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SPEAKERS

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So welcome to the we suck the suck, which is the holiest of the Holy Days of Buddhism, if we talk that way. And another way of talking is, of course, it's the holiest of Holy Days. It's now. And the idea is that here now is where you find your freedom. There's a teaching in Buddhism than here and now is where you find the pure land or where you find paradise or where you find and it has a lot to do with what they say. It depends. On your mind, now you see the world you live in more than what the world is like. And if your mind says if your mind is pure, you'll see the world is pure, your mind is defiled, you'll see the mind is default, the world is defiled. Now, you know, probably pretty quickly, some of you will come up with exceptions and protests, that so that's reasonable that you should have protests and statements like that. But it's also, if you protest too quickly, then you probably miss an opportunity that's available right now, too, appreciate this moment in some very profound way. I suspect that for most of you, some of the exceptions to that statement, are not really so present in this moment. Some of you may be it is but the value of a pure mind the value of a mind that's not caught up in hate, and greed and delusion is invaluable and helps us to see the world in a very different way than if we see the world through greed or through hate. And learning to see without greed and hate, I think is one of the great tasks of all humans. And we see and so frequently in our world these days, the consequences of hate and people living with that. So this is the holiest of Holy Days. Today to not live with hate, not live with greed or confusion, and not live with fear. It's a day for making yourself a safe person, so that the world doesn't have to be afraid of you. And the day is called the V sock because it's the celebration of the Buddha's birth, the Buddha's enlightenment and the Buddhist death. And I kind of love that this tradition puts it all together and One day. You know, it's, there's a kind of radical simplicity in this tradition of ours. You know, so if you get, you know, rather than doing it, you know, all kinds of days and it's kind of you know, just want once you know, once a year you get it over with and then you can go go get on with, you know, something that's more profound, something that's more profound name, which has to do with being simple. So in our tradition, simplicity is the great teacher. So fantastic teacher, and very demanding teacher, and in the extreme version of that demanding teacher is the experience of emptiness, or that their experience of having nothing that your mind depends on. So it is. So anyway, so today's a little more complicated here to celebrate the lack of complication and so we celebrate The Buddha on this day, and what will happen is in about 20 minutes or so we're going to have some of the children from the children's program are decorating the pagoda, in which the baby Buddha is going to be carried into the room here. So they'll carry it in here and then we'll do a little bit of chanting. The so the question is, you know, who is the Buddha? And one of the, I think most significant answers to that question that I've encountered was, the Buddha is, you know, when you see a statue of the Buddha and the image of the Buddha, it's really meant to be a reflection of you and the statue we have here. But all these know the two statues and the painting on the wall.

