

# 2012-07-30 The Buddhas Story

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## SPEAKERS

Gil Fronsdal

Good. Good evening, everyone. And can you hear okay? Maybe a little bit a little bit louder. We do it. Let's see, how is it? How's it now Is that better? work better? Good. So Good evening again.

I think that it's relatively normal and maybe natural or something that when people encounter and new religion, like if you haven't grown up with Buddhism, get interested in Buddhism does into religion. That one of the common directions people take to understand religions not their own is to go look at the tenants of the religion, the beliefs of the religions, the philosophy, something and there's nothing wrong with that approach. But it's probable that beliefs and philosophies and tenants and creeds are not that important for most religious people. Or say differently that what's important for most religious people is the stories of their religion. And the stories that they're told about their religion, the stories they live. And often people, many people who live in a religious tradition are sharing particular stories which are inspiring, meaningful of evocative. Those stories might speak to the teachings of the religion. They might express them or somehow, but there's more in a story than teachings. There's often a relationship people have with the story that's different than teachings people are somehow they identify. Sometimes with a story, they can sometimes use a story to mirror or reflect or think more deeply about their own life and their life story. They identify with the characters in the story. And, and you know, because there's a story, sometimes there's emotions to it, there's a plot that's exciting or meaningful or, and so in studying religions in every degree in religious studies, one of the interesting approaches to understand religion is not their beliefs, but rather the stories people tell. And so what are the stories that Buddhists tell? And what are the important stories? So I'll tell you those in a few moments, a couple of them. But before I do that, I'd like to also suggest that human beings people are To a great extent storytellers. And we tell our own story. And we have a story about our life, a story about the life, people were involved in, or our society or our community, or our world. And we tell these stories. And some of those stories are accurate enough, some of them we've learned later, maybe we weren't so accurate. Or the stories are, everytime you tell, anytime you tell a story. The story has, I think bias, leaves out some things includes other things or emphasize something over something else. Today, I was telling a friend, some stories about my own life. And it was a series of things that happened to me over my life that I was tying together. And I don't I can't recall ever taking these particular events and tying them together. They were common elements to them to make some sense, but it never occurred to me to kind of tell my story from that way. So I told a new story about myself. Sorry, I you know, I'm 58 years old. Alright, so some of this had to do when I was quite young What am I you know what, what meaning is a story I haven't told myself before it happened to me these things, you know, so it's not like I made up a story, but it is this you know, is this a relevant story for me or why how is it relevant? Is it interesting to see in my life a new perspective from this particular angle? And, and in do I emphasize some things more than other why to emphasize those parts of the story in other parts of the stories. And then recently, I went back the summer I went back to a city that I grew up in for five years as a

child, I hadn't been back in almost 40 years. And I was fascinated to be there. And this town city I was, I thought I had the run of the town. I thought I knew the town really well. And, and, you know, in fact, I didn't know parts of the town really well. Like back of my hand, but I was surprised that just a few blocks away from the center of town, I didn't know the town, I went in a very small section of town. And so I told him the whole story about my life around the built up around this town where I lived. And I did. And I thought, you know, his story involves knowing the town. Turns out, I only knew, I don't know what a 10th of the town, this little sliver through downtown, and the outskirts going to where we lived. So it's a story, right? And then, you know, and then you have stories which don't have, maybe even don't have dramatic plots to them. But stories like you know, I'm not enough. I'm not good enough. I'm great. And people don't recognize how great I am. I've had this, this terrible thing happened to me. And now I'm stuck this way forever.

