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SPEAKERS

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So what I'd like to talk a little bit about this afternoon is one of the parties or one of the 10 perfections. The 10 perfections, or the paramis are virtues, 10 qualities of character, which are said to support Buddhist practice support meditation practice. And sometimes in places like Thailand Burma, if someone reaches an obstacle difficulty with their meditation practice, it's not uncommon for the teachers to say that the person doesn't have the paramis, doesn't have the developed qualities to support meditation, and they should go develop those perfections. And so they're considered somewhat important, and they're the one that I'm thinking about today is that of determination and dedication. The word of that's translated as determination could also be translated as resolve. The Pali word is adhiṭṭhāna. And then Sanskrit is Adhiṣṭhāna. And it's I like to think of it as the that which number of things, but one of the most, it's that which is the bridge between having an intention and acting on it. Because you can have a lot of intentions a lot of wishes to do something. Yeah, yeah. I think I should meditate every day and don't that's my intention, but it never happens. And so there has to be something that carries beyond the intention in the sense of adhiṭṭhāna or this resolve, determination, dedication, commitment that gets us into action is important part. The it's, I think of it as quality of inner strength. And part of practice is in fact to develop certain strengths, strength of disciplines, strength of dedications, strength of a certain kind of action. Yes, I can do this. And it's a strength that then becomes a support for us as we live our lives in many ways.

The word resolve the idea of resolve or determination is closely closely connected to the idea of perseverance. You stick to it, stay with it. There might be obstacles, but you stay involved and keep going ahead. And it has a lot of benefits to stick to it and work and develop whatever you're doing sometimes. And some of the benefits are not the explicit benefits, maybe what while you're doing something, they might be other benefits that come from staying where that may be built and developed to Bill's patients to bill. capacity for to persevere, develops a lot of self understanding what comes up as we keep that something is difficult and we get to see what happens our responses reactions to that. And maybe it cultivates courage, maybe called all kinds of things. And some of you know like I say, the analogy that's in the book the issue at hand of two people who are going to roll across a river and one person rolls across when conditions are really optimal for rowing. It's the you know, the wind is blowing, pushing one across the current goes across the water is placid. And there's no you know, it just everything seemed to be just every time the person puts the water into the water. The boat, the boat is sails across the surface, like, just with ease, very quickly the person gets across. And one possibility is once a person has gotten across to the person congratulates himself or herself. And what a great roller I am, I'm the best fill of conceit in the photograph so good. And then someone else goes out to cross the same river to cross the other side. But now there's a huge storm. And the wind is howling against the person, the currents go against the person, the waves go against the person. And they can manage to get kind of out into the river halfway. But once they get halfway, it's really raging the wind, and they

just get blown back no matter how much they try, they can't make any headway. And so finally, they have to go back to where they came from. And so conventionally they failed. You know, and they might even think, Boy, am I lousy rower because of how quickly people have their conceit operating. Men, they fail. They haven't gotten across where they wanted to go. But there's other benefits the person who struggled and rode hard and didn't make it. That person became strong. In the process of rowing, and the person who had an easy time, no strength, it was just like, you know, probably didn't have to roll it all the current wind would have pushed them. And so sometimes it's that way in practice that sometimes when things are difficult, that's the time when we build the most strength, even if conventionally even think your practice is not working. There's a way in which sometimes persevering and keeping at it develops all kinds of good qualities, all kinds of self understanding, and you might have to learn to let go of a lot of things. If you don't succeed, let go of expectation, demand, lack of selfishness, self image ideas about yourself. You might need to help a lot of patience and all that builds it might support you and other times in other ways. So this is all to say that talk about determination resolve. I like the word resolve a lot because The I think the word has number of meanings. The as a verb, it means kind of determination to be committed to something to decide this is what I'm doing. Be firm on one's intent. But as a noun, it means to solve. To use an analogy I mean to solve, but the word comes from the Latin word meaning solution, like, I guess, you know, you can have a solution, that's a answer to our problem, but you can also have a solution which is a liquid that you have. And so they say and so the literal meaning of resolve in Latin apparently means is to untie or to, to loosen or dissolve. And sometimes, we resolve things, not by answering the issue directly.

