So, so continuing today on the second of five talks on the first noble truth, the noble truth of suffering. And the task that is mentioned by the Buddha is that the task is to have the first noble truth is to understand it, to fully understand it. And, and that's a different relationship than many people have with suffering. The idea that we should stop and really get to know it better to study it, investigate it, really understand it. is, you know, is maybe counterintuitive. We want to get rid of it. We want to stop it. And of course, we the purpose of Buddhism is to not suffer. So, of course, he asked, it's okay to have a wish for the end of suffering and not to suffer. But one of the wise ways of doing that is to, from our baby from our ledge of peace, have some kind of ease and equanimity, to be able to turn towards the suffering, to be with the suffering in a way that helps us to understand it in a deep way. So the wording of the first noble truth in its simplest form, is this is suffering. But the full kind of sentence it often comes with is, one understands. This is or one knows this is suffering. And the word is the more and more no here Then understand, because understanding can suggest something more complicated, when understands where it comes from, and all the elements of it and the consequences of it. And you know, the whole ecology of suffering, whereas to know, implies something very particular, just to recognize, oh, this is suffering. And that's kind of a clue to the Buddhist approach to this thing called suffering. And that is that we're learning we're learning how to be present for it. To see it in a way that is equanimous or see it in a way that in the being present for suffering. We're not adding adding more suffering to it. We're not reacting to it, attacking it feeling, attacking ourselves being angry, collapsing into despair, the ability to sit upright, metaphorically, at least. To sit, sit somehow and a very without collapsing without pulling away, to just kind of see suffering right in the eyes suffering, I see you. This is suffering, that's a difficult task. But that is the task of what Buddhist practice is slowly as we build a practice, build our capacity, build ability to be grounded and centered in ourselves rooted. We find our ledge, we find our nest. We find our sea legs in the story yesterday that we can we begin to be
able to find a place to breathe quietly to breathe and look and be relaxed in a certain way. And really, honestly, look at our suffering What's going on? And for some people hearing that this is the task of Buddhism find a huge relief in that the Because they grew up in their society, their families was all about avoiding suffering, pretending it's not there and denying it or, or somehow interpreting it in good ways in ways that kind of predict it and made it different than what it was. And to actually get the message that, yes, this is suffering. And yes, let's talk about it. Let's be with it. Let's look at it. But not so we suffer better. That's not the point of Buddhism. Understand, be with your sufferings, you suffer better. The idea is so that we suffer. Well, maybe you suffer better in the sense that we suffer without all the extra. We don't suffer more. But we suffer without all the extra waves of reactivity that we have. So to understand suffering, is that is the task and so I'm Maybe it's be interesting to say that the words for suffering is to do the UK aka che. And, and this word is translated into English in a variety of different ways. And it's kind of nice to have the different translations, because each translation points to a different angle, a different aspect different perspective on this thing that we call suffering. And we might be able to take dukkha First, it's important to understand that the word dukkha is an adjective, not a noun. And as an adjective, it literal meaning is painful, pain, painful. What, you know the Buddhist teachings if we translate dukkha as painful. So for example, there's a very common teaching that things like birth, old age, sickness and death are dukkha and sometimes people translated as, birth is suffering, sicknesses is suffering. Old age is suffering and death is suffering. And that in the word suffering is a noun. So it's one noun is the other noun. There's an equivalence, which leads to all kinds of philosophical challenges. The in if we translate it as painful, birth is painful. Old age is painful. sickness is painful. Death is painful. Now we're talking about something which many people can identify with, that your pain is other things This birth is other things besides painful, but it is painful. Old age is other things besides just painful but it is also painful. sickness is also painful, and death dying. It can also be quite painful, in one way or the other. And, and for the Buddha to say this, I'm very touched in a very deep way and kind of like very kind of a little bit in all a little bit. My appreciation of this ancient teachings, a goes up much more. When I consider the back in the time of the Buddha. They had no anesthetics, there's no aspirins, no novocaine no, you know, anesthesia. And there's no palliative care to let us kind of die kind of pain, painlessly in the way that now there's, we have a lot of wonderful medicines that can help us be much more comfortable while we're dying to die. is difficult and, and so the idea of pain was something that very acute in the ancient world, and people had to learn to live with it and be with it and so when they say that birth is painful, they mean it all day just painful, sicknesses painful death is