

## The Way to the Far Shore Pārāyanavagga: Sutta Nipāta Book Five (2 of 2)

**Leigh Brasington**

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**Leigh Brasington:**

So, the Way to the Far Shore. In the chat, there's a link to a page, which is the page that you see on the screen. There's something about the Sutta numbers. If you aren't familiar, there are two ways of numbering the Suttas from Book 5 of the Sutta Nipata, the zero relative and the one relative. I'm using the zero relative because, well, as a mathematician, that makes sense to me. I sort of want the first Sutta to be numbered one. It just seems to make more sense than the first Sutta to be numbered two. So you might want to, if you're not familiar, because we'll be looking at the Pāli as well as the English, and we look at the Pāli from someone who's numbering them the wrong way.

Also on here, the speakers have various ways they call the Buddha. They refer to him as the Blessed One, the Great Seer, the Sakyan, Good Sir, whatever. And I collected all of those and put them in here. I won't go over them now, but it's kind of interesting to look at. I have information on the translations. And this page basically tells you an easy way to find the Pāli and the Suttas. All right? And you'll see me doing this here. But the most important is the summaries, because that's what we're going to be looking at. And where we left off last week was-- the next one is questions of Kappa.

So to get the Pāli here, and to get the Pāli so that when I double click something, it gives me, well, the meaning. So if you want to do that, you click on Views, and then English or Spanish or Portuguese or whatever, and then line by line to get what I have. OK. So we can start in with the questions of Kappa. For those overwhelmed by old age and death, stuck midstream as a terrifying flood arises, tell me an island, good sir. Explain to me an island so that this may not occur again.

So the image of, well, samsara being a flood that overwhelms people is quite common in the Suttas. And it shows up in multiple places here. And so you're in the stream. The flood is rising. Where is an island you can escape to? An island is a very common simile for Nibbāna. There's a fantastic book called The Island by Ajahn Amaro and Ajahn Pasano on Nibbāna, a free download. Highly recommended if you're interested in reading about what the Suttas have to say about Nibbāna. It is a great book.

And so Kappa is saying, yeah, samsara is a problem. How can I escape? The Buddha's reply. Oh, an island is dīpa. You can see dīpa here. And the definition is not appropriate for here. Dīpa means either island or lamp. And so the famous saying from the Buddha towards the end of his life, be a dīpa unto yourself is a pun. Be an island unto yourself. Or be a lamp unto yourself. OK. So I suspect both are meant.

So here, given this is a flood, I'm pretty sure it refers to island. For those overwhelmed by old age and death, stuck midstream as a terrifying flood rises, I shall tell you an island. Having nothing, taking

nothing. This is the isle of no return. No return mean no return to the flood. We often use the phrase something is a point of no return. It sounds like, oh, this is it. We're stuck. Well, yeah, you want to be stuck on the island that's free from the flood. So that's what's referred to here. I call this, and it's translated as extinguishment, but the word you might be familiar with, Nibbāna, the ending of old age and death.

So having nothing, taking nothing. This is renunciation. Right? As a monastic, yeah, you really can get down to having nothing, taking nothing. Three robes and a bowl, but as laypeople, and I can tell pretty easily that everybody here is laypeople just by your haircuts and your dress. So yeah, we're going to need more than just three robes and a bowl. But we do need to come to terms with our possessions. We need to, well, ignore what the culture is telling us. The culture basically is saying, if you've got a problem, buy this, it's on sale. Whereas what the Buddha is saying is, well, freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose.

So we want to try and get to a place where we're using our possessions in a way that supports us being alive, but we're not lost in them. George Carlin has a great routine on stuff. It's on YouTube. And so after we finish up today, you might want to go to YouTube and plug in George Carlin stuff and watch his routine because he really captures how we in Western civilization are overwhelmed by our stuff. Ayya Khema said that every six months or so, you should go through all of your possessions and anything that you haven't used or worn or whatever, give it away. Just unburden yourself.

So this particular paragraph, having nothing, taking nothing, for laypeople, it means come to terms with your possessions. Practice renunciation. You don't need a new car every year. You don't need every version of the iPhone. Yeah. OK. I could go on about renunciation, but I won't. It is an important part of the path. And it goes against the culture. You're not going to get any support for it from the culture.

Those have fully understood this mindful. You can see the mindful there are extinguished in this very life. What it really says is diṭṭha; see dhamma, phenomena; nirvana. So I'm not quite sure whether it would be see phenomena as Nibbāna or see Nibbāna within phenomena, but it's in this very life. They don't fall under Mara's sway, nor are they his lackeys. Mara, of course, is the devil or the angel of death.

So to overcome old age and death, Mara, then practice renunciation is what's said here. When you're looking at the world, not in terms of what can I acquire, but in terms of what's the minimum I need for my support. Now you're beginning to see the world in a way that's much more closely aligned with nirvana. Remember, the dukkha arises because of the craving and clinging. What are we craving to get stuff? What are we clinging to? The stuff we've already got. If you're not dealing with getting and having, well, OK, now you're not falling into samsara. You're not falling into dukkha. This is nirvana.

Any questions on this sutta? You'll have to raise your hand, which is under, I believe it's under reactions. Clara Lynn.

**Questioner:**

Hi. It's more of a comment than a question. And it's just for anyone who does want to follow along with the Pāli now or later, the definitions that come up at the bottom, those are like automatically generated. So they're not always correct. They're usually good. But every once in a while, if you get one that doesn't fit, that's because the computer guessed wrong.

**Leigh**

Right. Yeah. So this is AI, but the eye is not that great. But it's definitely artificial.

**Leigh**

Okay. So if there are no other questions, we can move on. Okay.

Hearing of a hero with no desires for sensual pleasures who has passed over the flood, I've come with a question for that desireless one. Tell me the state of peace, oh, natural visionary. Tell me this, blessed one, as it really is. Okay, so you are not entangled in sensual desire and have passed over the flood, down the far shore. Tell me the state of peace.

We hear the mythology that the Buddha left home because he saw an old person, a sick person, a dead person and a renunciate. But that's mythology. The story does appear in the suttas, but for a previous Buddha, and the long discourse number 14, which is obviously a mythological discourse, but the mythology is that that's why the Buddha left home.

In Sutta Nipata 4.15, he indicates he left home because he was seeking peace. He was from the Sakyan, that's a warrior culture. So think of where the Buddha grew up as more like, yeah, a macho culture where people are always quarreling. And he wasn't into quarreling and he was seeking some peace. And so that's why he left home. And one of the things that was disturbing, of course, is old age, sickness and death. And definitely he was looking for some way to deal with that. But here this questioner recognized that he's going to know something about the state of peace.

For having mastered sensual pleasures, the blessed one proceeds as the blazing sun shines on the earth. May you of vast wisdom explain the teaching to me of little wisdom so that I may understand the giving up of birth and old age here. The translation says rebirth, but it's just birth. People have their immortality projects, including translators. And so there is a tendency to stick rebirth in there as a support for their immortality project when the Pāli actually just says birth.

So Manjara, I think, is aging. So old age and birth right here. So since you understand the sensual desires, you've mastered them, you're not caught in that, please explain this to me.

The sensual desires dispel seeing renunciation as sanctuary. Don't be taking up or putting down anything at all. Don't get lost in acquiring or rejecting. Don't get lost in, well, the first two hindrances, sensual desire and aversion. Let what came before wither away and after let there be nothing. So again, it's all about renunciation here. If you don't grasp at the middle, you will live in peace. The before is usually thought of as the past. The after is the future. And the middle is the present and the middle

between the past and the future.

Get rid of greed for the whole realm of name and form. Has no defilements by which they might fall under the sway of death. So name and form, this is Nama-rupa. It's a very interesting phrase, Nama-rupa. It doesn't seem to be always used the same way in the suttas. Non-independent origination is talked about as mind and body or mentality and materiality. But it also seems to have a sense of, so name would be like a concept and form would be a manifestation.

So if I say to you, cell phone, that's a concept. You know what I'm talking about. If I wave this in front of your face, that's a manifestation. So cell phone is Nama and this box here in my hand is the Rupa. So that's another way to think about it. So basically, the whole world is a world of concepts and manifestations. Actually there's a manifestation and then we put a concept on it.

You get something through your senses, that's when it's manifesting. And then you attach a concept to it. And so for the whole realm of ideas and concepts, ideas and things, when one is rid of greed for the whole realm of name and form, has no defilements by which they might fall under the sway of death. In other words, there's no craving or clinging. And if there's no craving or clinging, there's no dukkha. And this is what is meant by Nibāna.

I think there was something in the summaries. No, not for this one. One of the later ones. Questions on this particular sutta?

**Questioner:**

Can you please just reiterate the two suttas that you mentioned at the beginning about the bodhisattva leaving his family or clan to seek peace rather than the traditional one that's... What was the two suttas?

**Leigh**

Yeah, the one is Sutta Nipata 4.15, where he says he left home seeking peace.

**Questioner:**

Is that Bhante Sujato's version? Because of the numbering, I just want to get... Sorry?

**Leigh**

It's all the versions. I would say that if John D. Aralyn has one on Access to Insight, that's better than Sujato's translation. Otherwise, you can go with Sujato's.

**Questioner:**

And what was the other one from the Long Discourses?

**Leigh**

So, in the Long Discourses at Dīgha Nikāya 14, there's the mythological story of the previous Buddha called Vipassī, who went out and saw old age, sickness, and death, and I renunciate. And then to get the complete Majjhima 26, which is the story of the Buddha's awakening, from there he said that he

sought some way to overcome old age, sickness, and death, and found it. But he doesn't say how in that particular Sutta.

So it's clear he was looking for a way to overcome old age, sickness, and death, as well as looking for peace. But the two are kind of synonymous. If you're not troubled by old age, sickness, and death, that's peaceful.

**Questioner:**

This was actually a question for Clara Lynn, well, and for you, but about the AI situation. Because I saw that the definitions, the possibilities, are numbered just like they would be in a normal dictionary. Do you know if AI is programmed in such a way as to give preference, like to do it the way we would do with synonyms? In other words, do you know what I'm saying? In other words, like the more likely translations are the first, or is it totally randomized?

**Leigh**

So somebody wrote the part that's down here at the bottom. They wrote a little piece of HTML code that's got this on it. And when I double click this, it goes and looks in the database for whatever it's got under that. And it finds this, and it points to this, and then it displays what's there. So it has nothing to do with the context at all. It's just what's there.

**Questioner**

Thanks. That's what I suspected. I mean, so far. Thank you.

**Leigh**

Yeah.

**Questioner**

Yeah. And can I add something to that?

**Leigh**

Certainly.

**Questioner**

So if you go to the Pāli-English dictionary, you'll see that references are given for different definitions because the language that you find in this collection of old suttas may be different from language in later suttas, which may be different from language in commentaries.

So the references that the Pāli-English dictionary gives you, you can think of them as reflecting the different meanings sometimes in the different periods, the different kind of strata of text. And none of that's captured usually with the AI. I think sometimes you might see like COMM, which means commentary, but largely that's lost in the AI.

**Leigh**

And if you are not familiar with the Pāli-English dictionary, I have a free to download version of it for

your Windows computer. I'm assuming everybody has a Windows computer instead of one of those other kind. No. That's too bad.

There is a PDF of the dictionary that you could grab from that site. And it's on my website. Click on the Buddha and then look down for Pāli dictionaries and you can find the stuff there.

**Questioner**

And it's online. There's a website that accesses it. I just posted it in the chat.