And there's all these stories, ideas, concepts we have about ourselves, that we tell ourselves over and over again or Politicians tell us stories. And they tell the same story over and over again with a certain kind of emphasis. And so we live in a story and you laugh. But you know, it's almost subliminal and ways in which a collective society tells stories. And we incorporate them stories of inside and outside. And it's really dramatic in times of war, where we tell, you know, people will probably every nation's in war will tell stories sometimes about the other people, the enemy, so called enemy that's quite demonizing of them. And then later, they meet, they're in different circumstance, and they can become friends. So we tell stories, we're storytelling. And so it's very important to both take responsibility, understand the nature of our stories and how we tell stories. But I think it's also rich and important part of life, to participate in the stories to live in the stories to tell ourselves some of these stories, but nothing gets stuck in them, but in ways that the stories can help free us can benefit us can improve us as people as a society. And so what are their stories? So Buddhism has its stories that are meant to free us because liberation and freedom is really important for Buddhism. They're meant to point to some of the truths that Buddhism things are very important for our lives, and points to the possibility of human development and growth improvement. So some of the beautiful qualities of the human heart can come to the forefront. compassion, for example, is one of them. So their stories about compassion, which are quite common. So the classic story in Buddhism is a story of the Buddha's life. And that's one of the stories that Buddhists tell over and over again, and in every telling of a story. It's a new story, even though you heard this before. And so I said, you know that religious people, you know, they stories are really important for people and religions. They tell themselves stories or they're part of stories. Even if they're consciously thinking, that's what I'm doing, I'm aligning myself with a story. They're still involved stories. But perhaps it's a little bit more subtle. Maybe what's important is not story. But storytelling. And so to be participating in a religion is to participate in a tradition of storytelling, whether it's the Dharma teacher or the minister who's sermonizing and giving a telling a story, or whether it's you yourself repeating a story, both to your, to your friends, perhaps but also to yourself, you go home from hearing a story or reading a story. And then you kind of starts kind of working you a little bit and you review it, you reflect on it, you think about it, and you use it as a kind of reference point for your life. In fact, it's possible that, you know, for men, again, for many religious people, what makes them religious, is not necessarily they believe in something for what makes them religious. They, they keep referring back to certain stories as a reference point for their lives.

So, you know, so the little so think, you know, over over again. And so to just kind of read a story, so I know that story that makes sense and then not think about it anymore. Maybe that's maybe that's kind of limiting your engagement with a religious tradition. But to hear a story engaged, reflect and think about it is part of what it means to be religious. So I have this chaplaincy training program, right? I'm involved in teaching, some of you have been in it. And one of the aspects of this training program training people to be involved in offering spiritual care to others, is every month we give them a Buddhist story. And, and most people who do the program have never been trained or learned how to

consciously intentionally live with a story for a month. Read read it many times. Maybe once a day. We read it, reflect on it grappled with it. Imagine your characters in the story. Imagine how you would respond if you were different characters in the story. Can you see yourself in the story? In what way has your life even though story might be idealized? It's very dramatically different than your story, your life? or the other? Can you find ways in which a story has played out in your life? Have you been some of the characters in the life in the story? And it's very fascinating over the course of the year of teaching the chaplains training program to watch how the students inner life seems to deepen as they grapple with these stories and live with their stories and go with them. So this his way of saying that perhaps is not the story of a religion that's important, but the storytelling that we tell ourselves and we're part of this making some sense, kind of a different kind of approach, right? So we're usually do here. So now I want to tell you the stories. And so this is a storytelling it's a storytelling a particular way. July 2012. Is it a traditional Buddhist story? Just because I'm telling it, it can you go back to some of the Buddhist scriptures and say, well, that's not what the story says. This is the true story back there. They're all stories. Someone made up a story someone was telling a story. Some stories are more true and more connected to reality and others Some are more myths and others. I suspect that if a high percentage of the stories around the Buddha or could be called myths, so because they miss them, we don't leave those stories. The only one stories that really what happened true stories, you know, so how do we live? What do we how do we find ourselves in it? So the value of the stories I'm going to tell today are not found in the stories themselves, but are found if you pick them up, to grapple with them to reflect on them to tell yourself these stories. Find yourself in The story in some way, that's where the value is not just the telling of it, not to be inspired by it, that's valuable little bit, or not to be underwhelmed by it or that that's a terrible story that you can you're welcome to that as well. But in both situations of being inspired and being turned off by the story, you lose an opportunity. And the opportunity is for you to enter into deeper into what's going on for you. Why Why did you respond, respond and react to a story this way? Why did it touch him? You know, positive, negative, what's going on for you to understand to grab liquid deeper and perhaps if there are other dimensions to the story that I'm ignoring when I get inspired, or the other dimensions that I'm that I'm ignoring? When I turned off by the story? It's fascinating this chaplaincy training training program. Some people in the beginning of the promo especially right, I don't like this story and basically They say, it's not very, not very transformative for anybody, just to say I don't like it. And they have to be trained to hold their hand and say, you know, you have to, you know, what you need to do is kind of explore why you don't like it and what is it that what is it about the story you don't like and can you look around your preferences and look around your list, dislike and find something else that's going on there. And then if they really have trouble, then I start pointing things out to them. And their eyes go wide and they say, Wow, I didn't know there was so much in the story.