So for example, you know, maybe you could say I had this issue today I had to solve how I was gonna come down here and teach with my foot the way it is, it's not gonna really gonna work. Could I meditate gonna sit this way and all day long and, you know, just came out of surgery. So you know, who knows, I'll probably crashed or something and how am I gonna make this work? So I have extra coffee, I'll make some coffee with me and they'll make it work or, you know, I have this problem, right. And I couldn't resolve the problem really easy if I just stay at home. The problem resolved. So the problem is resolved not by answering it according to the terms of the question. But by taking away the question. And sometimes in practice, we looking for some answer. We're looking for some solution for something. But sometimes things get resolved. They get dissolved in a different way than we expect different understanding of what's happening. Then our usual Come mode. And not a few people have practiced. Maybe some of you today and have some problem that seems really big and really grip you. And the problem doesn't get solved by the end of the day. But your relationship to the problem changes. And you really now you're more at ease with having it and Okay, it's not a big deal. I think I can manage or, you know, go to sleep tonight. I don't have to be quick in the grip of it. So it's a certain way, it's a certain kind of way that the issue has been resolved for now. But it hasn't been solved because resolved by the fact that you no longer in its grip and need to have an answer right now. So that is I love the word resolve because all its rich meanings in English. The end part of resolve, having a determination is to have the wisdom to know what's a good resolve to have what's a good intention to have In the pyramids, these 10 List of 10 different things, it's kind of understood that each of them builds on the preceding one, or the preceding ones. And resolve is the seventh one. So it isn't just like, throw it out there. And you can you can be pretty stupid in your resolve. But, but you know, it's gonna build on the others and one of the ones that builds on his wisdom, so to be able to be discerning and be wisely thoughtful in what you're doing and understand a little bit more the consequences of what's happening. And it's also built on the factor of energy or effort or persistence. The ability to apply yourself is earlier, perfection. Resolve means that you stick to it. And sometimes you need to stick to something for a long time. And it was meditation practice, I think it's very helpful to have a sense of resolve because sometimes meditation brings instant results in It's very nice. But sometimes the results only come over doing it over and over and over again and a long time. So much so sometimes imperceptible day by

day, what changes and what develops and what growth we've had. But we keep going and keep doing. There's a slow refinements slows a deeper understanding what's going on to slow movement forward. That over time makes a huge difference. I think of someone who's a swimmer, and someone can know how to crawl across the swimming pool back and forth.

And but if you do it day after day, the swimming then in ways maybe not they're not even so conscious in perceptibly the person is learning to make slight shifts and changes in how their hand goes through the water, how they lift their their shoulders and arm and, you know, it becomes into more They do it, the more they starts the little differentiations differences, you start seeing that build up over time that they couldn't have, they couldn't have known if they just did, you know, went swimming once. But it's the repetition over and over again. So the same thing with meditation repetition, that if you do it every day, you start knowing something about your breathing, and what happens to your breath and what happens to your mind and how to relate to it and, and how to apply effort, how to apply attention. There's all these little variations of how attention is applied, or not applied. Or maybe you learn that you don't have to make hardly any effort at all sometimes. And it's mostly a matter of learning how a subtle way of getting out of the way and just allowing something to come through you. But, you know, it's very different. To learn something like that slowly, slowly, and finding your way because you're kind of refining it. Then taking the information in your system takes it in and then you learn and you adjust and It's much better and I think more enduring, to learn that way than it is to read a book, or listen to a Dharma talk. And, you know, get some idea. But it's not it's days of the idea that I in the realm of an idea, as opposed to this kind of, you know, you can read a book on swimming, right? Oh, you put your shoulder that way. Yes, you're supposed to move your shoulder when your wrist that way. But whoever wrote that book, didn't know your wrist, didn't know your shoulder. And it could be that there's a little difference because of how your bones are. And so you have to find your way. So the same thing with meditation, you know, whoever wrote the book on meditation didn't have your mind. So and so how does it work for you and how does it what goes on here and so the so part of the determination is to stay with it. Have you resolved this is what I'm doing. And you do it for a long time. Then You get slowly begin to acquire a lot of self understanding a lot of familiarity with a territory in the terrain that becomes easier and easier to to negotiate your way. One of the things that has been a pleasure for me to watch, both when I was a practitioner, but also as a teacher, is to watch how people's bodies change as they practice. And some people develop these kind of local more yogic bodies, they feel good to tell, you know, someone first starts meditating, like, they're sitting like, you know, you know, and they're all tense and, you know, trying to figure out how to sit and the squirm they're looking at their watch and, you know, ring the bell, their mind is yelling. And then at some point, you see that they can sit with comfort in there, they just sit and you feel certain like their whole body settles, and their chest relax, their shoulders relax and you feel the body is there in a full way and to develop kind of a yo potty. And that also, you know, it's kind of like a yoga practice you have to do I can do I can do it, and something settles, all these little shifts make an add up over time. So, regular meditation practice allows for these kinds of subtle small shifts that build and create and move as you go along in time. So part of the wisdom part of having resolve is to resolve on the right things. And some of us are resolved on our anxiety. You know, reflect i'm gonna i'm come I'm loyal to my anxiety. You know, and I no one's gonna take it away from me and I'm just this is my resume, you know, the term determination, my, my fear, my worry, my desire my, you know, I like my neurosis. I'm going to therapy to overcome it, but I'm not gonna let go because, you know, we're supposed to do therapy but I'm not good I like you know, not not gonna give that up. And so, you know, we can be resolved on things we can really be determined. And we might not even know how much we're determined because some of the strong things that motivate us are so usually sometimes occur off, you know, off stage, you know, in our subconscious almost. We don't really know why we're always doing the same thing running into the same problems. But it certainly is, it is some kind of determination. They're like, this is what I'm going to do. But it's good to