**Leigh**

Yeah. It's all online. So it's much easier to deal with. If you have an internet connection, but if you don't, because you're taking the train across America, it's really nice to still have the dictionary available.

**Questioner**

This is maybe too complex a question, but I did want to ask you, so in I'm doing Ajahn Anayalo's, the Nibbāna sermons that were given by Bhikkhu Nananda. In there, Nama-Rupa, and I never actually heard this before, I don't think, is that Nama-Rupa have sort of a special importance in dependent origination as a simile they use as a vortex.

So ignorance and Saṅkhāras, the first two are just the foundations for this vortex. So it's not so much that it's like a looping chain. It's more that you get caught in this quagmire of Nama-Rupa. And I don't know if you had any thoughts on that.

**Leigh**

I had not heard that before. So no, I don't have any thoughts on that. I have not read the Nirvana sermons, well, I read the first one, okay. And they're certainly recommended. They're really, really excellent. And so it'd be something if you really want to dive in deeply to take a look at. But yeah, I can't say anything more than that.

But the one thing I would say about dependent origination, don't take the 12 links as a single description of anything. Okay? It's a mistake. Think of it as a collection. Think of it as a mnemonic device for remembering a collection of necessary conditions rather than an explanation of any single thing.

Within that collection, there are bits and pieces that are strung together over a longer periods of time. And if you want more detail on that, you can download my free book on dependent origination and emptiness because I go into it in detail there.

**Questioner**

I've read it three times. Thanks.

**Leigh**

Very good.

**Questioner**

I wondered if you could talk more about Nama-Rupa because I, or is that a book or a reference you

recommend? Because I find it difficult to grok it. I understand it sort of in DO, thanks to your book, but dependent origination, I shorten it to DO.

But, so are you saying any other time he uses Nama-Rupa, it means concept and manifestation or are there other contexts in which he uses it also?

**Leigh**

In the suttas, it's used in different ways depending on the context. Sometimes it's very clearly mind and body, Dīgha Nikāya 15 there. It's very clearly mind and body. Other places, it's more like manifestation and concept. And other places it's, Nama-Rupa is a phrase that I am still working on. You know, you come across a phrase in the Pāli and you look at it and it doesn't quite fit everywhere and, you know, and then occasionally you find something that goes, oh, this is what they're talking about and it fits everywhere. Saṅkhāra being a great example. You know, lots of places it's translated, karmic formations, mental activities. What the heck is, it's one word for the Buddha. And then fabrications from Tantra or concoctions from Saṅkhāra and suddenly, oh, they're talking about things that are made.

But I haven't gotten it to go click for Nama-Rupa. And I don't think it's possible because I think it's over the period of time that the suttas were composed, both during the Buddha's lifetime and later, Nama-Rupa was used in multiple ways depending on the context. Just like the word dhamma, sometimes it means mind objects. Sometimes it means phenomena. Sometimes it means doctrine. Sometimes it means the Buddha's teachings. And so you have to figure it out from the context. There is no right way to translate it. You got to figure it out from the context. You got to get the translation, figure out what the translator, how they're translating it, translate it back into dhamma and then figure out what's the proper translation given the context. And I think the same applies to Nama-Rupa.

But it's one of the words that I still feel very uncomfortable about. I don't feel like I've got it nailed yet. And I've been working on this for years to try and really get a deep understanding of how it's used in what context.

**Questioner**

Okay, great. Thank you.

**Leigh**

Sure. Bye.

**Questioner:**

Hi. So there's a few things coming to me here is like I've been reading the dependent origination book by Chintita and Anananda. And so to me, you know, it really, I don't know, I have such a shallow knowledge about all of this. But I am interested in actual practicing rather than intellectual concepts. So I actually last time when I when I talked to you and then you said, let go of the concepts. So I practiced with that. And then, you know, from them, what I learned is even Anananda did the same

thing is like a Nama is, it's really not about the individual personal identity. It's about the qualities they make into individuality, which is mixed with the self sense of self to me. So you know, the five names of the Nama, that qualities, right? And like attention, contact, intention, perception, feeling. And then, and then Rupa goes into the four elements, consciousness, space. That's get together to me, I always thought that that was like a separate two things.

But as I practiced, I realized that it's really not separate, it's a together. And then when I bring my sense of self coming in, I separate them. However, that was very useful. You know, when it depends independent origination is like what I noticed is like, um, so I always practiced with like feelings, feelings, because in a sutra, they said that all Dharma converges in the feelings. So I did that. And then it goes right into the body sensations on and on. And then when I, I said, What if I go to Nama-Rupa then? And then what happens is, there I noticed the sense of self rising and I'm, I am making into that conditionality kicks in, and then feels established my consciousness constantly.

But when I when I noticed that that was a concept to me, when I noticed that, oh, it's a sense of self is doing it. And it's that that footing just went away. And suddenly there's a department goes away, and the concentration, concentration just rose up. So how do you look at it? Because you said that, like, it's not really very clear, clear to me. But if we think about it as a conditionality, it really makes sense to me.

### **Leigh**

So yeah, yeah, the way you describe it is very useful. And in many contexts, that is what's going on. But in other contexts, it's actually being used differently. So that's all I was trying to say is that it's not, there's no one definition of Nama-Rupa that's going to fit everywhere, you have to actually understand what's going on. And we don't have really much here, other than the whole realm of name and form. And so I think it means everything that you experience, both the concepts and the materiality. And it doesn't break it up into the bits and pieces as as was described of taking the khandhas and assigning them to Nama or to Rupa, which is something that is done and is useful at times.

But at other times, yeah, it's being used in a different way. Not not totally different, not opposite or anything like that. But here, it's just a general one grid, grid of greed for the whole of existence has no defilements by which they may might fall under the sway of death. So it's the whole realm of name and form. And you got to remember, this is all poetry. And Pāli poetry has to have the right number of syllables. So it's not possible to say one rid of greed Brahman for the whole of existence because you got the wrong number of syllables.

So but if you put in Nama-Rupa, then you get the right number of syllables and then it works. So we're contending with the way that it's expressed, having to fit the number of syllables as well as capture the meaning. But what it means here, the whole realm of Nama-Rupa is just the whole of everything that the whole the whole world.

### **Questioner**



I'm sorry, I'm taking a little more time. But how do you practice with that in your own experience?

**Leigh**

For this particular sentence, the way I'm going to practice with it is to pay attention to my greed. When do I want something? And it's greed for anything in the world. That's how I'm going to practice with it. So I'm only going to take the Nama-Rupa part as anything in the world. And I'm going to practice mostly with the greed.

**Questioner** \ So do you do you practice with the greed separately? Do you practice with the anger separately, clinging separately on and on? All the different patterns?

**Leigh**

When greed arises, I try and notice it. That's what I practice. But it's not there. There's always something else to look at. When the anger arises, that's what I practice with. So I don't go around, okay, what am I greedy about? It's like, oh, I'm being greedy right now. This isn't really useful.

**Questioner**

So presence and absence.

**Leigh**

Yeah. Okay.

Okay, so moving on to the next one.

Okay, this guy clearly, and I'm not going to try and pronounce his name, liked epithets. I beseech you, the shelter lever, the craver cutter, the imperturbable, the delight lever, the flood crosser, the freed, the formulation lever, the intelligence. What was that? 14 different things? Nine different things? Okay, now different people have gathered from across the nations wishing to hear your word, oh, hero. So apparently, there are a number of people around. People have come together to hear teachings from the Buddha. After hearing this spiritual giant, they will depart from here. Please sage, answer them clearly for you truly understand this matter.

What was the question? I mean, he had lots of epithets in there, but what was the question? Basically teach us dharma. Dispel all craving for attachments above, below, all around, between. For whatever a person grasps in the world, Mara pursues them right there. This is the second noble truth. It's not given as the second noble truth, but this is it. Don't do the craving thing because that's how Mara pursues you.

So let a mindful mendicant, bhikkhu, who understands, not grasp anything in the world, observing that in clinging to attachments, these people cling to the domain of death. So this is a very flowery teaching on the second noble truth. I mean, the noble truth, dukkha happens. Dukkha arises dependent on craving, or we could say clinging as well. Craving is I want it, and clinging is I got it. And so, yeah, if you don't have it and you want it, that's craving. If you got it and don't want to let go of it, that's clinging.

So second noble truth, dukkha arises on clinging to attachments. And then third noble truth, you don't want dukkha, don't do the craving and clinging. And the fourth noble truth, of course, is that practice is to undertake so that you can overcome your tendencies for craving and clinging. Attachments is usually upadhi, which we see right here. We talked about upadhi last time. Upadhi is, well, all the accoutrements of your lifestyle. It's given in various ways in the suttas.

**Questioner**

Sorry to interrupt you, but I can't see your screen. I don't know if it's just me, or if it's just me, I'll just log out and log in, but I just sort of mention it.

**Leigh**

Okay, can people see the sutta? Yeah?

So looking for upadhi, if I go here and here and here. So this is from "Majjhima Nikāya" number 26. And I read this last time about upadhi from B. Kubodi. This is from John Peacock. But B. Kubodi also has a footnote on upadhi. And if you want to look this up, I'll stick this in the chat. Upadhi is an interesting word. And I think the best translation, perhaps, is the accoutrements of one's lifestyle. Your iPhone, your car, your favorite sweater, all these things. So let a practitioner who understands not grasp at anything in the world, observing that in clinging to upadhi, the accoutrements of your lifestyle, these people cling to the domain of death.

**Questioner**

I just wanted to clarify. You're talking about grasping and you refer to the accoutrements of our life and the essential things we can grasp to. It seems to me that renunciation for those things is relatively easy compared to renunciation for our habits, our views and opinions, and our very sense of self, our personal identity, which I think the teaching is that we need to abandon grasping to all of those factors as well as things in the sensual realm.

**Leigh**

Yeah.

**Questioner**

Would you comment on that?

Yeah, you're exactly right. I think the word upadhi tends to refer to the accoutrements of one's lifestyle, but anything you're grasping at, I'm a dharma teacher, I'm an American, anything like that is a source of dukkha because, yeah, if the wrong guy gets elected president, then, yeah, being an American is a source of dukkha, right, and so forth. So yeah, we can grasp at anything. We're totally shameless.

And the one that's the biggest problem is, as you say, this sense of self because the grasping, the craving and clinging all requires a craver and a clinger. The craver has to be somebody who wants to get it. If there's nobody who wants to get it, there's no craving. And the same thing for clinging. It has to be the one who owns it, who's clinging to it. If we can uproot that sense of self, then there's nobody

there to do the craving and clinging, no craving and clinging, no dukkha, nirvana. Yeah, very good. Thank you.

**Questioner**

Thank you.

**Questioner**

Yeah, just to say, actually, both of those are reflected in this verse. So what we have is upadhi in a verb form. So it's saying give up, taking up these things, these accoutrements. But then we've got in the, what was it, the third line, the adana satte. And that is pointing to grasping more generally. It's just like entangled in grasping. So you've got the more general case there.

**Leigh**

Right, thank you. Yeah. So dana, you probably know that word, adana, not being generous, hanging on to, right, grasping.

**Questioner**

Yeah, I know we talked about this quite a bit last week. But it just occurred to me, while Victor, I think it was, was talking that we have this pervasive phenomenon in the modern world of people even clinging on to dukkha. I mean, they know it's dukkha, and they cling on to it because they, whatever reason, they want to be dependent or they want to get certain, you know, anyway, I won't go into the whole psychology.

