that he cares about me. Because he's worrying. And but at some point you stop worrying. And then there's what's going on you don't care. I don't know to care anymore. Does this answer your question adequately? Or you would ask

again, some more questions? Well, there's a bad way of creating more questions and goodwill. A good way. What do you want to ask? You want to ask more you have content for now?

Not ready for quite yet.

Okay. So one more, Norman, that last one.

You just added more confusion to my dilution man.

As you talked about changes, isn't there a certain degree of delusion from one to from where you go from one aspect or one idea that you think you're understanding to a change as you're beginning to either not care or become more impersonal about it, as you just stated that the monk last sight, good care less about what we thought about him. Isn't that a sort of dilution meant disillusionment? Is he just diluted, diluted?

I don't know if that was to the saralee. I don't know him that well. So I can't really speak for him and what what motivated him is understanding but how he was mean, it was kind of unusual, certainly. But I think there's often changes that go about, that we have that don't involve delusion, but rather maybe a greater understanding. You know, we don't understand something well, it's easy to get caught up in it. And we understand better what's going on. We're not so caught. And so that example I give often enough is a difference between first time parents and grandparents. First time, they both care a lot about the child. But the first time parents every little scrape and whimper is like, you know, a major Cause of worry, the grandparents have seen it all before, and they care, but their caring is not so worrisome are so caught up in every little detail. So there's a change that happens over time. And I don't think that change necessarily involves the illusion. If I missed it, you might want to ask again, because maybe I didn't understand you.

That's my problem. I'm still confused about the illusion and when is it? When is it not the illusion that you may have a certain understanding about what you feel that is a good change or bad change? But where is the line where you are not the dilution? Your it's not dilution for you?

Yeah. So

the

one of the definitions of wisdom in Buddhism is to know when it's beneficial and Know what is not beneficial. And so that's something hopefully we can see clearly. So when we're diluted, we're doing things that aren't have understandings and doing activities, which are causing harm. And, and, and hopefully we can see clearly some point wisdom sees clearly Oh, this is harmful. This is causing affliction, and this is beneficial. This is not causing harm. And that can be seen, that's like and if we try to understand if the opposite of delusion is to some kind of grand philosophical truth about the nature of reality, that's maybe too hard to come to. The Buddhist idea of wisdom I would like to suggest maybe is kind of humble. It's not to grand grand understanding of philosophy or grand understanding of the nature of self or grand understanding of the nature of the universe. But rather is conditioned on this very simple ability to notice when we're suffering or not. And then to be able to see, oh, this here is causing me to suffer. This is causing me not to suffer. And so that's, that's where the wisdom and delusion is that how those are separated in Buddhism.

That makes sense.

Yes.

At this point anyway, a little later, I'd

be happy to, you know, to talk more about you later some point about it. Thank you. So, thank you all. And if you see dependent arising, you see the Dharma, you see the Dharma, you see dependent arising. And so as you those of you who stay for the potluck, I hope that you enjoy the food for your body and the company Many of your fellow community here becomes a wonderful Dharma food for your mind. Thank you