have some wisdom over what is a wise thing to be determined on and what is not. And in the Buddha gave four resolves, that aren't the end of the story, what to be resolved on, but they're very interesting list of things to keep in mind.

And I've been told in places like Thailand, they said are considered very kind of, they're often referred to and people think about them often. They're kind of in people's kind of consciousness, there's something to be resolved on. So the first is to be resolved on wisdom. So wisdom means not just a bunch of knowledge that you have how things work, but the ability to be discerning the ability to see look and take the time and see clearly what's going on here. And have a good sense of, of what is helpful and what is not helpful in the situation. So to be able to look at the situation, through the viewpoint of what is helpful and what's not helpful, as opposed to the, the, the, you know, the framework of what's in it for me, you know, are some selfish kind of concerned about the situation but what's helpful or not helpful? And so to be resolved on to seeing more clearly to be discerning. Fantastic question, what is this? What's going on right now what's helpful in this situation for everyone? concerned, as opposed to what's helpful for me what's helpful for them to kind of open I think that's, that's part of the definition of wisdom.

The second is to be determined on truth. And there is no Buddhist practice without a commitment to truth to being truthful. I just, you know, not being truthful goes in the opposite direction of waking up being free. So that can interest them even a passion or delight or joy or for truth, what is true, what's really going on here? And I just affect the drive the desire to discover what's true, is probably the most important thing. Sometimes it's a little dangerous to discover what's true. If you then hold on to it, like you know, and almost you can, you can kill the truth by holding on to a too much. Hopefully you discover the truth but it does. But don't, you know, don't hang on to it, then keep seeking keep go to the next thing the next moment, every day you wake up, there's something new, every moment something new. So don't hold on to the past truth, but rather, look at what's next. What's true now. And part of that idea of commitment to truth is to be a true person. And I'm actually very fond of this expression in English. To be true. To be someone whose true means to not just to be honest, but to kind of say that to say true for me that expression means that how you live your life, how you manifest yourself, how you present yourself, is his honest is true is aligned to what really is. So it'd be a commitment to the truth to being true. For some people. This takes a lot of courage, and it's maybe why it fits into this category of resolves. Because it's hard to be committed to the truth. It's hard to be committed to being true and make some people feel very afraid they feel vulnerable. They feel me taken advantage of. They feel that if they're that transparent, and being true to the world, that they'll be judged in some negative way. But to learn how to be wise and be true, that's the path opens up.

The the third resolve is, is a single word in Pali. But it's a word that can be translated into two ways. And I like both ways. One way is translated as generosity. So it'd be resolved be committed to generosity, and doesn't mean that you have to give away everything you own, the first chance you have, but maybe it means that you offer your attention to people. Maybe when you see people in the store, clerk in the supermarket, generosity means you don't give them money. You know, one of your doughnuts you bought But it means that you say how are you are you smile at them, or you just spend a little bit more time to try to see if you can make a human connection to them. And I don't know, maybe you're not like me in my, you know, unusual way of being a human being. But I'm capable of going on the checkout counter counter, and only be interested in what's going on in my things that I bought and what price I make sure I got the right price, and never look up. So I have to remind myself, there's a person there, and so to, to, you know, to, to be generous with my presence, my attention.