But, I'm wondering, is there, is there any evidence of that back in those times in the suttas of people who are, like, in mired in dukkha and want to stay there? I'm thinking like, like in the, again, in the, in the Bible, which I know much better, the idea there's there versus like talking about a pig returning to the mud again and again or a dog returning to its vomit, you know, this idea of like, actually clinging to the dukkha itself.

**Leigh**

Yeah, this is mentioned in the suttas. I don't have a reference there that, you know, but this idea is mentioned there, and that someone, someone has something that is not helpful for them, but they won't let it go. And I don't, I don't have a reference for you.

**Questioner**

I mean, I was thinking just the last verse here. These people cling to the domain of death, that in a certain sense, there's the clinging to attachments, which are alluring, etc, etc, or one's own ego or whatever. But, but as I read that, that's what made me think of it actually was this last, these people cling, that they're actually clinging to the dukkha itself.

**Leigh**

Yeah, only they don't see it as dukkha, of course.

Right. Yeah, sometimes I mean, people cling to something, and they do see it as dukkha, but they won't let it go. Here, people don't understand that it's dukkha, I think is what is being pointed to.

**Questioner**

Okay, thank you.

**Leigh**

So those were the easy ones for this time. We'll take a look at some that get a little more complex. For the meditator rid of hopes, who has completed the task, is free of defilements, and has begun gone beyond all things. I've come seeking with a question, tell me the liberation by enlightenment, the smashing of ignorance. I think last week, we talked about hope and getting giving up hope was that at this course or was it one of the others I was teaching? It was this one. Okay, good.

So yeah. Hope, hope to get something better. Yeah, it's just deal with what's there. Who has completed the task. In other words, the victory cry of the Arahants, one knows this is the end of birth, what had to be done has been done. There's nothing further to do here. One has completed the task. Is free of defilements and has gone beyond all things. Gone beyond being attached or craving or anything. Come with a question. Tell me the liberation by enlightenment, by awakening, the smashing of ignorance. And the way to get there, the giving up of both sensual desires and displeasures, the dispelling of dullness and the prevention of remorse.

Okay, I'm going to throw a phrase out there for you. Five hindrances. Do you see four of the hindrances right there? Sensual desire, first hindrance, definitely. Actually aversion would be a better translation here. Okay, giving up sensual desires and aversion. Dispelling of dullness. This is one of the words right here that you used for sloth and torpor. Okay.

And this is one of the words used when it's talking about restlessness and remorse. Okay. So this appears to be a very early teaching on the hindrances, although it only has four of them here. And the hindrances are what's necessary to overcome in order to enter the jhānas. See that word right there? J-H long A. And jhāna would then be in A. But this is Pāli, and so everything gets changed around. The practitioner of the jhānas would be a way that you could translate this. The word jhāna literally means meditation. So the practitioner of meditation, the meditator. But yeah, this is important. The jhāna practitioner.

Clara Lynn, you had something to say on these?

**Questioner**

Oh yeah, there is a great pun in here because this word, nivaranaṃ, the word for hindrance is nivaranaṃ. The only difference is the I is long. So there's totally a pun there.

**Leigh** Okay, now which word is this? What's the... Where is it? Right down here.

**Questioner**

Right at the end of what you read out. See it says nivranaṃ. And the word hindrance, okay, it's

nivāranam. So the I becomes long and the A becomes short, but otherwise it looks the same.

**Leigh** Oh, interesting.

**Questioner**

So it's great wordplay and pointing to the hindrances. That's how I read it anyway.

**Leigh** Yeah, this is very definitely, this may be the earliest reference to the hindrances in the whole of the canon, time-wise.

Pure equanimity and mindfulness. Actually that's not a great translation. A better translation, I think one more accurately would be mindfulness purified by equanimity. But this phrase right here occurs as a description of the fourth jhāna. And so I'm going to say that this is a reference to the fourth jhāna. Yeah, I know that the seventh jhāna supposedly showed up and I'm like, nah, it's not the jhāna, it's not the jhāna. But I think this one is actually referring to the fourth jhāna. So with mindfulness purified by equanimity, with investigation of principles running out in front, with a mind that is supremely tuned to investigating phenomena, with a mind that is jhanically concentrated and has equanimity fully purified by mindfulness, has mindfulness fully purified by equanimity, with the investigation of the principles that lead the way, understanding what's really going on. This I declare is liberation by enlightenment, the smashing of ignorance.

This is very similar to what we find in many suttas. So we get the abandoning of the hindrances, followed by the four jhānas. Fourth jhāna, you've got mindfulness fully purified by equanimity. And then with a mind thus concentrated, clear, sharp, bright, malleable, wieldy, given to imperturbability, one directs and inclines it to knowing and seeing, to investigating reality.

So this very much matches what's found in the gradual training. And yes, I talk about the gradual training quite a bit in the book on the gradual training, which will be out later this month. So you can take a look at it. So yeah, I'm going to say that from here, the giving up of both the hindrances and by practicing the jhānas up to four, and then investigating reality, this is liberation by enlightenment, the smashing of ignorance. This is a summary of overcoming the hindrances, practicing the jhānas, practicing insight, and overcoming the asavas, which are the last four steps in many of the recensions of the gradual training. So this could be thought of as the granddaddy of the gradual training, gradual training developed out of this.

The questioner continues, "What fetters the world? How does it travel about? The giving up of what is extinguishment, nirvana, spoken of?" So what fetters the world? How does it travel about? That's actually not a really good translation. I'm going to give him an F on that line. This vicāra, which is often translated as examining or pondering, literally meant wandering about originally. And that's what Sujato has done here, is he's taken vicāra back to his very original meaning of wandering about. What fetters the world? How does it travel about, which doesn't make any sense. But what fetters the world? How can we examine that maybe is a better way. With the giving up of what is nirvana spoken? Delight

fetters the world, nandi. It travels about by means of thought. We examine by thinking. Here's vitarka and vicāra. So we think and ponder about what's going on.

With the giving up of craving, we're back to the second noble truth, nirvana is spoken of. One living mindfully, how does consciousness cease? We had that last week, right, the ceasing of consciousness. See vinyana here. And it doesn't know what this word means, but it says see this word. And so to break up, hinder, stop, keep in check. For one living mindfully, how does consciousness stop, keep in check? Let us hear what you have to say. Not taking pleasure in vedanā, internally and externally.

Okay, so don't get lost in seeking pleasure externally through your senses or internally through your mind. For one living mindfully, that's how consciousness comes to an end. And consciousness coming to an end, we talked about that last time. This is mentioned in the verses at the end of Dīgha Nikāya number 11. This is the story about the monk who goes up through the various heavens wanting to know where the four elements cease without remainder. And all of the devas go, we don't know, ask the guys upstairs until he gets to Brahma. And Brahma goes, I don't know, ask the Buddha, you're like a Buddhist monk, ask him. And the Buddha asks, the monk asks the Buddha. And the Buddha says, you put the question wrong. It's where do the four elements no footing find? Where do high and low, long and short, beautiful and ugly come to an end? And Nama-Rupa come to an end. And it's with consciousness that is signless, limitless, and all illuminating.

So signless, what is this? Okay, you all know it's a cell phone. Why do you know it's a cell phone? Because of the signs. It's got a screen. It's a rectangle, you know, twice as long as it is wide, and it's really thin and it's got the buttons on the side. Those are the signs of a cell phone. Right? So consciousness is signless. Consciousness that's not taking the sensory input and conceptualizing it. It's just taking in the sensory input. If you're familiar with the advice to Bahiya of the bark cloth, in seeing, there will only be seeing, in hearing, only hearing, in sensing, only sensing, in cognizing, only cognizing. When you can do that, Bahiya, there's no you in that, no you in this, no you in between, just this is the end of dukkha. Okay?

So basically, what the Buddha is saying is, can you experience the world prior to conceptualizing your experience? That's how consciousness ceases. That's what he's saying. Oh, and then the sutta goes on to say, with the cessation of consciousness, all this comes to an end.

So the cessation of consciousness comes for one living, for not taking pleasure in vedanā, internally or externally, for one living mindfully. That's how consciousness comes to an end. If you don't get lost in the vedanā, you don't go seeking the pleasant, running away from the unpleasant, both internally and externally, and can live mindfully, then you have a chance to get to the point where you're not being fooled by your conceptualizing. Because well, mostly what we do is we experience our concepts. Right now, you're looking at me on a computer screen. Okay?

But you're not really, you're really looking at pixels, little tiny lights, bulbs going on and off and changing color. I move around like this, different pixels get lit up with different colors. That's what's really coming

in. But you're taking it and you're interpreting it as me and my eyeglasses and the blackout curtain and the photograph on the wall and the tanka and, right? We live in a world of concepts. We have to. The universe is too big for us to take the whole thing in.

And yet we need to find something to eat. So we need to take bits and pieces of the universe, conceptualize what they are. And then having conceptualized what they are, we can decide whether we should eat that or is it going to eat us or whatever. What the Buddha is teaching is don't be fooled by your conceptualizing. Now he's not talking about that here. What he's talking about is not getting lost in the vedanā, the pleasant or the unpleasant, both internally and externally, and to live mindfully.

But the cessation of consciousness that he talks about in Digha Nikāya number 11, and also in the Bāhiya Sutta, which is Udāna 1.10. It's about experiencing the world raw rather than experiencing your concepts. So I just threw in a whole bunch of other stuff from other suttas. This one is pretty simple. Not taking pleasure in vedanā internally and externally. Live mindfully. This is how consciousness comes to an end.

But there's a lot in this particular sutta. I mean, we've got, it starts off with practicing the jhānas. For one, practicing the jhānas, rid of hope, completed the task, free of defilements, gone beyond all things. What's awakening? Overcoming the hindrances. Practicing up through the fourth jhāna, mindfulness fully purified by equanimity, and investigating reality. This is the liberation, the smashing of ignorance.

What fetters the world? How could we explore it? With the giving up of what is awakening, Nibbāna talked about. Delight fetters the world. Think about the things you're entangled in. It's because they're delightful, right? We can explore this by thinking about what's going on. With the giving up of craving, Nibbāna has spoken of. If someone's living mindfully, how does consciousness cease? Not taking pleasure in feelings, not getting lost in your sensory input. Live mindfully. This is how consciousness ceases.

### **Questioner**

Hi. I just want to make comments here because this is almost ingenious. What I see here is backwards, from the bottom to up. What it is, it's pointing out the four factors of concentration practice. You know, pitaka, pichara. Economy and all the way to ekakarta. And that's how it goes into jhāna. It seems to me it's just so beautiful and it really opens my heart. Also, it's like combining it together with vipassana and jhāna practice together here.

### **Leigh**

Right. Yeah. The insight practice is frequently combined with jhāna practice in the suttas. That's the whole point of the gradual training. So yeah. But yeah, this is brilliant. I mean, if you read it backwards, you wind up with the jhānas. You read it forward, you wind up enlightened.

### **Questioner**

Yeah. I was just completely taken aback.

**Leigh** Yeah. This is a really powerful sutta. There's a lot of great teachings in this one.

**Questioner**

Thank you.

**Leigh**

Sure. Any other questions or comments on this particular sutta? Okay.

So, the question of Posala. Oh, also, the one we just worked on. There's these two suttas that give more information. I talked about Digha 11. This one is about the stopping of consciousness. And it's the stopping of being entangled in your sensory input.