Boy, excuse me, we have absolutely no idea what the Buddha look like, whatsoever, except that looks like he was probably a man. But maybe not and is androcentric tradition probably kind of, you know, could have easily kind of worked it after a while and what if the Buddhist started off as a woman? And then somehow, because, you know, there's all these myths that built up over time and stories, and, and so maybe kind of like, you know, became more male over time. Who knows? We don't know, we know very little about the Buddha, and what he looked like or anything and mostly what people know are myths anyway. And statues like this are really some artists or some communities, some Buddhist traditions, ideal idealization of what, of something of some value of something that's very important. And what's important and what's a value is not the Buddha who lived 2500 years ago, but rather the Buddha Are you discovering yourself? Or are you discovering yourself? And that is something that resonates with what we call the Buddha. And what we see is that you and there's a long tradition that goes back, supposedly to a time of the Buddha, that you can only really understand what the Buddha is who he is, who she is, through your own practice. And so if you read books about the Buddha, read biographies of the Buddha, you don't really discover who the Buddha is. Because the Buddha with the Buddha is what it represents, is the inner transformation in ourselves. And so when we practice, the Dharma practice, meditation, ethics, goodness, compassion, all these wonderful things that make up the practice of Buddhism. They change us and, and that change is something that is discernible, we can feel And since we've experienced the benefits of it, and some of them are pretty simple and straightforward, we have less stress and you can feel the delight that the benefits of having less stress in your body and your mind and your heart. You can feel the path the fading away even just temporarily, have a mind that's caught up in in resentment or anger or hate, or a mind that's caught up in anxiety or fear or mind that's caught up in still living in the past swirling in the past and what happened and why did it happen, what should have happened or caught up in the future and worried about the future concerned with the future, or a mind that's caught up in greed for all kinds of things. And to be able to feel the you know, viscerally immediately in your own being. The difference between the mind that's caught in these things and then releasing of that the software Have that the relaxing of that. That's where you begin to discover the Buddha. And the more you practice, the more you experience this transformation, this change, it's letting go this softening this relaxing this, releasing this peace, this. You also feel the growth of such things like compassion and love and integrity and generosity and all these beautiful, beautiful things that kind of flower in us. And to feel that in yourself, not as thoughts not as ideas, not as concepts. Not to take Buddhism as a dogma, you know, what's the tenets of Buddhism that I have to kind of fit myself into these belief systems of Buddhism? I think there's this not what Buddhism is, is a set of beliefs. There are orientations and there are perspectives that come as we practice. And those perspectives can be presented in such a way that it sounds like beliefs, but it really is, you know, what's the perspective of the world that you have, when there is no greed? What's perspective perspective of yourself with the world you have, when you're not caught no longer caught up in conceit and caught up in self identity caught up in self preservation, caught up in self assertion or self protection, all these kinds of self that were kind of swirling around in when we're not caught in self, what perspective that we have. And so the teachings of Buddhism have a lot to do with someone, maybe the Buddha or others having a new perspective because of how they've been transformed.

And so the Buddha represents what people feel inside of themselves as they get transformed. And different people will see different things in the image statues idea ideal of the Buddha, because people transform in different ways People, different values, different backgrounds, different situations and stories of their lives means that different things at different points in their life are really valuable. Some people what first and foremost when they start practicing is they start noticing compassion and compassion and feeling compassion and touching into it is really. And so the Buddha then you see the compassion in the Buddha, some people feel relief, to sit down and meditate or sit down and just feel tremendous relief, sometimes because of some people feel because of what seems to be the honesty

of Buddhism, of really kind of naming the human condition in some direct way. So Wow, yes, finally, someone names not trying to pretty it over and feel relief. And so the Buddha has had profound relief. Some people feel they can like some, something they've been holding on to for maybe a lifetime like Go. And so the Buddha represents the capacity to fully let go. For some people and the Buddha here, if there's a little bit here in the, in the West, the Buddha has little bit the qualities of kind of Mr. Natural or, you know, this soft guy who just sits under a tree and it's very accepting and, you know, peaceful, non violent and, you know, it's kind of like, no, it's the garden variety, Buddha and that's where many times he lives right in our statues and people's gardens. And so, the Buddha represents that and we put him in the garden. But for some people, and this is often been time periodically in the history of Buddhism. The Buddha represents someone who's a warrior, someone who's very strong, tremendous strength, and, and a lot of confidence, a lot of courage. And some people as a practice transformation they go through because they discover that the requires of them there. Life requires having the heart requires of them. courage and strength and confidence, and maybe even a little bit of a warrior spirit sometimes. Because the alternative to having the warrior in you is to keep giving in to addictions, keep giving into some of the forces of the mind that for better or worse that our tradition calls defilements afflictions. And it takes a big deal. It takes a lot of courage, a lot of sometimes a warrior to say, I'm not going to do that anymore. And so the Buddha sometimes represents that for people. And so you see, they sit usually he sits up straight. Some people, the Buddha represents their dying experience of the confrontation, the meeting the concern we have with dying is a huge one for some people. And grappling with coming to terms with dying is important. And so we have here up here on the stage, the Buddha lined He's not taking a nap up here.

