

Okay then. I believe we are recording.

We better be.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 151. I am your host Ponyo Bosa.

And 151 apparently is a prime number. So this should be a prime episode. Oh, almost took a drink without taking the umbrella out. This is my beverage, by the way.

and I'm your host Pony Mall. I always forget. I don't notice, you know. It's just like this automatic thing now that I say stuff at the beginning and then I don't remember if I just happened to mention I'm your host Pasa and I just noticed it's like

I got like this rune like this like
Scandinavian rune bead on my beard
because I'm I've taken another step
towards becoming a Viking marauder. And
I think the rune is just some like
completely mundane one like thorn,
but it causes my beard to wiggle when I
talk just because of the the metalness
of it.

So, it's going to be distracting me, I
suppose.

Hope it doesn't distract you too much.

It's like you get to the end of the Q&A
and it's like I forgot to pay attention.

What are you saying? Because I'm just
like watching his his beard bead like
bob around.

Anyways,

let's see. 151 is a prime number. I already mentioned that.

And I'm I'm getting started late again today. It's like 3:00 in the afternoon on on Saturday going or is it Sunday?

Yeah, I guess it's Sunday, isn't it?

Uh and I've got work to do. Yesterday was going to be my day of rest. And then we wound up going to a hardware store and buying like 700 lb of concrete and 300 and something pounds of sand. And I'm like pushing this cart with well over 1,000 lbs of stuff on it. Like literally from one end of the this huge hardware place to the other side.

So, I didn't get as much rest as I as I really was

liking to get yesterday cuz Saturday is like my day of rest. It's like my lazy day. Today, after this, I'm going to be out moving bags of concrete and also doing the finishing touches, I hope, on the fish pond I've been working on for a few weeks. And then tomorrow it's going to be like putting down some like cement like like shaping like filling in rock holes and stuff in the sides before we put in the liner. Put water in the in the pond.

And at some point I'll probably do a Q&A with the pond in the background just so you guys can gaze in awe and wonder at

our new fish pond.

But I suppose I should just start answering questions because I mean that's the main reason why we're here, isn't it? So first question is from Maitraa Buddha and Maitraa Buddha says, "Was there a relationship between Zoroastrians and early vadic settlers in India?" The Hindus call good deities davas and bad deities Ashuras. However, in Zoroastrianism, the good god is Ahura Mazda and the Davas were the destructive deities. Yeah, I've noticed that too. And I used to think that at some point the Persians broke away from like the mainstream of Indo-Uropean religion

because I mean it's the Greeks have the same legend. So it goes way back where you've got this war between two sets of gods, two pantheons. The Davis is when the Assuras or the Titans going with the Greek term lose and then they get like chained up at the base of a mountain which would be Mount Meu for the Indians.

But the Persians had it switched around so that the uh you know their good god was an Assura and the bad gods were the Davids. So they it's like they switched around so that the other side won. And I used to think that this was probably, you know, it was sort of like a war of pantheons between, you know, two

subtribes of the protoindo-europeans.

But it could be in I've been thinking about it later. It could be that just the founder of Zoroastrianism, you know, Zoroaster, Zorahustra,

that he may have just deliberately switched things around just to like accentuate

the the difference of his religious system where he's saying, "No, you guys have got it all wrong. The Dava were the bad guys and they lost." That kind of thing. So, that's possible, too.

And I haven't really studied into like the uh the archaeology of it or anything like that enough to really decide

exactly why it is that the Persians like
flip-fpped

this like ancient prehistoric

theological war so that the losers

became the winners and the winners

became the losers because apparently

most Indo-Uropeans believed that the

gods defeated the titans.

We know the Davis defeated the Assuras

or Ashuras.

So

this let's just get to the question

though. The actual question is was there

a relationship between Zoroastrians and

early vadic settlers in India? Well,

like the Persian

subbranch of the the Indo-Iranian

language family, which is a branch of, you know, Indo-Uropeans.