And then there's AN 333. And Sariputta, "When a bhikkhu has no eye-making, mind-making, underlying tendency to conceit, in regard to this conscious body, in regard to all external objects, and dwells with liberation of mind, liberation by wisdom, some more eye-making, etc. It was with reference to that that I said, the abandoning of birth and sensual perceptions. So this particular sutta is a commentary on what we just read. Okay. This is a later sutta, I think. Now, whether later means it's late in the Buddha's teaching career or after his death. But this phrase, the liberation of mind and liberation by wisdom, only appears in suttas that seem to be later composition. In the early material, you don't find this.

And stuff that's clearly later, you will find this. So I'm taking that as a marker that this is a later sutta. But it might be worth reading. And it's linked from here. So you can look through the summaries, and if you want to take a look at it later. So we're up to Posala. And my comment is, this is a very cryptic sutta. Okay.

Also, I don't think it's jhāna 7. So this one, when I was studying for this, and I was reading the suttas, I began to get a sense of what was going on in most of them. But this one, yeah, this one is still more difficult to understand. So we're going to do it. And then we're going to take a short break. To the one who reveals the past, who is imperturbable, with doubts cast off, who has gone beyond all things, I have come with a question. Consider one who perceives the disappearance of form, who has entirely given up the body, who sees nothing at all, internally and externally. I asked the Sakyan about knowledge for them. How should one like that be guided? Okay.

I don't think that this particular translation by Sujato is very accurate. It's great if we want to look up, you know, something and find the poly for it. But I don't think it's really that helpful. And so I have another one. To the one who points out the past, the unmoved one who is cut off doubt, who is perfect in everything, I have come in need of a question. I've come in need with a question. For the one whom perception of form has ended, who on the inside and outside is seeing there is nothing whatsoever, I ask about his knowledge. How is such a one led further? Okay, so we're last week we had a sutra that some people thought was referring to the seventh jhāna. Well, guess what? They're thinking this is the seventh jhāna and I'm going no, this is no thingness. Okay.

All the stations of consciousness, the realized one knows. So the stations of consciousness are talked



about in great detail in Dīgha Nikāya number 15. But, yeah, there's always a but. Dīgha Nikāya 15 is a Kuru Sutta. It's a sutta from the land of the Kurus. There are about a half a dozen of them, including the very famous Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. But I don't think those suttas are actually given by the Buddha. I think they were composed in the land of the Kurus and brought to the second council of Arhats, which was somewhere around 60 to 100 years after the Buddha's death.

Dīgha Nikāya 15 is really three different teachings jammed together to make one sutta. The first one is on dependent origination and is a detailed explanation that supports a two lifetime model, not the three lifetime model found in the Visuddhimagga, but a two lifetime model. The next one, the next sutta in this sutta, the next discourse in this sutta is on the stations of consciousness, and there are seven of them, the highest one being the seventh jhāna, the realm or experience of nothingness.

And so frequently, all the stations of consciousness realize one knows. So this is taken to mean, oh, yeah, the nothing here is definitely talking about that. I'm not buying it. Okay. The realized one knows that where one stands, what one is intent on, what he knows that one stands, what is intent on, what he is going towards. In other words, very mindful of what's going on in life. Having known the origin of no thingness, and that enjoyment is a fetter, knowing deeply that it is so and then having insight into this, this is real knowledge for him, the Brahman who is accomplished. Okay.

So raise your hand if this is all totally clear. Yeah, I didn't think so. As much as I've studied it, it's really hard to figure out what's going on here.

So Clara Lynn, what can you say?

**Questioner**

I'm not raising my hand because it's all totally clear. Okay. I just want to clarify that. But but this stations of consciousness, I mean, when when I see it in the Pāli, I see something quite different. I see consciousness and it's this word like to stand, it's the route to stand, which you can take as a station or a support. But the way I just am instinctively reacting to it, it's it's all those places where your consciousness can land and label things. Right, not not like stages or anything, but it's like it's landing on this thing I'm calling a dog and it's landing on this thing I'm calling a computer, the places where the consciousness lands. It's another way to read it.

**Leigh**

It's a it's makes so much more sense. I have the translation by KR Norman here. And we should take a look at what he says.

Norman is, I would say the best translator.

**Questioner**

Yeah, but he's he's going with stages of consciousness too.

**Leigh**

Oh, he goes, he does as well. Yeah, knowing all that, and he says stages, and then there's another

possibility. Stations stages of consciousness, but I like your translation. It makes much better sense.

**Questioner**

Yeah, I mean, I'm often on my own with these translations, but I'm sticking to it.

**Leigh**

Well, it fits my understanding of what's being talked about much better than anything else.

The realized one directly knows how consciousness goes and finds its objects. What it stands upon, and knows this one remains committed to that as their final goal. Knows that understanding this, how consciousness takes up things that gets gets entangled. This is this is this is what we're after to understand how that's going on. Understand that desire for birth. Where is it? It doesn't say rebirth. I don't see it. I think this is a really poor translation. If we look at it here, having known the origin of nothingness and enjoyment as a fetter, that's really kind of different from understanding desire for rebirth in the dimension of nothingness is a fetter, right? The rebirth in the dimension of nothingness. What's really here is no thingness. The state of having nothing, complete absence of possessions. I think that's what's meant here rather than the state of nothingness. Okay, rather than the seventh jhāna, which is what meaning number two is. So yeah, really poor translation there.

So understanding the state of having nothing, the complete absence of possessions. Understanding no thingness. We have to interact with the world by taking the holistic universe and dividing it up into bits and pieces, things. This is person, this is glasses, this is blackout curtain, etc. We're "thingify-ing" the world.

So if someone can get to the point where they're not fooled by their "thingify-ing" and directly understands what this really means, one then sees that matter clearly. This is their knowledge of truth, the one who has lived the life.

So I think what the Buddha is saying here is the cessation of consciousness is the cessation of divided knowing. Vijnana is literally divided knowing. So when you stop chopping up the holistic universe into a bunch of bits and pieces, you stop thingifying the universe and experience it "raw". Now this doesn't mean that you're experiencing the real universe. This means you're experiencing your sensory input raw. We don't experience the real universe. We only experience our senses.

You've never seen anything ever except neurological activity in your visual cortex. We hope that it somehow relates to the external world because if you see a donut, then you know you can eat it or not. But all you saw was neurological activity in your visual cortex.

And so what the Buddha is trying to say, I think, is can you experience the world without getting lost in the concepts that you're laying on top of your sensory input, without dividing the world up into bits and pieces and this concept and that concept and everything else? Can you?

You can do the Bāhiya practice in seeing there's only seeing and sensing only sensing. When you can do that, you begin to free yourself from your concepts. Mostly well, mostly we're entangled in our

concepts. Think about all of the political division in the United States today. What are people arguing about? Their concepts. That's all it is.

When is it a human being? Is it a human being in the gleam of the eye of the father as he approaches his wife? Are there a human being there? I mean, the sperm exists, you know, is that I mean, if these people really want to get serious about it, then they have to make, you know, a man having an intentional ejaculation a criminal act that's murder, right? Well, that's that's all concept.

And so does life start at conception? That's a concept. Does it start at birth? It's still a concept. Does it start when the child is one year old? In some of the ancient cultures, they never gave a kid a name until they were one year old because so many children died in childbirth. You didn't really want to get attached to them by giving them a name. Right. Their conceptualization of when life started was when you were one year old. Right. And so people are arguing about their concepts. They're not arguing about reality. You can't argue about reality because without your concepts, you can't actually express what you think reality is. So you're always dealing with concepts.

The trick is not to get rid of concepts. The trick is to not be fooled by your concepts. Don't be fooled by your conceptualizing, which is the title of the last chapter of my book on dependent origination, which is pointing in the same direction. I think that's what's going on here.

Right. It's not explicitly laid out like that in this particular sutta, but this particular sutta is just not explicitly laid out in a way that I can really understand at all. And so this is what I get. This is what I understand that it's pointing towards.

**Questioner**

I'm just wondering if that's maybe, is that maybe like what Advaita is pointing to with non-duality, the sense of taking in life as we experience it without separating anything just as a kind of a whole experience. That's part of my question. Then my other question is-

**Leigh**

Wait, wait, wait. One at a time.

**Questioner**

Okay. Yeah, because I'm not a student of Advaita. I just know some of the-

**Leigh**

I'm not either. And non-duality is pointing at, can you experience the world without the dualities of long and short, high and low, beautiful and ugly, et cetera. And non-duality is experiencing the world like that. I suspect that's what Advaita is pointing at, but I'm not a student of Advaita and I can't say for sure.

**Questioner**

But isn't this kind of the same? I mean, what you've just said and that sense of not breaking up into boxes and categories is kind of going in the same direction, right?

**Leigh**

This is non-duality, yes. What I'm saying is the Buddha's teaching non-duality right here.

**Questioner**

Right. Yeah. Okay.

So, if we were to experience everything directly, which I also understand the Bāhiya practice, I still, when I look at it coming from, and again, as you well know, and I keep reiterating, I'm coming at all of this from a Christian background. So, it's a very different orientation. So, that's why I want to have checkpoints where I see if I'm going off in the wrong direction. I always think of the Citta when I'm looking at everything Buddhist, and to sort of as the Citta as the kind of orientation that we not, so as not to get to, not to divest ourselves of the significance. I mean, to me, there's no point in even achieving enlightenment if you've thrown the baby out with the bathwater, so to speak, by just being like an animal, just sensory. Now I'm eating, now I'm defecating, now I'm sleeping, now I'm dying, the end. That the Citta to me, from my limited understanding of the suttas, is kind of like the glue that holds it all together, that you never can let go of the, and that's where if you combine the Citta with the Advaita, well not Advaitic, because we're not doing that, but the non-dual sense of like this all-encompassing experience, that somehow you arrive at the like the sweet spot as a, because as human beings, we are different than just like plants or whatever, in terms of our sense, we're sentient beings. Does that make sense? Probably not.

**Leigh**

Yeah, sort of. Okay, so Citta is that organ in the center of your chest, which is the source of your thinking and emoting. The goo in your skull is the marrow of your skull. Sometimes you get excess and you have to blow it out of your nose, so you're blowing your brains out. This was the understanding at the time of the Buddha. So the heart was the source of thoughts and emotions. And that's really what the Citta was. This was the organ that did all of this. It was the organ that generated the vitarka, the thinking, et cetera. And Pāli doesn't distinguish between thoughts and emotions, so vitarka would be thinking and emoting. We cover both of those.

All right. Now, interestingly enough, the Mahayana talks about compassion as being really important, and this is why the Buddha left home out of compassion and so forth.

You read the suttas, the Buddha left home because he was seeking to find a solution for himself. There was no compassion involved until he became awakened. And then he looked around, saw there were some people who had little dust in their eyes, and then out of compassion, he went out to teach them. In other words, the awakening itself has a tendency to take you to a place where compassion is spontaneously arising, apparently. I can't give you what full awakening does for someone from my own experience, because I still got work to do. But this definitely seems to be the case, that once you realize nirvana, the process of doing it is going to take you to a place where you're also realizing the interconnected nature of the whole universe, because you're looking at the world non-dualistically.

And you realize that, oh, yeah, I come back here and there's me, but I'm not really separate from the other beings. It just sort of looks like I'm separate from the other beings. And if one of them is suffering, because we're interconnected, I should try and alleviate their dukkha. So the compassion is an automatically generated phenomena from the realization that happens in the awakened state. This appears to be what's going on. So it's not so much associated with the citta, it's associated with a deeper understanding of reality, that the compassion arises out of that.