And so the generosity is a beautiful quality partly because, and this is but the other meaning of generous of this word chogha is it also means renunciation or relinquishment, and the two go hand in hand in the sense that if you have a gift, and you give it to someone, you have to hold it, and then you have to release it from your hand or To give the gift. So the generosity in does involve some kind of giving away of something. And so this idea of relinquishment of those things that we hold on to and there's something about generosity, it's very closely associated with freedom with not holding on to anything at all. And so to explore and discover this, this world of generosity as a determination, and be resolved on this, be generous, don't hold on, is of great support for practice. The next one is the last one is be resolved on peace. And peace is one way to understand peace is to be resolved on non conflict. So it doesn't mean that other people are not conflicted with you. It doesn't mean that you don't have disagreements with people. But the word conflict I you know, I think and I guess it may be a Latin I It kind of is a violent word it means like to strike against, strike with. And is that right? You someone you know something. And to be in conflict means you're kind of in a fight with someone. And it's possible to have a disagreement and not necessarily be in an active conflict or fight with a person like a post like us. It's possible to approach someone and say, Wow, we seem to see this situation situation in a different way. We seem to have a different understanding. I wonder if we could talk about it, then you're not in conflict, then you've kind of been partners. Let's explore it. As opposed to you. You said I said, you know, and then we're in conflict. So to be resolved on not being in conflict. When I first went to Thailand to practice staying in a little monastery and I met them. Meditation monk who'd been probably a monk for many, many years. He really impressed me. And he had a kind of eyes that I haven't seen very often you look into his eyes and you look like you're looking into deep, deep, profound space. Like, I just look into his eyes. He's like so deep somehow, literally deep smelling. He was a deep meditator. I never heard anybody describe the meditation experiences he had before until that time, it was new, all new for me, and he inspired me. So I asked him one point, all your years of practice being a monk, what have you learned what's what benefit Have you had permit? And he said, non contention. He learned non contention. And I guess if it's a maybe his way of saying and learning not to be in conflict. So I think it's a beautiful thing, this idea of peace being resolved on peace. And again, it has to be supported. By wisdom, you don't want to just kind of be peaceful and harmonious at the expense of denying what's going on or denying yourself or just pretending there's nothing going on that's difficult and challenging. But even I think Steve pieces even more valuable when there is interpersonal challenges when there is difficulties between people to be resolved on peace then means that you stay in the situation, but you try to find a way that is not in conflict in a way that maybe is mutually supportive for everyone involved, as opposed to me versus you, which is often a part of what goes on in conflict. So these four resolves wisdom, truth, generosity, and peace. And then there's your your resolve your intention. I think that one of the things I've learned from my years have practice is what a very important resource source is to be found in your deepest intention, your effort to really look deeply in yourself and discover what is you what is it that you want which intention you have for your life.

And because it's so important your life you're important to, you know, I think, to value yourself to value this life to value this opportunity to be alive. To consider yourself as someone who has is important that counts. And then if you count if you're important, or how, you know, what is the intention was to support what is what do you want your practice to be about your life to be about? And I think this is so important that I think that's actually you know, of course, I like people to meditate every day. I think it's great, right? But I think it's actually more important for people to everyday spend time reflecting on what their deepest intention is. Because it's really makes it personal is really what's here. And out of that comes out of your deepest intention comes your life and follow from that I have a lot of faith and confidence in people's deepest intention, or said more accurately, I have a lot of confidence in the search for and trying to discover what your deepest intention is. I spent a year of my life with every day thinking about how would I live my day, I knew this was my last day I was going to die that evening. And it was great