So stories, so it's the responsibility of you if you want to even take a story really far. Or you can go a really a short distance by just saying forget that story. So the story of the Buddha. So one story is that the Buddha lived a life that was very closely connected to nature. He was born under a tree. a pivotal turning point in his life as a young child was sitting under a tree when he was six years old. He spent long periods of time living in the wilderness, and then he was enlightened sitting under a tree. As a teacher, he spent a long time in nature. That's your world of India walking. And when he died, he died. He laid himself down underneath two trees, and died there peacefully under the trees. And for Buddhists, this idea that the Buddha was connected to nature and trees is important. Part of the story of the Buddha living this way being close to nature and his story of life of simplicity. People get turned off if you tell the story, it's the lack of renunciation. But you can say it was Life of simplicity and something something very, you know, I just spent a few days, camping with my kids. It's really beautiful to be away from everything in society and TV and computers and all this stuff. And just to spend enough days to kind of let all the drop away and live in the simplicity of nature. And what is it about the story of living in nature being connected to nature being you know, that is a meaningful story. For me, it's a story which

I'm inspired by meaningful for me personally, I like hearing the story of the Buddha being close to nature, because it speaks to me of a simplicity of being I don't need a lot of stuff. I don't need homes and cars, I don't really need these things, to be happy. I can be happy very simply. I don't need a lot of stuff. The Buddha didn't know this when he was a young man. And the story is that his father kept him entertained by all the kind of music and courtesans, and dancers and sports and all kinds of things. And he also kept him somewhat secluded from the world around him and supposedly from nature around him the wider nature of the wilderness of nature, by keeping him fairly sequestered in the three palaces that his king the father had. So here's a life that was not connected to nature. So you can feel sorry for him or save big deal. But you don't have to go very far from IMC, into our community in this area of the world and encounter people, maybe some of you, who spend almost no time in nature, not only spend very little time in nature, but are protected from it. Nature deficit syndrome is now a syndrome for children. don't spend enough time in nature.