For the people at the time of the Buddha, the compassion arises out of the deeper understanding of reality, and it arises out of the citta, because that's where all the thoughts and emotions arise from.

**Questioner**

I guess the reason I chose the word citta for this, I mean, that's always what kind of echoes for me is the sense of, I mean, I love that word, because we don't really have it in our language, this unification and integration of the heart and mind, whereby we're not just functioning like the AI that we see here, where it's just this arbitrary, you know, and I hope you're not saying we have to wait till we're all enlightened to have compassion.

I know you're not, I'm teasing, but what I mean is that I guess I use the word citta as a kind of to emphasize this integrated approach to life, rather than just, it's not surely conceptual, and it's not surely, we're not, you know, we're not animals, as we have higher moral obligations, you know, like the precepts and things, and we're working towards something. But to me, the citta is what differentiates, well, maybe I'm using it wrong, the potential for compassion is what distinguishes, like, to go to your favorite politics subject, one would distinguish one candidate from the other. To what degree are these people actually compassionate? Are they looking at the universe from a perspective, an integrated perspective of that we're all in this together, it's not just about me. So it's the non-selfie, I mean, it's the whole thing.

Anyway, I'm not, I'll let other people come in, there are lots of people waiting. It's a big discussion. Thank you.

**Leigh**

Right, sure. Okay. Yeah, compassion is definitely required on the path. So is metta, and mudita, and equanimity. I mean, the Buddha taught the Brahma, Viharas, and practicing them is really important. And Ayya Khema says start every meditation period with a metta, you know, at least, at least, you know, a minute of metta at the beginning of every period. And basically, compassion is metta in action.

**Questioner**

So thank you.

**Questioner**

Yeah, I'm just thinking on my feet, but I think what's been said already, that word, "no thingness", it does seem to have an ethical calling about it. Because if the Bodhisattva set out and then became

the Buddha, as a peace generator, his project was peace, seeking peace within himself, and then consequently, with other people.

**Leigh**

Exactly that no thingness of, you know, how, for how long are you going to quarrel, believing that this is the right point of view? It's letting go of those three points, isn't it? Hatred, hatred, and confusion that is it worth it? Is it worth fighting over? You know, can we not just get on? It seems so humble in a way, so much common sense. And so down to earth, and so simple. But it's so hard to put in practice, because we do get stuck in concepts.

And it's like, well, it's my, it's my right, or I am right, or they shouldn't have done that. But I think it is, what I'm feeling is that the whole project of this no thingness feels like a no possessions. It's not literal, because I've lived alongside monastics, they might not technically own possessions, but they make use of a lot of things. And I think it's more of an ethical project that he's trying to communicate, without being prescriptive. It's not like a command.

**Leigh** He's trying to point out the importance of not craving and clinging.

**Questioner**

Yeah, basically, it's not a project of prescriptions, or you must do it's for each and every one of us to do the right thing, basically. It's like the precepts, undertake the training. Yeah, yeah. But I think it's a moment by moment awareness of ethical awareness of that, how to, and I'm thinking on my feet, so I don't have a formulation of words to articulate it in a very elegant way. But it's just this no thingness has this ethical quality built into it. Because ultimately, it's like, well, if in that moment, you can actually feel a sense of anatta, you might have a chance of doing the right thing. If in that moment, you have a sense of a feeling of anicca, you might do the right thing. If in that moment, you have a feeling of dukkha, then you might do the right thing, because you want to you want to generate peace. So I feel that's where I'm at.

**Leigh** Yeah. Once you experience the world, "no thing", once you can get to the "no thing" space, then the tendency to crave and cling around that disappears, drops down. Because this whole thing to cling on to, and even when the things come back, you realize, oh, this is just a construct in my mind. There's nothing that I can cling to, that's going to give me the lasting peace. It's it's all just in a big flow and flux.

Now you're seeing the anicca. And you've seen the dukkha and the anatta as well. So this is a way to experience the world. And me talking about it here is not going to get you to the experience. You have to go out and practice it. This is the only way. And yeah, it takes a while. But yeah, this is what is being talked about, I think, in this particular sutta.

**Questioner**

Thank you.

**Questioner**

Yes, I just wondered if you could upload the KR Norman translation one more time for this one, the Posala, please.

**Leigh**

Yeah, we can do that. Yeah, I'll do that.

The answer is: the Tathāgata knowing all stages of consciousness knows that person standing in this world or released or destined for that release, which again, didn't I didn't get it. Knowing the origin of the state of no thingness, one thinks enjoyment is a fetter. Knowing this, thus, then one has insight there in. This is the true knowledge of that Brahman who has lived the perfect life.

And yeah, that didn't really clear anything up for me.

Yeah, this is a great book. This is a really excellent translation of the whole Sutta Nipata. This is a really difficult book. I read multiple copies, multiple translations of the Sutta Nipata multiple times before I could actually read this and figure out what was going on, because it's more a literal translation. But the literal translation at this point didn't help a lot.

So yeah, this one is the most difficult Sutta in book five. And I'm hoping to take the transcript of this teaching and turn it into a book, just like I did with last year's Sati Center teaching. And I know that this particular Sutta is going to eat up more of my time trying to get it explained than any of the others.

Okay, so we're eight minutes past where I wanted to take a break. So we're going to take a break. It's 38 past the hour. So a 10 minute break, 48 past the hour. And we'll come back and look at the remaining Suttas.

[BREAK]

So we can get started. And this is probably the most, well, the most interesting Sutta in the whole collection. It's my favorite by far. And this is the questions of Mogharāja.

So Raja, you probably know the word Raja, that's king, right? Maha Raja, great king. Yeah. Mogha. Mogha can mean foolishness, or vain, or empty.

So the king of foolishness. Twice I've asked the Sakyan, but you haven't answered me, O clear-eyed one. I have heard that the divine seer answers when questioned a third time. So this is something that shows up multiple times in the Suttas. You ask the Buddha something and he doesn't answer until you ask him three times. Bahiya in particular, you know, he interrupted the Buddha's alms round. And you're not supposed to interrupt the alms round of somebody who gets their food by going on alms round, because if you interrupt them and ask for teachings, then there won't be any food left.

But Bahiya kept insisting, and so the Buddha gave him a brief instruction, which worked, and he became fully awakened. So Mogharāja apparently has asked the Buddha twice and didn't get an

answer. And so now he's asking a third time. Regarding this world, the other world, and the realm of Brahma with his gods, I'm not familiar with the view of the renowned Gotama.

So I've come seeking with a question for the one of excellent vision, how to look upon the world so the king of death won't see you. That's an interesting question.

How should I view the federal government so the IRS cannot see me? Or something like that, right? Why would viewing something differently, you know, I mean, especially how can you look at the world so that you don't die? I mean, that just really seems like a very weird question.

But the Buddha has a brilliant answer. Look upon the world as empty, ever mindful. Having uprooted the view of self, you may thus cross over death. That's how to look upon the world so the king of death won't see you.

Okay, so this is an interesting sutta in that it's got all this flowery stuff about asking multiple times and hopefully you're the clear-eyed one who will give me the answer when I ask you the third time. And then it's very simple. How should one look upon the world so the king of death won't see you? King of death right here.

Look upon the world as empty, ever mindful. That's the answer. Okay, so mindfulness has gotten a lot of billing lately and hopefully you have some idea about mindfulness.

I would translate mindfulness as remembering to be fully present with what's happening in the here and now. So you're not lost in the past or the future. You're paying full attention to what's going on in the here and now. So there are practices of mindfulness given in the Satipatthana Sutta. There's 13 in the Pāli version and there are multiple versions. Maybe you're familiar with Bhikkhu Analayo's teachings from some of the Agamas, the Chinese versions. There's two versions that he teaches from there. I think there's a Tibetan version and a Sanskrit version. There's also another Pāli version in the Abhidhamma. So tons of versions around of mindfulness.

There's a brilliant book by Bhikkhu Sujato who's doing these translations for us called A History of Mindfulness that you can download from my website. Go to my website, click on the reading list and look for a history of mindfulness. It'll give you a lot of details about, well, the history of mindfulness, the history of the mindfulness suttas and how it came to be.

And then Bhikkhu Sujato, his PhD thesis, Bhikkhu Analayo's PhD thesis is on the Satipatthana Sutta and it's quite a scholarly look at it. And then Joseph Goldstein has a really brilliant big old thick book called Mindfulness, which is a collection of discourses he gave at the forest refuge on the Satipatthana Sutta. I was lucky enough to be there and hear some of them live and it's brilliant. It's a really great book. So I don't think I need to say anything more about mindfulness, but the emptiness thing, we probably can talk about that,

But I'm going to stop with Clara Lynn and see what she has to say here.



**Questioner:**

Okay. So two really interesting things. One, we've got Suññato lokam, right? So lokam is in the accusative case. That's the object. We're looking upon the world. Suññato is not in the accusative case. It's in a different case. What case is it in? It's an ablative. Ablative can be like a cause or it can be where something originates.

So the way I read this, and again, I think I'm alone in this, but I'm sticking to it, it's like from the vantage point of emptiness, right? You've gotten into this, there's no you when the non-dual state is there, but it's emptiness. And it's from there that there is regarding the world.

But Suññato and lokam are not in the same case. Suññato is ablative. And then the other really interesting thing, Mogharāja sadā sato. Sadā is an indeclinable, so the endings aren't going to change on that. Sato, okay, yeah, you can translate it as mindfulness. It also just happens to be the dative of the participle of the verb to be, right? So like for one being, like being here, being present. And I can't believe that that is not at least a pun. I just have to call that out.

**Leigh:**

Right. Yeah. So, yeah, be here as you ever be here.

**Questioner:**

Right, for one always like in the moment, basically is what it's saying. The one who's continually Sadā, always in the moment, and then it fits with the rest of it. So it's another way to read it.

**Leigh:**

Yeah. But definitely we have Suññato. So what does it mean for something to be empty? That's the question. I have this web page on my website, which I have now integrated into the second edition of Dependent Origination and Emptiness, which will be out sometime this spring. This is really the only change. And I'm talking about emptiness there and what it means. So the translation here closely matches what we just read. I think I took it from Ireland.

How should one view the world so that one is not seen by the king of death? View the world as empty or view the world from an empty perspective. Ever mindful, uprooting the view of self, you may thus be one who overcomes death. So regarding the world, one is not seen by the king of death. So this is about the deathless, right? And the deathless is a synonym for Nibbāna.

Now, Mogharājā, the king of foolishness, might have not been talking about the deathless. He may have been talking about literally, how can I view the world so I won't die? We don't know that. All we know is what we have here. But the Buddha answers him very much with deathless as the answer. And so what does it mean, view the world as empty? Well at Samyutta Nikāya 35.85, so 35 is on the book on the senses. Ananda asks, "Empty is the world. Empty is the world. In what way, Venerable Sir, is it said empty is the world?"

So what does it mean to view the world as empty? It is Ananda, because it is empty of self and what

belongs to a self. So when the Buddha tells Mogharājā, view the world as empty or view the world from an empty perspective, what he's saying is view the world and see that there's not a self or what belongs to a self. And what is empty of self and what belongs to a self? The I, Ananda, is empty of self and what belongs to a self. Materiality, sights, are empty of self and what belongs to a self. I consciousness is empty of self and what belongs to a self. I contact is empty of self and what belongs to a self. Whatever vedanā arises with I contact as condition, whether pleasant, not pleasant, or neither pleasant or unpleasant, that too is empty of self and what belongs to the self. And the same for the other senses, ear and sounds, nose and smell, tongue and taste, body and tangibles, mind and mind objects.

