So this is the third talk on the third noble truth, the noble truth of the cessation of suffering. Now, some of you might know that a very central teaching of Buddhism and Buddha himself is the idea of dependent co-arising. The idea that things occur, independence and other factors being present as well. That nothing exists spontaneously without any relationship to anything else. Then all things arise in relationship to other things that are also happening just prior to it, or while it's happening. And this idea of conditionality, that things arise based on conditions is over and over again emphasized in the teachings of the Buddha. And there's many reasons for this and many ways that people are inspired by this teachings. Some people will dig deeply into the philosophy, the psychology, the mysticism, of conditionality and interdependence, and all these things. Oh, in the early teachings of the Buddha, the, one of the central purposes of understanding that things arise because of conditions, that nothing arises spontaneously, without any connection to anything else, and nothing there's nothing which is permanent. Nothing which is exists independent of conditions, and so is unchanging and, and always been there and always will be there. That all things arise conditionally and if the conditions change, they will cease and pass away in some way or other. And now in the early teachings of the Buddha, in the process by which the Buddha became awakened, there's a various descriptions of this. One of the descriptions, places as a central role for cessation, nirodha, the third noble truth in the understanding or in the coming out of an understanding of dependent co-arising, that things arise because of conditions. And, and it's presented in the story of one of the stories of the Buddha's process of awakening, in very strong emphasis, very strong terms. And in this particular formulation or a story, the Buddha realized what's known as a 12 full chain of Dependent co-arising, how 12 factors come into play in the creation of suffering. But rather than emphasizing that the important understanding is conditionality, the important understanding seeing how things are dependent on each other. The Buddha makes a different conclusion. It's kind of like this is the, the, the, not the refrain exactly, but the culminating insight that comes after the Buddha for first time understands these 12 process of...
twelvefold dependent co-arising. And so this is what realized that dependent co-arising, how deeply everything is arising conditionally, and then he exclaims, that the way the language is written, it's really like a wow, this is how things are. And so the Buddha says, with the understanding of conditionals He says, arising, arising. Thus regarding things unheard before they arose in me, vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge, and light. Those are grand terms. So what he's emphasizing here is not that he saw conditionality, but rather the conditionality broke up the this idea that anything is permanent, that anything is constant and unchanging. And that was what he thought, wow, this is not constant. It's in constant, it arises. And then he understood seeing all those 12 full chain of dependent co arising. He saw how they are if the condition cease all the other cease and there's a cessation of of suffering. And this is a 12 full chain of dependent cessation as opposed to 12 full chain of dependent arising. And when he saw this, he said something said similar kind of words of exclamation of celebration almost that now he had an insight, but he made it even more important, like more penetrating how valuable this next insight was. And now he saw in seeing the cessation of things, he said the same thing in regard said, cessation, cessation regarding things unheard before, there rose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge and light. But then he went on, went on and said, added that this was a breakthrough. With through wisdom. Breakthrough means that he experienced the first stage, first insight sight of awakening of liberation. He didn't experience that but seeing arising. Only was seeing the cessation, that he had this what it called the breakthrough. And even more significantly, he claimed that with this breakthrough that showed him cessation he understood that this is the path of awakening. And this is the path of awakening then he taught for all these years. That what was the path of awakening, this is not seeing conditionality by itself, but how seeing how things arise conditionally that allowed him to break the trends, the enchantment of idea that anything is permanent, including our suffering, is was able to to begin having insight into how suffering arises and passes, how our psychophysical experience comes and goes, Arise and passes. And, and when we do this in meditation, we're really, you know, not looking at the mountains and seeing them arise in passing. But rather we're seeing the arising and passing of experience, moment by moment, in our moment to moment, living as we meditate, the opportunity of meditation is that we don't have to think about the past or the future. We don't have to think about abstractions and big ideas when we meditate. It's possible to settle enough to go to what's called the building blocks of our experience, kind of like the most basic ways in which we experience. Part of the reason why we relax deeply in meditation and can have a very peaceful, quiet mind is not only to have a peaceful mind, but that quiet mind is very much in touch with With the moment to moment flow of experience as it's happening. Many years ago, not so many years ago, I go hiking up nearby in the hills here. And there's a lot of tree roots that come out into the trails off. And it's a regular thing for me to be going along and maybe I don't know, thinking about something or I don't know what I'm doing. And, and the side of my eye, I noticed I see there's a snake in the trail. And, and that's my body kind of reacts to the snake. But then I looked down and I see that it's just a snake like, a root that's poking out of the ground that's kind of winding itself across the trail. So there is a seeing in the direct experience of something that has a shape, long and narrow snake like shape, and then my mind constructs it as a snake and it's not really accurate. And once in Thailand, I did the opposite. It was dusk. And so I didn't see so well as walking in a jungle with have very poisonous snakes. But it wasn't thinking about snakes. And, and it was a
wide road, you know, I think wide enough for a car, dirt road in the jungle. And there was a branch laying a bit the large large tree branch it was laying across the road. And just I don't know why I just wasn't thinking about it too much, but I wasn't thinking at all. But I stepped as I walked, I just stepped on the branch. Turned out the branch was a six foot or more longer snake and the snake immediately started moving. And boy did I move fast after that. So there I saw a branch for what was a snake. So it turns out that in our mind constructs, reconstructs reality and occasionally it's not so accurate. But even when it's accurate, it still makes a concept, an idea of what is. The deeper dimensions of insight meditation is to let the conceiving part of the mind get quieter and quieter. So that we just see we see the branch we just see on the trail. For example, we just see the shape, the texture, and the color. We just see the building blocks from which we then construct snake or branch. Sitting in meditation, we start seeing the immediacy of our feelings of pleasure, pleasant and unpleasant, sadness and joy. And before it's, it's constructed into I'm having an unpleasant experience or this is going to be a bad day. Or I'm a bad person because I'm having sadness or I'm a great person because I am happy and we build all these edifices of all kinds of things based on very what do we originally was very simple data. And when we can come down to that level, then we see that in fact, everything is coming and going arising and passing. And it's not solid and fixed. And even the concepts we have that we tend to get lost in and tend to kind of assume that things are more permanent, concepts having a kind of a filter of giving some kind of permanence to experience because an idea, ideas are kind of unchanging in certain way. But it's they're not they just also come and go in the mind. And so it's this experience of the flow of our experience, the dynamic dynamism of moment to moment that we can experience when the mind gets focused, unified, quiet and clear. Then we see things arising and more importantly, we see them ceasing. And to get a little sense of how this is a possibility of freedom, that ceasing, the cessation when things cease, before they arise again, in that gap, who are you? When you have no thoughts to tell you who you are, when for a moment thoughts have ceased and before the next thought arises. And you can't use thoughts to tell yourself who you are, who are you? When for a moment something ceases that's been bothering you, and before it reappears in the next moment, but the moment in between, in the changing flow of experience there, there's a Kind of freedom, that kind of peace and kind of powerful teacher teaching. There we can see the hints, the evidence, that what it's like to have this cessation of the causes and conditions and experience that has to do with suffering. So for the Buddha, really for the first time seeing how thoroughly and completely his experiences are, is in the flow is arising and passing a phenomena led him to exclaim arise, Arise, it's combining these two, arising and ceasing rising and cessation, regarding things unheard before. There rose in me vision, knowledge, wisdom, true knowledge and light. Break, this was a breakthrough through wisdom. And I realized the path to awakening. So, rising and passing, the cessation, this is one of the fundamental insights of the Buddha. And I'll talk more about that tomorrow. So thank you for today. And thank you for this chance to do some teaching and I hope that your day is good and that you spread your goodwill wherever it's possible. Thank you.