But it's not just nature that people are protected from the first time that I saw a dead body, the dead person was I saw, I believe, I don't remember exactly what it was, but it was a child. I think it was a young girl, young teenage girl I believe, wrapped up in a blanket being carried by a group of people down to the riverbank in Kathmandu to be cremated. I was 11 years old. And until I time I'd never seen a dead person. I didn't see a dead person again until I was about 28 kind of remarkable. Some people can't imagine something like that. But I have no someone here at IMC, who didn't see a dead person until she was 45 there was only because she was in the chaplaincy program and she did a little bit of chaplaincy, did chaplaincy volunteer work at a local hospital, and then you end up in the emergency room. And then you end up with people who are dead. So how many people grow up in our society protected from nature. One of their stories Buddhism tell tells is that dying birth and death is part of nature. And if you're connected to nature, you're part of that you're connected to that. But there are plenty of people who live isolated not only from death and be protected, we don't have it public. Let's not walk down the streets carrying the corpses like they do in Kathmandu. But you know, we kind of keep it off to the side or, you know, How many people live in communities where they're not aware of the tremendous amount of poverty in this country? Or how many people in us keep their distance? Or the people who struggle in many ways. So the idea of living a life that somehow isolated from a lot of what goes on in the wider world, I think is a very common one. In many in our community in our extended community. children grew up that way. Living in the suburbs, or wherever living some people are protected from or isolated from Metro nature because they live in inner cities, that they're struggling and poor and there's gunfire and all kinds of things going on around them. But they also don't have a chance to go through nature. They have nature deficit, they don't see the wider world they don't. You know, I've heard of people in the inner city who someone took them to the ocean and ever seen the ocean someone took takes them to There's a Sequoia see the parks. And they just, you know, they just blown away. They can't imagine something like that they're familiar with alleys and sidewalks and drug deals and things. So what are we not connected to? So the Buddha wasn't connected as a young man. That's the story. So what do you do? As a young person, young, new 20s grew up living a life that's isolated and not connected, not connected to the wider world. Not he wasn't connected also to the wider society. You know, he didn't he didn't see, sickness, old age and death is what the myth says. So what do you do when you get a wind of how limited your life has been? What do you do when you realize that your life is, you know, doesn't really see all of life doesn't include everything doesn't include all of you. When you do, what do you do when you realize your life has Really faced and dealt with the existential issues that every life sooner or later Later has to deal with. I know a man who is 8182 I think I try occasionally to, because of his age and my role to bring up the idea that, you know, there might be some interesting usefulness to discuss, plan for your depth, prepare for that. And he refuses, he's not going to go there. And just seems to add to you know, you know, it seems like it's a natural thing and to have some discussion about it, or some preparations or something, and it seems kind of odd to just kind of shut down and resist that to me. Maybe that's the story I live in that he lives in a different story



worth that's it's better not to address it or look at it. But so the Buddha was such a person who was you know, in the head and dealt with these issues. The way the myth goes, a story goes That one day he occurred to him to leave the palace and go explore the world a little bit. And he went out with his charioteer and the chariot and to his surprise, they saw a person that he never kind of personally never seen before. So he hasn't shed a tear theater. Who's that? What's that? And he said to the charioteers Oh, that's an old person. Really. And that's an old person and then theories are said as the nature of everyone to get old. And so then they went further on and they saw another kind of person that goes on what's the Who's that What's that? That's a sick person. And really, Tear Tear says nature everyone sooner or later to get sick. And then they say a dead person. And the Buddha said he wasn't the Buddha yet he was Siddhartha. What is that? And he said, that's a dead person. And that got the Buddha's attention. Today I talked to one of these people that we trained in chaplaincy. We spent a year being doing the hospital residency that's required to become a professional chaplain and hospital. And he wasn't prepared. So Well, I think, or he was just surprised that this was his encounter with what Buddhism is called the heavenly messengers, sickness, old age and death. And he went through the list for me, what happened the deaths that he was present for the first three days that he was started work in hospital a year ago. And they were not like, you know, romantic, beautiful death. 99 year old person who just said I'm ready. let you know. I'm ready to go and thank you very much, you know, hold my hand. And that's not the deaths that he had that night because it's an emergency room. So it gets pretty dramatic. So for him it was day after day to heavenly messengers and he feels that he was transformed by this experience, and he's never going to be the same. It was his and a good way administer really showed him something hadn't faced something about life. So for his story, where he takes us Buddhist story of the heavenly messengers of the Buddha leaving the palace, which is yes, this is this was my experience of doing this. I left the protection in my life, and I encountered something very profound about human life. That is definitely part of it. But few people see few people spend that much time in a hospital emergency room seeing what really goes on there. So what is he so you can tell the story to yourself. You can ask the story, you know, have you seen what's called the heavenly messengers sickness, old age and death. What impact has this had on you? With meaning? How? What kind of impact would you like it to have on your life? Would you like just ignore it? You know, it's, you know, it's, you'd rather with surfing, your whatever your equivalent is in like, I don't have time for that, or would you like to is there some way of reflecting and thinking about these things in such such a way that is really good for you and for others is helpful, that's meaningful, that's motivating. The story that's the heavenly messengers ends with the Buddha then seeing a fourth, sometimes called the Sign In Buddhism, a fourth person to the Buddha said again, who's that? material here said, that's a renunciant. That's someone who's left their ordinary, everyday life in order to find some peace, inner peace, some resolution, some come to terms with these issues of sickness, old age and death. And the Buddha was really impressed. So this person he saw the renunciant, was really peaceful and calm. And that inspired him. So that's the fourth of the four was called the four heavenly messengers in Buddhism. And so then he left the palace. He left his wife and newborn child behind a story that horrifies many people in the West, how could of man leave his wife and newborn baby? Little bit, we are horrified because we see the story tell the stories, from the point of view of modern American Life. Where that means something specific for us. We don't know 2500 years ago in India, different culture, different time. We don't know what that was about. The relationship and family would mean to be a family what it's hard to know and understand what it has the same meaning as it has today leaving a family but also, maybe he had no choice leaving the protected isolate Did not real life that he was living. The way I tell the story of the Buddha leaving the palace was not a story of leaving a family leaving the world. But it's a story of entering the world. The Buddha was not in the world, protected in his palace. And at some point, it was untenable to keep living, not in the world, not part of the world. And it was a courageous act for him. It wasn't so much renunciation that he did was that also, but he entered the world. And how many of us don't enter the world how many of us hold back in some way protected? Afraid, attached to