So, the Persian branch of the Indo-Iranians and the Indian branch of the Indo-Iranians, the Indo-arians apparently had already split.

um like Zoroaster or Zorathustra apparently lived

back in like early Rig Vedic times or even a little earlier than early Rig Vedic times. And so I mean he was just kind of doing his own thing. He was over like dealing with the Persian branch.

The Indo-arians were already a separate culture by that time. And maybe in the Rig Veda you'll find

references to you know like the
neighboring Persians different religious
system

but I'm not I haven't read enough of the
Rigveda to really be able to find it. Of
course I don't I don't read Vedic
Sanskrit either so I'd be relying upon
translations that may be more or less
competent.

So but by the time of the Buddhist time
you know it's the the the center of
Vedic culture had moved eastwards you
know farther east along the Ganges
Valley and I don't remember seeing any
mention at all of Persians or
Zoroastrians in the poly texts you they
were they were far enough away and the

Indian culture was insular provincial
enough

that it there wasn't really an issue.

You know, there wasn't seen to be any
need

for religious pmics explaining why the
Persians have a wrong religion.

You know it just I mean the Buddha was
talking about Jane's Ajivacas and like
Vadic Brahmans that was that was like
the religious system

in the Buddha's time like in the central
to eastern Ganges Valley of Northern
India.

So

I notice I say so a lot sometimes for no

other reason than just to like fill gaps. I think just about any language has these little particles, grammatical particles or whatever they're called just to fill gaps, you know, like um there's a lot of like basically things like that. Burma has lots of just special words just to throw into sentences to kind of slow up the sentence enough that your brain can keep up with it that don't really mean very much of anything.

So, let's see here. Was there a relationship between Zoroastrians and early Vic settlers in India? I don't I'm unaware of any obvious relationship. I

think they had already gone their separate ways by that point.

So the Zoroastrians I'm I've read Zorathustra came from Baktra in Baktria which is you would think it would be like the BOC the uh what is it? I can't remember what BOC stands for, but that was the BOC. I guess I should back up a little bit. So, you had a group of in protoindo-europeans who migrate eastwards from the homeland like in the Pontic step and they were known as the Cintashta culture. They were considered to be the people who invented the war chariot which was this a devastating new military technology at

the time. And it may be that the cintashta culture was the first people that called themselves Arya. There's no indication that like the western protoindoeuropeans like the Germanics and the Celts and the Italics and the Greeks that they called themselves Arya. I guess there's some kind of theory that Ireland, you know, that their in Ireland is a corruption of Arya, but that is maybe just a hypothesis that can't really be proven one way or the other.

So the cintashta culture in central Asia um they eventually migrated farther eastwards and produced the the more widespread Andronovo culture and then

some of the Andronovo culture migrated southwards into like what is now Afghanistan and like eastern Iran.

And the ones that kind of settled in Afghanistan mainly became the Indo-aryans.

And the ones that kind of moved farther west, settled farther west like on the the plains of eastern Iran, they became like the proto Persians and they just kind of went their own ways. I'm pretty sure that the BOC the Baktra something something complex um that was mainly the ancestors of the Vedic Indians and also the the the leaders of the Mitani.

Apparently, it was there was one tribe

of Indo-Aryans that migrated all the way to Syria and and became like the the ruling class of a of a country called the Mitani, which became extinct around gosh, I think it was even before the Bronze Age collapse.

Maybe they were wiped out by Hittites or Assyrians or something.