painful. grief, mourning, distress, anguish are painful. Sometimes a translation into English is the word stress. And so that you know, birth is stressful, old age is stressful, sickness is stressful, death is stressful. Morning grief, pain, distress, anguish are stressful. This is a raw kind of a raw experiential Association for the word dukkha. And it has the advantage is that it's more physical Last last remnants of stress that in mind, otherwise very peaceful. And that's a very useful instructions to see that also as dukkha. So the even though states we continue the process of letting go. When we translate it, dukkha is suffering. I don't know how it is for you, anybody, other people, but for me, that has a very strong emotional Association. Suffering has feels almost like an emotional heavy word I'm suffering and it just feels really, you know, just feels holistically you know, emotional and full and existential, and it seems like very kind of Cisco's feeling of totality to it in my
mind, my heart, suffering, I'm suffering, and it just feels like this is almost like the totality of who I am. We're a stress you know, we can have stress and in my life, sometimes I feel like my eyes are straight. If I'm spending too much on the computer and the rest of me is quite happy, but suffering Sansa, totality emotional totality to it. And it's sometimes it's a little difficult people to get their mind around the word suffering because it's so big. Another translation, the last one I'll mention that can be quite popular, is more in, in my mind as a more intellectual or philosophical Association. Or to say it more precisely, it's evaluative in nature has to do with making a little bit more evaluation, constructing an understanding, philosophical or intellectual understanding, that's little bit removed from direct experience. Whereas pain can be really about direct experience. Stress can be really about direct experience. Suffering exactly how much is direct experience or how much is evaluative or conceptual? is, you know, that's part of the discovery process of mindfulness. So this one that's more intellectual also has a more universal quality to it. And that is translating dukkha as unsatisfactory. That and the recognition that and then and then that how to evaluative or intellectual is that you have to then explain what the ways that unsatisfactory pain you don't have to explain in what way it's pain, you know, it's painful stress, maybe the same way, suffering maybe it's a little more complicated, but unsatisfactory, clearly is more complicated, because it requires some explanation, some understanding. That's more than just feeling sensing that something's unsatisfactory. It begs the question on satisfactory in what way and the usual explanation of people who choose this is something like if we're searching for lasting reliable happiness and peace, we won't find it in the particular experiences, objects things of the world, including the objects and experiences we can have within ourselves that nothing that can be directly experienced. As in as a, as a particular concept, idea experience can provide lasting happiness because it's impermanent, because it's in constant because it comes and goes appears and disappear. And any attempt to hold on to something, this is it, this is what how you can be happy this will make me happy. I remember once very clearly when I when I was about 20 years old, I had a very nice summer and I just was kind of ecstatic, but the end of the summer very, very happy. And I remember having the thought, I'll never be unhappy again. And then just a month later, two months later, I was more depressed than I've ever been in my life. So much for that idea that I would always be this way. The so the so unsatisfactory, and in deep meditation and also an ordinary life, people come to the wisdom to understand that what they were holding on to or expecting to do it for themselves to really make things great for them happy for them, satisfying for them. That that it it's fleeting, it's not lasting, it doesn't live up to the full promise. And so many people are disappointed what was made them happy at one point in life is no longer makes them happy later in life. For And then because it's fleeting people will kind of who are always looking for something outside or something, some experience which will do it will then just go on to search for another experience. Another thing another thing and, and the Dharma is not about finding some thing, some experience, some idea that is it, that brings happiness, but rather it's more about discovering not something, but some absence of a thing to discover the freedom and the peace and the happiness that comes from the absence of clinging, the absence of thirsting and being compulsive and grabbing and holding on and attachment, which includes, you know, very strong resistance to things. That absence of resistance, that absence of clinging, of grasping of attachment. That is reliable, if we can let go fully. So the purpose of really getting to know suffering, really see it clearly. And to understand it

This transcript is machine generated and may contain errors
Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License
audiodharma.org
3
is part of this project to come to the absence of suffering, to let go of clinging in a very deep way. And, and so that which we'll look at over these days and weeks that we look at the Four Noble Truths more deeply. So I hope this is nice and this kind of explanation and it lays the groundwork for what's going to come. So thank you for being part of this and I look forward to our time tomorrow.