what was important for us. So in some ways, our life maybe he's not as full as it could be. We haven't entered the world as deeply or entered something deeply.

And so here the Buddha that's a story of Buddha and then enter the world. And I think it's also a story of a young man, young person who has to leave home. I think that pretty much in our society in many societies we grew up in sooner or later the task is to leave home. And then what does it mean? What does it mean to leave home? And there are people who leave home but don't really leave. And not futile is not a few parents who are surprised how much their children don't leave? Even when they're living somewhere else? And what does it mean to leave home and to and to grow up and to mature and establish oneself and, and, and, you know, there's a certain degree of autonomy and independence. And how much does that how many people actually do that in a full complete way and find their autonomy, their independence, how many people really leave behind their security to deal and these days issues. So it's stories right or just telling stories. So then the Buddha went off and to explore these issues. And he, what he did was he went around and picked up books went into went to study what the wise people of his time were teaching. So that's a reasonable thing. But he went and found the wisest people he could find spiritual people. And he took on their practices and their approach. Their approaches, he tried a variety of different things. And some of them had to do with deep, deep, stilling of the mind into kind of trance like states. Some of that had to do with asceticism and self mortification. And it says that he went as far as you can go in these different ways, going into trance going into self mortification at some point He realized that the answers and the peace and the engagement the world that he was looking for the freedom he was looking for, cannot be found this way. And then he remembered a story. And the story was from his youth when he was six years old. And his was the springtime, and his community did a ritual celebration or a ritual of the first ritual plowing of the seat of the spring season. It was a festive event. And his father who was a king, something like that presided over this, but being six years old, he was kind of like Nazi in the middle of this celebration was an important part of it. So he sat he sat down under a rose apple tree at the edge of the fields. And he was forgotten there. They were off in the fields doing the ritual plowing and he remembered that when he sat there alone, left alone. peacefully, no one wanting anything or doing anything, that he sat there peacefully. And he became really peaceful. And a certain kind of joy rose up. And that memory of this childhood joy and peace became a reference point for him and how he then found his enlightenment, the freedom. And perhaps I think it's not uncommon, maybe not super common, but I'm not saying everyone's had has this, but for people to remember to have experiences when they were children, that are touchstones that are memories that that was a really good there are people who have bad memories as children that are touchstones. They'll also be positive things. For me. There are a number of ones that I had, that became touchstones became more important as I learned to meditate. In fact, one of the experiences I had, I didn't remember until I started meditating, recovered memory and then Kind of kind of because meditation kind of brought me into the same experience. And it was good for me because I had as a kid, it was good. And it was, I can't I can't take probably explain to you what this experience was. But I had a word for it as a kid. The phrase, the expression of this experience was the edge of the pillow. And it was experience I felt when I was going to sleep at night, and I put my head in the pillow. And the feeling of being really Complete Whole settled, like everything was right. And I didn't think about it much as a kid. I just had it. And then when I started meditating, it came back. Oh, yeah. I'm having that again. This is meaningless, you know.