So viewing the world as empty is your sense organs and their objects. And the object of the sight is the physical world out there. So when in the Mahayana they talk about the world out there being empty, yes, this is addressed here. But even more importantly is addressed that your processing of your sensory input is empty up through vedanā.

Now the Buddha talks about how we process our sensory input in multiple suttas. Probably the most famous is the Honeyball Sutta, which is found at Majjhima 18. And basically what the Buddha says, there is object and there is the organ. And there is sense consciousness. So sense consciousness is what required for to get the organ and the object to come together to make contact. For example, right now you are not aware of the pressure on your left foot until I just said it. You had no sense consciousness in your left foot. Your sense consciousness was pretty much focused on looking at your screen and hearing me talk. So when I say the pressure on your left foot, oh, suddenly you have sense consciousness there and you have the contact.

So those three coming together, object, organ, consciousness, that's contact. That's followed by vedanā. And the vedanā, whether it's pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, also has no self. But it doesn't go into the sañña, which is what comes next. Sañña is usually translated as perception. But I want to translate it as conceptualization or conceptualizing. So what is this? You just conceptualize it as a cell phone. You might have also conceptualized, why is he always showing his cell phone? He could show his clock, you know, the clock, right? Oh, you just conceptualized the clock.

There's no self involved from the point of sensory contact. Even though you have consciousness there, there's no self involved. And there's no self involved with the vedanā. That's not under your control. The first time it comes under your control is at sañña, the perception or conceptualization step. And it's my cell phone. It's my clock. It's my eyeglasses. All right, we put the self in there as part of our concept. And that's where the self begins to show up.

But we need to see that the self is something we're projecting on top of the sensory input. There's no self in there with the sensory input, either in our minds or out in the world. It's only when we get to the conceptualizing step that we come up with a self. Now there's also from the Dhammapada, the very famous, all of creation is without permanence, all of creation is without lasting satisfaction.

All phenomena are without self. Okay, so we put all of this together, all phenomena without self, therefore all phenomena are empty. And this is what winds up being so important in the Mahayana tradition, the emptiness of all phenomena. You might hear someone in the Mahayana tradition go, "We have everything as emptiness. You only have self as emptiness." But clearly from what the Buddha's teaching here, yeah, everything is empty. View the world as empty. Okay, now this goes on and I come up with three levels of experiencing emptiness. And there's a whole big chart here, and I'm not going to go into all that, but I will put the link in the chat.

Okay, so if you want to look at this after we finish talking about this particular suttas, then we can do that. But the good stuff, at least as far as this goes, is the stuff at the beginning.

**Leigh:**

So Victor, you had your hand up and I suppose you put it down, either I answered your question or you were being polite.

**Questioner:**

You sort of answered what I was thinking about, but it just seems like such a brilliant solution from the Buddha, you know, the middle way between the concepts of annihilation, I die and that's it, or eternalism, I die and I keep on going forever. The solution is I never existed in the first place as this personal identity. So how could I even die or be born or anything? Because there's no I there. It's just, it's brilliant to me.

**Leigh:**

Yeah, yeah, it's absolutely brilliant. My, well, the sutta I think is the most profound one of all is Samyutta 12.15, which is the Kaccānagotta Sutta. And Kaccānagotta wants to know what right view is. Oh, view, that's how Mogharājā wants to know. What's right view basically is Mogharājā's question. What's right view so I don't die? And the Buddha's answer to Kaccānagotta is this world depends upon a duality, upon the notion of existence and the notion of non-existence. But one with right view doesn't get entangled in quarrels and disputes or ideas and ideologies or anything else.

One with right view does not take a stand about myself, my soul, my atta. In other words, one with right view doesn't say there is a self. One with right view doesn't say there is no self. It just, they don't take a stand about that. One with right view sees that, well, there's nothing but the way I put it, streams of dependently arising processes interacting. The Buddha says this, that conditionality dependent origination.

Okay. So yeah, can you experience the world without thinking things exist or without thinking things don't exist? These are categories that we usually use, but they have their limitations.

There's Santa Claus. Does Santa Claus exist or does Santa Claus not exist? Well if he exists and he lives at the North Pole, he's in real trouble because the ice he lives on is melting, but you probably don't think he exists. But does he not exist?

Well, if you have a misbehaving three year old three weeks before Christmas and you say Santa Claus is watching, you got good behavior immediately. So non-existent Santa Claus can change a child's behavior. And of course he rides at the end of the Christmas parade and he sells Coca-Cola and all the rest of it. So concepts of existence is non-existence. Don't capture what's really going on. What really captures what's going on is this, that conditionality dependent origination or the way I put it, streams of dependently arising processes interacting. SODAPI.

So yeah. And if I don't exist and I don't not exist, then the question of what happens to the non-existent await, the not non-existent await, forget about what happens after. Nothing there to begin with. Nothing can be found.

**Questioner:**

Well, I'm glad you brought up Santa Claus because that actually helps as an illustration because well, I have these multiple questions again. The question I was hanging on to and not being polite, unlike Victor, was about the vedanā piece.

Can you just go back to that for a minute? Because for me, vedanā is like already fraught with traps because as soon as we determine that something is pleasant, well, I take refuge in the neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Because I feel like if I can look at everything as neither pleasant or unpleasant, which I can't, but anyway, this is all conceptual, then I can release it from self. So instead of saying, I can just say this is spinach, whether I love spinach or hate spinach is immaterial because if I can just say that it is what it is and if I can do that- But spinach is a concept. It's not a vedanā.

No, the vedanā of spinach. Well, I mean, isn't vedanā determining whether something's pleasant, unpleasant, or neither pleasant nor unpleasant?

**Leigh:**

It's your initial categorization of something as pleasant or unpleasant. But if you say spinach, you've gone way past the vedanā.

**Questioner:**

Oh, okay. Well, help me out. Because what I'm asking basically doesn't have to do with spinach. It has to do with, to me, Vedanā implies a selfing in so far as-

**Leigh:**

No, it's automatic.

**Questioner:**

Isn't everything just neutral? Yeah, but what is pleasant versus unpleasant? I mean, it depends on your point of view.

**Leigh:**

Yeah, but what is pleasant versus unpleasant? I mean, it depends on your point of view. It's what your

mind decides it is. But then I have a mind. We have to use these words to talk about this. You don't decide that it's pleasant or unpleasant.

Suppose I had a chalkboard. Okay, here's the chalkboard. And I scrape my fingernails down it. And I say, "I'm going to scrape my fingernails down this until everybody agrees it's pleasant." Well, you'd all hang up from the talk, right? Because it's going to be unpleasant, right? You don't have any control over whether it's pleasant or unpleasant.

If it's just a simple sensory input, you do have control over what comes later on, like the conceptualizing, like the thoughts. And remember, the thoughts also are input to the sixth sense and they have a Vedanā. And there's the whole thought stream in those vedanā. So you have control over the thoughts because you're the one thinking them. But you don't have control over the Vedanā of the thoughts, right?

If I mention the name of your least favorite politician right now, you can't make it so that when you hear it, it's pleasant. Okay, the sound is going to be the sound Vedanā. Okay, and that's going to be neutral. But the thought of your least favorite politician is going to produce an unpleasant vedanā in your mind.

**Questioner:**

Isn't that a concept though?

**Leigh:**

Your least pleasant, your least favorite politician is a concept. And when you bring that concept to mind, it will automatically without you doing anything about it, generate an unpleasant Vedanā in your mind.

**Questioner:**

Okay, I'm still confused about how to keep the self out of it.

**Leigh:**

The unpleasant vedanā from hearing this name of your least favorite politician happens automatically. The self is there because you made him the least favorite politician. Okay, but when you hear the name, the unpleasant reaction that arises, you didn't do that. It's automatic.

**Questioner:**

That sounds like conditioning.

**Leigh:**

Yeah. But there can't be, well

**Questioner:**

okay, I don't know. This is too big and there are lots of people waiting. So I'll let it go for now. But apropos Santa Claus, that's I think an excellent example because I firmly believe in Santa Claus. The reason being that Santa Claus, I mean, Santa Claus has more power than like my neighbors down the

street whom I don't think about one way or the other, but I know that I know in some intellectual way that they exist. Well, I know in an experiential way too, especially when they play basketball. But Santa Claus is really powerful. I mean, Santa Claus definitely exists. You know what I'm saying? So then it's a relativity of how do we determine these things?

**Leigh:**

Yeah, well, the Buddha is saying the categories of existence and non-existence aren't really the best categories. The best categories is to see everything arising dependent on other things. Right. Now we're good.

**Questioner:**

Right. Now we're good. Yeah. Okay. I'll go back to your dependent.

**Leigh:**

That's conditioning, of course, for some of the SODAPI.

**Questioner:**

Yeah. Right. Okay. Thank you.

**Leigh:**

Sure. Barton.

**Questioner:**

Hi, Leigh. Good to see you. So when you were talking about Santa Claus, I get obviously thinking about the uncertainty principle and quantum physics. And I don't think we're going to have time to get into that much, but I just thought maybe I'd ask you, where is the overlap there? And I don't want to waste time because that's not really the main point of the class, but there really is a lot in the Dharma, I find at least, that ties into fundamental science and fundamental psychology that we're really either rediscovering or discovering for the first time dependent. Yeah. I agree. Do you think that was part and parcel with, I don't mean necessarily quantum physics and Heisenberg's principle or whatever, but let me just put it a different way. How do you see all of that when you're reading this and studying it? How do you see the interrelationship in terms of helping us to find our way to the far shore? Is there anything there that we can use?

**Leigh:**

Yeah. There are a lot of things.

Okay. So Carlo Rovelli's Helgoland, right? Helgoland? Okay. Yeah. Helgoland. I'm reading this and I'm going, "Hey, you're writing the same book that I wrote on dependent origination and emptiness." I mean, not really, because he talks about a lot of other stuff, but it's very similar. And he's pointing out that things arise dependent on other things. The fact that I was able to see that things arise dependent on other things is at least partially due to the fact that I studied physics in college and see the interconnected nature of things. So yeah, there is a lot of stuff. It's not exactly the same because

quantum physics or physics in general is not talking about pleasant, unpleasant vedanā and so forth and grasping and clinging. But there's a lot of stuff in modern science that can be very helpful for understanding what the Buddha is actually talking about, because it's the same principles being applied in an impersonal way to the external world. And you realize, "Oh yeah, but that's also sort of what happens in my mind as well." So yeah, there are definitely a lot of things in science that are very helpful. I would not be teaching this class if you removed all the stuff that has influenced my understanding of the Buddhist teaching that was based on science. I mean, it'd probably all go away.

**Questioner:**

I'll just say, I think that physicists do, and others, all scientists really, but especially the quantum group, they're trying to frame up and put perspective around and wrap their minds around how the universe works, what it is, including themselves. And increasingly, when you read the interviews of these people, including the papal or Vatican astronomer, I forget his name, they're all coming around and saying, "It's not at all like we thought it was, basically. It's very different, it's more simple and more complex, and it's really beautiful," and so forth. And it's almost increasingly science and intuition. So anyway, enough. Thanks. I'll look that book up. This would be a fascinating talk for another time, maybe.