because it kind of brought me to kind of ask this question, what do I really want to do today? What's most important for me now? What's my motivation or what do I really feel it's important here and, and to be reminded of that day after day was kind of a wake up for me and it really got me kind of You know, engage in this life in a fuller way and motivated in nice way. But it was also nice because over time, my intention shifted over the year. And to watch it shift or to watch a change or kind of to have it had find one intention, and then kind of stay with it and keep asking the question to just settle that knot. I saw that one not going to do more important things now. But just keep asking the intention into asking the question, what is the intention, what's the intention, and then dropping underneath the surface of some and discovering deeper ones and deeper ones? One of the interesting ways of exploring intention is to see what comes up as an answer for you. And if it's a negative answer, then restate it positively. So for example, if the answer is to live without fear, that's a negative response to the absence of something. It's a great thing. To live without fear, so to be it's an intention that should be honored and definitely, but, but, but it's stated positively or say it this way, if you had no fear, then what would be your intention? And sometimes if you, if you say a negative negative intention, and you restate it, it throws a different light on your life and yourself, okay? a different understanding. So someone who says, I want to live without fear, we say stated positively or, or if you had no fear, what would your wish then then they might say, oh, to live with love. And to hear it be said that way to live with love, compassion or whatever. I don't know that that's part of the deepest intention. It might actually be more useful to focus on that and to focus on being without fear. Sometimes, not always, sometimes fear can be shared like a snake shedding its old skin. So if you realize that love is a primary intention, then to let that grow, make sure that has space and time water that and then some things will just kind of fall away. And that's part of the what's also very useful with intention with resolve or determination. If you have a strength of resolve that's stronger than your neurosis stronger than your fear or your hate or your greed or whatever it might be, just keep going. Then it's sometimes you can grow beyond that or kind of break, the shell of that just kind of falls away. And it doesn't have to be solved, you know, to figure out what to do with your fear or your resentments or your hurt that you carry with you. But something grows and grows and grows within you and some inner strength, some inner sense of fullness or inner sense of contentment. Peace well being something. And the other thing is just kind of dissolve or shed or fall away or break open or something. And sometimes it's occasionally it's actually more effective that way than just, you know, dealing with the fear directly or whatever it might be.

So the idea of resolve determination last thing I'll say is that this theme is quality of resolve or determination. Many people will think of it are associated with getting tight, and bearing down kind of go now I got to get tough and I gotta get serious, you know, Gil's talking about determination, and we're gonna tense up and really, you know, like, you know, put on my armor and really, you know, make an effort here. And, you know, that's not what I'm talking about. One of the nice things is you can be very, very are completely committed, dedicated, give yourself completely over make a lot of strong effort at staying relaxed. And then nice. So you know, so that you know, you can't just tense up to get more relaxed, right? That doesn't work. But you can really put a lot of effort into low tension really try to stay that way open, relaxed, and it's so well worth the effort to try to stay relaxed and soft and a certain way. So this is the idea determination doesn't have to make you hard in a very good way. Hopefully this kind of language was okay for you. It can make you soft. And now, the the, if you've been around a really good Yogi, somebody's done a lot of yoga. Some of them if you look at their muscles, it doesn't look like they've been to the gym. You know, they don't have all they can, you know, they can't bulge in his balls. And all that, but they can be very, very strong. But those muscles are really soft. And so they kind of kind of have a very sort of soft and ease and, but they're really strong. Soft doesn't mean you're not strong, and maybe the strongest people in the softest. So to be resolved to be determined, and to be supported by that, to have a sense of what your intention is what you want what's important to engage, even if you don't always know, but to keep engaging, is staying in it staying in the fire, staying with it,

the slow training over and over again, like swimming over and over again, do it and do it and do it. As opposed to giving up and just like watching TV. You know, and in, you know in five years from now, 10 years from now, you probably remember your TV shows you're watched or the news that you read, but doesn't maybe won't support you but stay with it. slow step by step being determined practice and let it slowly grow slowly grow it slowly that is that powerful snake that you are gross that you shed all the old skin. Okay, so that's what's on my mind. And I want to thank you all for coming to this day long and keep saying this when I do that, because it's true. I'm very fond of these day Long's and, and I think it's a very important very important part of what IMC offers is the silent day long from 830 to five where there isn't some teacher interrupting your practice with all kinds of words and guided meditations and you just kind of left with yourself and it's really when you're left to yourself and really finding your way and your path through yourself and even not being distracted from yourself that I think some of the deeper work happens and to know that so many people will come to do this for a day. It's very satisfying and inspiring and Thank you all for doing it. So it's the custom here at IMC is that