Or when I grew up in this town, I was talking to you earlier, I went back to Italy. I used to take the bus to school, public bus, buy ticket now that and for a while, I noticed that so With that, in the old days, my old days, you know, I'm too old now. For me, but you know, this is 50 years ago now, right? I used to, they had to conduct had a conductor and advice driver on the public bus. And the bus drivers job was only to drive the bus and the conductor's job was to sell the tickets. And he sold one way tickets, round

trip tickets, children's tickets, senior citizen tickets, you know, all kinds of tickets. And he had different color tickets for the different things. And I lived at the end of the bus line almost. And we got to the end of the bus line, there were no one or more with people getting on the bus. He would sit in a particular place in the middle of the bus and bring out his ledger. And he would do very carefully record all the different kind of tickets he sold to keep records of it. And I discovered that if I sat in the seat right behind where he sat and watched him do his ledger very focused and careful. I would feel really good. That's all I knew I was a little kid right? I feel really Because watching it. And when I started meditating, I realized what was going on. I was getting concentrated. I was getting zeroing in and focusing in my world was disappearing. Just I was, somehow there was that thing. So these are simple stories. It's a lot of stories that people can have. But here the Buddha remembered something when he was a child, a child experience became the doorway to his enlightenment to this great spiritual tradition. You know, you can get a PhD in Buddhism, you can, you know, you can read books and tomes of books and Buddhist philosophy and, you know, all these great stuff. And that Buddha's doorway into this realm was a child's experience of well being. Is that interesting, and then next story. Maybe it's not so difficult. And so with his experience of joy and well being said that that's a joy and well being that's reliable, that's maybe useful. It's not dependent on Well, in sensuality and status, and all the things people search for in the world for well being and happiness, it doesn't depend on things in the world. It feels like a good it's healthy and clean. In ancient India, the idea of clean happiness or joy was a really important one because there was a big, big mistrust of sensuality and some of the spiritual traditions of India. And the idea that you could have joy and happiness, some people in the ascetic traditions kind of mistrusted. And so the idea that there could be this clean or pure kind of inner joy was very meaningful for him. And so then he sat down under the Bodhi tree, in order to re experience that kind of well being enjoy. And he started allowing himself to have that well being enjoy sitting under the Bodhi tree. That led him deeper into particular kind of meditation experience, where the experience was more and more subtle. Lime, and peaceful kind of happiness and joy and equanimity. And he found that when he got to the pinnacle of equanimity and peace, that this kind of this took him to, that it gave him an ability to see to understand his life in a way that he couldn't see it to understand it, when his mind was more busy and active. And he saw something very deep about the processing of the mind the heart and seeing how them how and what he saw, is also very simple. It's a story. And the story is called the story of the Four Noble Truths. This story is that the British love to tell this story, the story of how that if you cling, that clinging will bring you suffering. And if you let go of that clinging, that suffering will go away. That's a story, right? That's a story people have found really useful. How do you live in that story? You're living that story by finding out if that's true for you, and how it's true for you. So when he saw immediate mine that was really peaceful, and economists to see kind of in the deepest roots in the mind, the way that Buddhists tell the Buddhist stories, is they love the word roots, to metaphor, right? But there's these deep roots in the mind, meaning that you can't see them on the surface of the mind. You don't see it in the flowers in the plants of the mind.