**Leigh:**

Yeah. The book is highly recommended. Yeah, I totally enjoyed reading it. And I quote it in "Dependent Origination and Emptiness." I mean, yeah, there's a quote from there that made it in. The difference is science is trying to understand everything, and the Buddha is trying to get you out of dukkha. That's the major difference.

**Questioner:**

Right, right. Yeah, I know, but I think that... Anyway, I'm not going to take up more time. I'd love to chat over this. Maybe I'll send you an email once I process it all in a couple of hundred years. Okay, thanks. All right. Thanks, Leigh.

**Leigh:**

Sure. Ah, yeah.

**Questioner:**

So I would like to clarify a couple of things here. So what I am understanding here is a cease of consciousness is nirvana. Then what happens is that through understanding emptiness practice and the teaching from Vajra, for me, it's more like we are practicing gradual unbecoming from conditionality. And then what happens is like in my own experience with concentration practice, jhāna, whatever we call, then what happens is when I'm in the concentration, I really notice there's no defilements, no sense of self, no making of, you know, on and on. Like senses are pretty much like a bear to me. Then what happens is there's a non-duality happening. Then we are seeing things just as it is, and at the same time, really seeing like my consciousness is doing a visual play, you know, the word doesn't seem to be exact. It's all like a makeup play for me, stage. Then you know, then we understand the

convention and ultimate reality in that way, and balancing each other in our daily living. I mean, I'm not always that way, but gradually I am becoming more like, oh, this is where my sense is playing. Sense of self is playing. This is my, how my thoughts are playing here and, you know, insisting on something and resisting, accepting on and on. So that is, would you be in our own experience in our meditation, would you be going toward the nothingness then?

**Leigh:**

Well, what we're trying to do with our meditation is get a mind that's quiet enough. That's the concentration part. So then when we start examining reality, that's the insight part, we start seeing what's actually happening and we start seeing, oh, there's no self found in any of this. And we start seeing, yeah, in seeing there's just seeing if we're doing the Bāhiya practice. And if we get deep enough in there, we realize that all of the things of the world are in our minds. We're the ones that are dividing up the holistic universe into the bits and pieces. So we're going in that direction. And what we want to do is go in that direction far enough so that it leaves us in a place where we have a deep enough or a deeper enough understanding so that we don't do the craving and clinging and therefore we're escaping dukkha.

**Questioner:**

Yeah. All right. Thank you.

**Leigh:**

Sure. Okay.

So, as I said, this is my favorite of all the suttas that we're going to talk about in this particular book. And yeah, it's just really a great one. So simple. View the world as empty, ever mindful. I came up with an image. I should maybe go back. I came up with an image. It's a river. It's going along. And there's an island and the river goes into two channels. Right? And one channel is very narrow. This is the mindfulness channel. And one channel is very wide.

This is the default mode network channel. The default mode network is a network in your brain that becomes active when you got nothing else going on. You might have encountered it the last time you meditated because the default mode network is your distractions. All of your distractions are, yeah, your default mode network kicked in.

So we've got this river of mental activity. And there's this narrow channel over here called mindfulness. And there's this broad channel called distraction, default mode network. And our job is to actually get enough rocks thrown in the river so we start damming up the default mode network and at the same time widening the narrow mindfulness channel till the river actually switches course.

And so that in the future, when we got nothing to do, we're just mindful of the present as opposed to getting lost in thought. I suspect that's what happens when someone is fully awakened. Now we don't have enough fully awakened people around to ask questions of to see if that's the case. But this



is my best guess. That in other words, we're trying to establish a new default and the new default is mindfulness. So this is what the ever mindful is. Okay.

And then, yeah, if we're mindful, then we're not getting lost in all the distractions that come up and notice how you seem to be the center of almost all of your distractions. You wanting something and wanting to get rid of something or wishing about something and so forth. Yeah, craving and clinging. So if we've got a new default of just paying attention to the present moment, then there's no craving and clinging.

So I think that's what's being talked about here. Okay. I am old, feeble and pallid. My eyes are unclear, my hearing faint. Don't let me perish while still confused. In the teaching so that I may understand the giving up of birth and old age. It doesn't say rebirth. So I'm old. I don't want to die confused. Please give me instructions so that I can overcome birth and old age. Seeing them harmed on account of forms, on account of forms, these negligent folks are afflicted. Therefore being diligent, give up form so as not to be reborn. And again, I don't see rebirth. Okay.

But seeing people attached to materiality. Seeing people thingifying, right? Taking the holistic world and from their senses, conceptualizing it a bunch of things and yeah, getting attached. Therefore being diligent, give up on form. So as not to give birth to yourself as the owner of form. Instructions continue, the four quarters, the intermediate directions, below and above. In these 10 directions, there's nothing at all in the world you've not seen, heard, thought or cognized. Explain the teaching so that I may understand the giving up of rebirth and old age here.

And again, it's birth and old age. Seeing people sunk in craving, tormented, mired in old age, therefore being diligent, give up craving so as not to be reborn.

So this is fairly simple. Help me out here. Okay. So don't get lost in the world of forms. Don't get attached there. Help me again. Don't do the craving and clinging thing. Pretty simple. But kind of hard to do, but I think the understanding of what is going on here is pretty obvious. Seen heard thought or cognized. There are teachings in the Upanishads that talk about seeing, heard, thought, cognized. And it is thought that the advice to Bāhiya, which uses sensed rather than thought, the advice to Bāhiya in seeing, there's just seeing, hearing, just hearing, sensing, just sensing, cognizing, just cognizing. This probably was something that was in the culture because of the Upanishads. So that's why that would come up there. In all of the directions, there's nothing at all in the world.

So we're back to the no thingness again. Except that there's nothing that you've not heard.

So observe people sunk in craving, tormented, admired in old age, aging gracefully. I hope we all can do that because there are only two other choices, die young or age ungracefully. And aging gracefully is probably the better option, I think. Give up craving. That's how you're supposed to do that. So questions or comments?

**Questioner:**

Me again, sorry. I'm really, as the morning progresses, I'm thinking more and more about this birth/rebirth thing than the original. It's the word for birth and the rebirth is an interpretation. I feel like maybe that's the key to the whole thing. Our concepts of what is rebirth anyway and what is, you know, like, well, anyway, I think you get the drift. I'm not going to say anymore. But if you could just play with that for a minute, I would love it. But maybe it's another class.

**Leigh:**

Yeah. I don't want to get involved in that class. But yeah, so it's just the word birth. And it may be that the questioner was actually asking about rebirth. OK, I mean, Mogharājā certainly is worried about death. All right. And that's that's why people think about rebirth is because they're yeah, the body's going to die, but I'll be reborn. So this is possibly what all of the questioners are asking about.

The Buddha answers with just birth and it may be giving up the birth of self. This is the usual interpretation of the twelve links of dependent origination in the moment to moment interpretation that the birth which comes at the end is the birth of a self, a sense of self. And so if you can give that up, then you don't if you don't give birth to a self, you don't give birth to the craver or the cleaner. That would be my modern interpretation. But I'm sure that you can find lots of people who give you very different interpretations because.

**Questioner:**

Oh, here's Clara Lynn on the on the threshold. So she'll provide some enlightenment.

Yeah, essentially, that's why I was driving that. In other words, if you if and this, I think, applies from my from my understanding across all spiritual traditions, once you give up the self and just just live like moment to moment and that's the end of the story and try to live, you know, coherently. Then the whole issue of rebirth or life after death or, you know, heaven paved the streets of God.

I mean, all that business just evaporates like instantly because because all we have is now and that's all that matters. And the rest of it is speculation anyway, so that that's why it just suddenly triggered. I thought maybe this is no coincidence that it's the word birth all the time in there. This rebirth thing is like is like the desire for eternity, the desire for immortality, the desire for a second chance, whatever. OK, then I want to hear what you have to say. So I'm going to go. Thank you.

**Questioner:**

Right. Yeah. So, you know, you see in the question, the word that Leigh's got highlighted, Jātijarāya, that's birth and old age. So the question is definitely saying birth. But then the answer the Buddha gives is he looked right down at the very end, the last word apunabbhavāya. So apuna is like again to do something again. And then bhavāya, it can be existence, but it can just also have the sense of becoming. So that's like anything you want to become, you know, someone who has less gray hair. I want to become that person. It can be any kind of becoming.

It doesn't have to necessarily be another existence. But a lot of translators may take it that way. But I think the broader way to look at it is, you know, there's no further any kind of becoming. Does that

mean, sorry to jump in, but so the apunabbhavāya, then if that would, I mean, that in my mind would imply that. So the goal is to give up craving another life, craving another birth, craving another chance, craving more time, no old age sickness, death, etc.

**Leigh:**

But also all the other becoming that we do. I want to become rich and famous. Right, right.

**Questioner:**

Exactly. It's really exactly. And this word bhavāya captures all of that. If you're pointing to Jāti, that's kind of signifying, you know, a life and existence. But bhavāya breaks it open to anything you want to become. So you've got a, which is not, punna again, and then bhavaya becoming.

**Questioner:**

Is that bhavana relate to bhavāya? Yes. Okay. Yeah, so fabulous. I feel like a whole like, I'm now I'm craving. Nevermind. Goodbye. Thank you.

**Questioner:**

And I just want to point out, this is a great example of how the automatic dictionary doesn't always get it right.

**Leigh:**

Right. Yeah. emitting an odor. I don't think that's.

**Questioner:**

Yeah. From a thundercloud. Right?

**Leigh:**

Yes. So but the dictionary can be helpful. But it does. It's only sometimes helpful. Right.

So that's the 16 suttas. There is, I don't know, an epilogue. We had the prologue at the beginning. Remember, I mentioned that where it's all about, you know, some Brahman who is upset that some other Brahman told him maybe he's going to smash his head in. And so he sent 16 students to ask questions of the to find out how to get his head not smashed in. And the Buddha says, I got to know anything. And the 16 students he said, supposedly asked these questions. But this is clearly much, much later. mythology. And then the closing, which comes after this. It's you know, some of this might be true, this could have been said while in the land of the Magan is at that shrine. But you know, probably, probably this was much, much later as well. Notice that none of these start with thus have I heard once the Buddha was living at wherever. This is so old, so early in the Buddha's ministry that it doesn't have that. And yet the first line here, this was it tells where it happened. And that possibly is correct. But all the thing down here about all of these guys. And yeah, I yeah. It's it's it's got a number here. It's numbered what number 18. But I'm just gonna say this. It's the the epilogue and you can ignore it. If you're gonna read it, you know, once I have probably read it two or three times over my lifetime. Whereas I've read the suit as much what you want to study are the suit is. So we're finishing

20 minutes early unless you guys have more questions.

**Questioner:**

I have more. Oh, well, no, I just I it's also back to the Santa Claus thing. I think as a whole that it's just now what triggered it was actually this epilogue because it reminds me of the of the endless genealogies in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, which most people skip by because they're so tedious. So and so begat, begat, begat, begat, begat. And but what's interesting is if you really like delve in as a scholar, all of a sudden those very things that seem like you can slip past them without, you know, they they contain all these gems because it turns out like like in, for example, in the genealogy of Jesus that that there are only like four women mentioned explicitly by name. And the rest are all men. And some of the men are very famous. We have to worry about them. But the the those four women are very, very significant in what what sort of inroads they made in terms of what's up anyway, I won't get into a whole theological thing, but but it's just the idea. Suddenly I was looking at this list and I thought, what if there were like all kinds of things about if one could track down these these the actual people who were asking the Buddha the questions and and get some sense of the context that they came from and what I don't know. Anyway, it's it's I see there's another question. I'll let I'll let I'll go away because I'm taking it.