But rather, this is this is the statue that used to represent the Buddha as passing away. And so the Buddha passed the way the story goes. The Buddha was at 81 years old, and he was on walking cross northern India, perhaps trying to go home to his home country. And at some point he laid himself down under some trees. And was there long enough for a few days or at least three enough hours that people from villages came came in and visited him and his disciples were there and they, he gave vice finals teaching final teachings to them, and then when everything was settled, then he entered into he laid out on this side like this and his right side and, and then was preparing for his dying. He was apparently quite sick, apparently quite weak. He had a lot of paid memory there. of pain, pain medication back then, our image of the Buddha, you know, is that it's a guy who flows from a cloud and you know, just everything is joyful and happy some people do right. And but he was like, What was it like to be an 80 year old guy in India 2500 years ago with, with medicine they had done in, you know, a lifetime of. So anyway, we know he had a bad back we know he talks about he talked about his he was old that he was just like an old cart that was held together by straps all tied up together. And he said, if it unless he meditates, he's actually in a lot of pain. So it's, you know, it's not the usual image of the Buddha. People like to have a Buddha image of the Buddha when he was about 40, or 35, or something young, or young, but, but he was he died old, but he laid himself down peacefully under these two trees, and consciously prepared for his dying by going into a deep meditation. kind of went through some of the deeper realms of meditation, he knew deeper levels of peace. And in that peaceful place, he was released, he passed away he died and represents a wonderful possibility of facing death, consciously, clearly and without any fear. And with kind of releasing, letting go into peace, rather than letting go into fear or worry or something else. So for the Buddha represents that possibility of confronting meeting some of the deepest existential issues we have in our lives, with tremendous equanimity, with wisdom with peace. So that's what it represents for people. So what does it represent for you? You know, I mean, some of you have been practicing for a long time. And so what has happened to you in your practice? What is what is touched? What do you recognize? What do you recognize in yourself as being the transformation that change the benefits The value that you've had from all the different aspects of Buddhist practice. And it's true that the more you're the more you practice, the more the

benefit you get from it. If you only practice meditation, you will get the benefits maybe of meditation. If you practice meditation once a week, you get the benefits of once a week. If you practice every day, you get the benefit of every day. If you practice generosity, you get the benefits of personal benefits of generosity. If you practice, compassion and love, you get the benefits of that. And if you practice much of the package of what Buddhism has to offer, kind of enter into it in a full way. The more benefits you get, and the more you come. I was very touched a long time ago when Zen teacher I was studying with named Robert Aiken said. People would often ask the question how do I integrate my practice into my daily life and it's a beautiful place. You know, people practice for a while I had that question at some point, and became important for me. But he just question how do you feel some benefits, you feel some change, you feel some goodness that comes from a practice. And you don't want to just have it in meditation or in your private practice? How do you bring in the rest of your life? Now you live your life? And he turned the question or the statement around? He said, he said, I don't remember exactly how he said it. But he said, instead of thinking about how you can bring your practice into your life, what about you? What about include in your life in your practice?

And so in other words, have your practice at the center of your practice, be that want to orient your life what guides your life what your life is about? And then you invite your life and all aspects of your life into that. And what that means is that some of the values of that hopefully you're discovering for yourself some of the transformation you find the more impact tissue give to it, the more I can become the orienting values of your life and what's most important for you and the choices you make, how you live your lives, what you consume, how you relate to people around you, the work you do, even just everything can be kind of a place in which to live from the goodness of your heart or live from what you find is most deeply true and valuable here that maybe comes from the practice. And so then the question is not, you know, well, I have a life and I'll bring my practice into it. This is my, this is my life. The practice is my life or this goodness or this, this growth of the goodness of the heart, that is my life. The heart is my life, the inner this inner freedom is my life. That's the life I want to have. And now how do I bring everything else into that? How does that have to fit into that? What do I have some people say, What do I have to let go of? So that I couldn't really make this but these transformation that's happening The place the wellspring from which my life springs and flows. And so one of the titles that Buddha has is the happy one. And they gave him a lot of titles down through the ages. And we don't even know really his name. Buddha has a title. But one of the one of the titles is the happy one. And I think it's a great name, you know, and so, are you happy? Do you want to be happy? What does happiness mean for you? Or what happiness mean, if it was not the happiness of winning, winning a lottery ticket, it was not the happiness of getting a great date, or getting you know, or just whatever, what it was the happiness of living in a world where you are deeply at home in yourself deeply at In the world in some way where you don't feel in conflict with yourself, don't feel like conflict with the world you're live in. And so that when you enter into the world, you don't see the world through the eyes of conflict. You see the world through the eyes of oneness of unity of brotherhood and sisterhood, human family, all of us together. And so, the Buddha created a sangha community of monastic monks and nuns. And it said that one of the characteristics of that community is it became a, all the different rivers of society meaning all the people from all the different corners of society, aspects of society. Back in India, the different castes of society, all they're all streams going along, and they all they all can flow into this into the great ocean of the sun. via the Buddhist community and become one there, and live there, and monks and nuns without that, all the differences, being the first and foremost thing that people know, but rather than, you know, a common humanity that we share and support each other together, and so in that way, also the monastic community represents, can represent that wish that we can have about the world we live in, that we create, we contribute to a world where all the different beautiful streams of differences that we have, and all the ways that we're not beautiful, can all flow together and the beauty can be recognized and that which is not beautiful, maybe can fall away. And