But you have to go deeper into under the soil in the mind to see the roots. And that's why this deep meditation, the Buddha discovered, is so useful because it gets you down to the roots. And then he saw the simplicity of clinging and the release of clinging and then doing the end and doing that he became free. Free from clinging. from continuing this process of holding on and grasping, that is such a common part of human minds. So the story goes on. The next thing he did within a short time was he started teaching this to other people. This is story of a man who then had compassion for others. And then in his simple lifestyle of living walking around India, he went around for 45 years not living in, you know, enlightened retirement. Exactly, you know, just sit there and, you know, be enlightened and pick your nose and under the shade of the tree. But rather, he went off and wandered around. met people receive people taught people was engaged in the world. Remember, he left the palace in my story, doing In the world to be in the world, and then he stayed in the world that way. It's a beautiful story, I think the story of compassionate service and care of the world. And then, when he was at 81 years old

the way the story goes, was he was walking back to his home country. Why he was walking back to his home country. It's such an old age, probably frail. We don't know. The Buddhist texts don't say but he was walking home. Okay, touched by this, you know, it's kind of like this humanity going home one last time. He didn't make it. It's kind of nice. You know, there's a tendency in certain religions, all religions to idealize their founders and actually the further away you get from the founder. The more hagiography there is, the more Smith's are built. And more perfect the person is. If he was really perfect, maybe he would have made it home. If his life was perfect, everything would grow. But it didn't work out, even there. He didn't make it home. But he knew he was dying. He laid himself down on the ground. And he gave his last teachings to his to his, his monks, his students. And then he closed his eyes. And he went into meditation. And this childhood experience that he had and well being and peace that he had such a child. He brought that on again. And what he learned from that to go deeper into the mind, he then went deeper into it. And when he reached that place of greater equanimity and peace, stillness, that had been the doorway to enlightenment to his great insight. That's when he passed away peacefully That's the Buddhist story. For Buddhists, that's I think, you know, so what do you want to do with that story? Do you want to do anything with a story of the Buddha dying peacefully so nice stories, a meaningful story? I don't have to probably don't have to tell you that there are religions in the world, where how the founder of the religion died, is like a central part of the story. I mean, like that story is like, this. religion doesn't exist without that story, right? So it's possible to take the death of a founder and make it into a really important part of the religion. You know, it's so what about the death of the Buddha? Can that be a really important part of the religion for Buddhism, how he died? Maybe it's a myth. He died that way. But what is that? What kind of myth what kind of story what kind of lessons what kind of theology Can you grow and develop and live with, with the story of a of a teacher spiritual teacher who died peacefully under a tree? Is that meaningful? So how do we live with these stories? Are these stories meaningful? How can be repeated? How can we find ourselves in the stories? How can they reflect their own life? They don't have to you don't have to have these stories at all. But what people have found is that revisiting these stories, living with them, reflecting on them, talking them telling yourself these stories, finding yourself in these stories, finding the stories in your life is one of the ways to deepen a spiritual life or religious life.

Because story making is part of what is part of the path part of the Richmond part of the depth part of the speaks to the speaks a little bit more to the fullness of the human heart and the mind and what what goes on our processing. Then reading really abstract books about the 32 kinds of emptiness in Buddhism Or the hundred and eight kinds of consciousness. You know, you can do the interesting to do those things. But you can go through the lists, I think 127 kinds of consciousness. So we'll be here for a while. If I read through it, I'll list it all of them to you. But to tell the story, you know, it's so. So I offer that to you tonight, the importance of story and living and story and living with playing with story. And it's really important for religious people, I would say for Buddhists way of deepening and enriching your life. There's many stories in Buddhism that are very valuable. And one of the stories that we tell her Buddhist motel is not only when they say the stories are important, because they tell a lot of stories. But one of the functions of stories is to be able to take you beyond the stories. The stories that help you drop all the stories. So I'm sure there are stories that you carry with you that are not for your betterment. And it's really a wonderful, wonderful thing to have the stories that can help you put down all stories, even if just temporarily, and that's one of the, you know, that's one of the goals of Buddhist practices. At least they have the experience once in a life where your stories are completely put down every single last one of them and, and who are you when there's no stories to tell about yourself? So, I hope this was interesting and useful. And I guess it really depends on you know. Thank you.