**Leigh:**

I don't think there is any way to track down anything else. These are just 16 guys that showed up and ask questions and that's it. We don't know that they were Brahmins necessarily. Some of them are referred to as a Brahmin or whatever. But I'd say that that 99.99% of what you can learn is going to come from the 16 suttas. Every log are just yeah, you can forget about them.

**Questioner:**

No, no, I don't mean this specifically. It's just the principle of like the more context, the more the more gems can be discovered or and then you.

**Leigh:**

And I think this stuff doesn't really provide context other than maybe the first line, which says that it was given in the land of the Magadha. And the rest of it, I think they just went totally nuts with making up stuff because it sounded cool.

**Questioner:**

All right. Thanks,

**Leigh:**

Sean.

**Questioner:**

So thank you again for a lovely evening. For me. At least because I'm from London. And what I wanted to ask is, so in what ways has your practice changed when you started to really, you know, seriously

studying the suttas? And maybe if you could just go over some of the ones that you find most significant or the most impactful for your own understanding and practice.

**Leigh:**

Yeah, so I started seriously studying the suttas in 1991. And the book on the gradual training that's coming out is one of the things that comes out of seriously studying the suttas. That particular retreat was a month long retreat. There was a one week retreat followed immediately by a one month retreat. And during the one week retreat, I had learned jhānas six, seven and eight. So I now had a month to practice them. And it was with Ayurvedic and she let me play with the jhānas for a week or 10 days or so. And then she put me to work doing insight practice.

And the insight practice at that point was what changed my life. And it also because she was teaching the gradual training, I had a context for what was going on. So I began reading suttas more at that point. And my understanding now compared to what it was when I first encountered the gradual training is it's their first encounter probably makes up, you know, four or 5% of what I understand now from reading the suttas. The whole thing about dependent origination, the studying of, you know, emptiness, all of these things have changed my life in the sense that I'm less likely to get as upset as I used to when things go wrong. I'm less likely to get caught up in craving and clinging, because I see the empty nature of things. I'm hopefully a bit more compassionate and loving.

And I finally experienced for myself what they meant by mudita. I can very remember the very distinctly remember the first time it came spontaneously. And it was like, oh, that's what they're talking about. So yeah, it's changed my life in so many ways that I can't tell you. I mean, it's like so much of who I am is now built atop the practice and the understanding from reading the suttas, both is what practice to do and how to interpret what I was experiencing. So you want suttas that have had an impact on me, go to my website, click on suttas and scroll to the very bottom of the page.

And there are my somebody asked me for my top 10 suttas. And my top 10 suttas has 11 of them listed because I couldn't read more than that. So those are suttas I think are really important. I also have suttas study guides. And again, go to my website, click on the Buddha and look for the sutta study guides. And most of those I have some sort of indication of what I felt was important for the for the long discourses.

Yeah, it's a true study guide. For the middle length discourses. These are the ones I think are the most important and these are important and these are pretty good. So yeah. And then for the connected and numerical, it's just whatever sutta I thought was important or interesting. That's what's in the study guide rather than everything. So yeah, you get if you want more of what I thought was important. You can go take a look at those as well.

**Questioner:**

Okay, thank you so much.

**Leigh:**

Sure. Victor.

**Questioner:**

Thanks so much for the day. It's been great. I just wanted to go back. We were discussing quite a bit earlier about people possibly repeatedly choosing to suffer. You know, in the Buddha taught the end of suffering. But if we really see suffering and are aware of it, aren't we able to choose to suffer if we want to? You know, if we want to be attached to something, if I want to be attached to my partner and I realize, yeah, this is going to lead to suffering, someday we're going to be separated. I'm going to suffer but I choose that. And in the Mahayana tradition, this bodhisattva vow, these people are choosing to not be enlightened into everyone else's that's certainly choosing suffering, right?

**Leigh:**

Well, I take the bodhisattva vow is while I'm here, I'm going to do everything I can to be of help. Okay, I'm going to do what I can to help other people get over their suffering, as well as deal with mine, rather than choosing not to become enlightened. That has nothing to do with it. I think I'm what I'm choosing to I mean, in the Pāli bodhisattva means one intent upon enlightening enlightenment.

And so I take the bodhisattva vow to mean I'm going to do what I can to help other people out while I'm here. That's what I'm going to dedicate my life to. The other thing to say is the Buddha said I only teach dukkha in the end of dukkha. You know, if you want something else, you have to find that from somebody else.

So yeah, you choose that, okay, I'm going to be attached to this person. And when we are separated, it's going to be dukkha and I'm willing to put up with that. Or I'm going to be attached to this person and hopefully, I can get to the point where I'm not attached, but I'm fully loving. In other words, that I can transform my current attachment to this person to my partner into its fully loving this person. It's still going to be painful if I'm separated from them. Okay, but I'm willing to do that.

But yeah, I say I wouldn't put it as I'm choosing to suffer. I put it as okay, there's still stuff I got to work on and this stuff I'm not going to give up yet till I make further progress.

**Leigh:**

Alex. You're still muted, Alex.

**Questioner:**

Yes. Hi, thank you for your lesson. Very interesting. I do have a question more like technical part. And people look up to you on your programming technical skills, but it's so hard to keep up with technology just for everybody else. But I know about this stuff, everything changes every few years.

And I'm not very young, I'm 50 years old. But I'm looking at how you guys like using these dictionaries. This is like 10, 15 year old technology. So is it because there's not enough young people in our circles that we don't get enough energy slash something, whatever to get like this actual AI, looking at sentences.

This neural translation is better than human nowadays. And how you say, oh, there's like translation error or broken badly. Like why are we using such an old technology?

Do you know of any efforts to like bring it up to the current ages where that somebody mentioned here AI, there is no AI. Guys, whoever thinks like there's AI here, there's no AI whatsoever. And we do need to bring AI if we want to make it accurate translation and find all these mistakes that have been made. But by us, we are humans.

**Leigh:**

Yeah, so I've actually played around with AI, with Buddhist things. And AI at this point is not very good for things like the jhānas and translations. AI could probably get to the point where it does understand Pāli, but AI doesn't understand Pāli at this point. Definitely doesn't. And so you couldn't make an AI that would give you good translations because AI just simply doesn't understand Pāli at this point.

**Questioner:**

Well, that's an outdated view. I'm sorry to say that. Just to kind of, you know, you're teaching us, I can teach you a little bit. So this is called the low resource language. And yeah, that was the case maybe three, four years ago, but not anymore. All these large language models can be taught relatively easily with this low resource languages.

And I think there's enough of both Pāli and translations to be able to do it. So it's not, first of all, it can't, you're saying like right now it can't, but in reality it actually can. And it probably could have actually two, three years ago. So this is where we are. Just letting you know.

**Leigh:**

Yeah. Well, when I look at multiple translations of suttas, it's not that I find, oh, this translator got it right all the time. It's that nobody got it right actually. And there isn't a large enough language model for Pāli yet that it will work because what's out there, you, so when I studied for this course, I read five different translations of all these suttas, if I can find five. And nobody agreed. Okay. Yeah.

And sometimes it was Bhikkhu Bodhi had the best translation. Sometimes it was K.R. Norman had the best translation and I'm the one that's picking which one is the best translation. Somebody else would pick other stuff. So it's just not there yet.

I played with AI asking you about jhānas and it quotes a lot of stuff, but it also confuses the Vipassana jhānas, the Visuddhimagga jhānas, the sutta jhānas.

**Questioner:**

I mean, it's, it doesn't know what it's talking about. Yeah, it needs to be fine tuned. Yeah, definitely. It's not, but you don't need to like teach it everything. You can learn what, how humans think and it doesn't matter what the language is and then it needs to be fine tuned to Pāli. Now whether it can learn how Buddha thinks, that's a different story.

**Leigh:**

Right. Yeah. And it will get better. I know it will get better, but it's certainly not there.

The other thing is all of this is being done by people in their spare time. This website, Access to Insight and Sutta Central, this is people's hobby. You know, the dictionary that I got, I swiped everything from the University of Chicago on their side and put it together, you know, in my spare time. The books I'm writing, I'm giving them away for free, you know, it's a spare time project and you know, we just don't have enough people that can take it to the next level yet because they can't afford to. So.

**Questioner:**

Well, I think we need to do something about it and that's one of the reasons why I'm speaking up here.

**Leigh:**

Right. Yeah. Well, if you come into a lot of money and want to finance people to do stuff like that, I'm sure that it would be appreciated because that's what it's going to take.

Yeah. Let's see. Barton.

**Questioner:**

Hi, Leigh. I'm just, I'm not really directly responding to that, but I just wanted to say that I have a lot of background in AI going back to the 80s. I think there's a lot of misunderstanding as to what it is. I went in a different direction eventually, but I've been playing with some of the generative stuff that's out there and I'm not going to get into really what's good or bad.

I personally believe that there are tremendous benefits in actually reading and interpreting and then meditating upon the suttas myself. That's stated. I have used chat GVT. It is capable of translating Pāli to English, although that comes with a caveat from the site. It says right on the site, you know, it's not the same as somebody who's an expert or somebody who really understands the context because it hasn't been trained in that.

However, as a tool, if somebody is trying to get general basic questions answered, you know, like what are the hindrances or something, it's not a bad resource for that because you can just put in a couple of basic questions and it will spit out as best it can what it has and then you can say, I need references. Where did you get this from? And then it will go and get you some references. Now I would say 70% of the time the stuff is good, 30% of the time the stuff is garbage or it's been harvesting things that it doesn't understand. Let's put it that way.

**Leigh:**

That's what I'm asking you about the jhānas. I mean, it quoted me a bunch, but it also quoted people who are teaching different states.

**Questioner:**

Exactly. So I think it's an interesting tool. I do use it sometimes when I'm trying to remember something



or just get a quick reference and I don't want to go find four books. And then of course there are several excellent Buddhist sites out there, you know, kicking around for like what's that one? So I know you have a bunch of things listed on your website as well. I just think there's a very fundamental discussion here about human capabilities and needs. Yeah. That need to be considered. But at the same time, there are some interesting tools if people want to go look, chatGPT, I'm using 4.0, actually isn't bad.

**Leigh:**

Yeah, it's really amazing what we've got. Okay. So Clara Lynn's the last one because we're running out of time.

**Questioner:**

Yeah, thank you. I just wanted to chip in on this discussion. I loved what Barton said about meditating on these and it works the other way. We take our practice into the translation. I mean, what I find is translation is part knowing what the Pāli is already, part looking up what the verbal roots are to understand what's the scope of what these Pāli words could mean that maybe aren't standard translations.

And very importantly, digging deep into my own practice to try to understand it's got with this kind of ground up feel, what does this mean? So it's not just this cognitive top-down process. And I remember I came and saying, you know, the translators didn't meditate and the meditators didn't translate. So we need more people who can translate and have deep meditation practices, because that is absolutely key to translating the Pāli. And we need to have deep meditation practices as we read these multiple translations. So we make our own sense of it because your understanding will be different from mine and my understanding will change over time as my practice changes. So this is a very live process, very involved with meditation. Yeah, that's what I have to say on it.

**Leigh:**

Thank you. Yeah, thank you, Clara Lynn. This is so true.

I mean, what you got from me is based on, okay, having read a bunch of translations and my practice, my understanding of what this is saying as filtered through my practice.

We're coming to the end. Thank you.