we can all stream together, all the rivers can flow into our common Sangha, our human Sangha, our universal Sangha that we share with all beings, where we live without conflict, and we offer ourselves to the world so that we do not live with conflict with anyone. The beautiful thing. So we celebrate the Buddha. So we celebrate the birth of the Buddha, which is your birth. And may you be born this way every day. And we celebrate the awakening of the Buddha, which is your awakening, and may you wake up every day. To this being the holiest of Holy Days, whatever day you're in, and we celebrate the passing away of the Buddha. And may we celebrate the passing away of your greed, hate and delusion.

May we celebrate your ability to discover a profound and abiding peace, a peace that's a gift to the world that allows you to face your death peacefully and without conflict and without fear. That's what we celebrate. So the when one of the ways that this celebration is done, is that you know, because the Buddha is being born all the time, we bring him in. And so and he's and what you do with babies when they get born is you wash them. And so he would overcome inevitable basinal bowl with water ladles and the children will have a chance to watch the Buddha. And now you know who were really washing. So, as the children wash the Buddha, let the children wash you. Why don't you consider what you know what is it that would be good to wash away? What do you carried with you what goes on inside of you? What are you holding on to what? What? You know? What do you what do you complain about? They say that when you really understand the Dharma, you have nothing to complain about. Isn't that pretty radical? and probably some of you will never go back now is letting go of self that's okay but let it go my complaints. So what is it that you What do you want? What do you want to have washed off you and washed. So when the kids come well they'll bring up the baby Buddha here in a celebratory way and, and you'll see you'll hopefully you'll see that pure land. That's here the beauty the children represent something for us as well and flowers, you'll see flowers that represent things and then we'll chant the refuges together we'll chat a little chat that has to do with that literally says May all beings be happy, that expresses that wish comes from a liberated heart. And there might be a song that someone's gonna sing on a guitar and, and so we'll see through the children, our next generation and hope That our practice here as adults becomes a gift for many generations to come. So others also can discover freedom and compassion and the pure land in their hearts. So with that, let's sit quietly and they'll come in singing or chanting. And perhaps if there's a few guys here can just move back a little bit because they're going to be carrying the they're carrying a whole temple. And yeah, great. Yes. It's probably okay. I think they're gonna come around like this.

And we can just sit and meditate for a couple of minutes until they start coming.

Maybe John, if you could call you out and tell Ellis that we're ready when she is. JOHN, could you tell him this out there with the kids? Just tell him that we're ready when they're ready.

As we bring up families, we gathered to learn mindful harmony. We sing and we play and we sit quietly. And we share. Family love. Because love makes a family. Love makes a family. Love makes

me love makes

me yes Love makes

me

thank you

You, Carla, and I hope that love next song guys well, so may it be for us for this next year. And thank you, Liz and thank you all your kids. What are your name's Rachel and Tory and doesn't have what? Michael and what's your name? euro and my Glenda bracy and Sarah and Victoria and one more what Clayton did all of you. Great, thank you for coming and helping with this wonderful ceremony and bringing the Buddha and decorating but go to so beautifully. So you're welcome to watch the Buddha more if you think he needs it and you And you also are welcome if you feel there's more need. You're welcome to come here and watch some more. Please

work best maybe some of you sit in the lower