So, yeah, I don't think that there was a clear relationship. I mean, right at the beginning when they're like living on the like neighbors, I mean, there's like a border. They're sharing a border then probably there was some kind of cultural relationship between Zoroastrians and early Vedic

settlers before they made it into India,

I guess. But I don't know what the evidence for that would be. But presumably, it did happen to some degree. But it wasn't as important and major enough to create a controversy that continued, you know, well into the Buddhist time much farther east in in northern India in the Ganges Valley. There's I have seen no evidence of that. There's a famous person, I can't remember his name now, who wrote a book that the Buddha himself was actually from Persia and that there's all these veiled arguments against Zoroastrinism in the poly text, but I've just never seen it. In fact, I can't even remember

a clear like mention of Persia in in the
polyudos. There's a mention of like
tribes called the there's a tribe called
the Cambogas
that uh you know they they spoke an
Iranian language. They were like warlike
barbarians living in the northwest that
would sometimes cause trouble to the
like the Vadic Indians of the Ganges
Valley and farther west like in the the
Indis area. But that's about as much of
a mention of Persia or Iranian people
that I can remember ever coming across
in the poly text. Although like in the
what was his name?

Darius, the guy who tried to invade
Greece, tried to conquer Greece and was

defeated at uh first the battle of
Salamus and then and then the battle of
uh gosh
uh Platia. But I mean according to the
inscriptions and the the early
historians and so forth that there were
Indians
fighting in in Darius or Das's army. Um
so it' be like northwestern edge of
India would have been incorporated into
the Persian Empire. But still you just
do not see clear evidence of any kind of
um like mutual influence. I mean they
they shared certain things like the soma
sacrifice of the early brahinss was
essentially the same as the homa

sacrifice of the early persians but that's about as far as I can answer on this one. I mean with regard to the relationship between zoroastrians and early vadic settlers I'm unaware of any clear evidence even though presumably it did occur.

And so I'm just going to go on to Maitraa Buddha's second question which is kind of along similar lines. He says there is an inscription in ancient Persia that writes in the DNA inscription. I don't know what DNA stands for here. I don't think it's deoxy ribbucleic acid here. The the DNA inscription at Nox Rustam Darius states I am Darius the great king

of kings king of countries containing
all kinds of men. son of Histaspes, an
Akimenes, a Persian, son of a Persian,
an Arian having Arian lineage.

And then

uh Maitraa Buddha continues here,
the word Iran is said to be uh
translated to land of the Aryans. So
here's the question.

Did the Arian invasion come from ancient
Persia? How did Aryans differ between
ancient Persia and ancient India? And
I've already kind of pretty much
answered this question in my answer to
the previous question. So the Arian
invasion, the Indo-arian invasion came

from essentially Afghanistan, Bactria as it was known to the ancient Greeks.

Um, and by that time, I'm pretty sure the Aryans had already split into the Persian Aryans and Iran is a corruption of Aryan. Also, the Alans, the Allens that were enemies of Rome that had there were sort of like Scythian type nomads that lived in the P on the Pontic step like the homeland of the proto-Indo-Europeans. that Alan also is a corruption of Aryan. So they were sort of like um sort of the the Sintashta or Andronovo culture kind of started migrating back into the ancient homeland and taking that over.

So let's see here. Did the Aryan invasion come from ancient Persia? The

Arian invasion came from north of Persia, like what would be now like Usuzbekiststan or something and then it split and one split went into Persia and became the Persians and the the Iranian speaking tribes and another branch according to my understanding of the situation migrated into Baktria and pretty much took over the there there was a relatively advanced civilization going on in Baktria at the time. So the Indo-arians kind of uh incorporated more of this Brian culture before continuing onwards and invading into India. Whereas the Persians, as far as I know, had minimal influence from this um

bachan or or what is now Afghanistan
that this this relatively advanced
culture although there was had to have
been cultural uh influences and so
forth.

So the Arian invasion I mean the
Indo-arian invasion came from like what
is now Afghanistan or that is the the
prevailing theory at present whereas it
was like earlier Orians split into like
the Persian speaking the Iranian
speaking groups that settled in like
especially
eastern Iran at first and then like
conquered coned their way westwards and
then the uh Indo-Aryans like the
protoindo-orans

kind of conquered Baktria apparently in some way and then continued onwards into northwestern India.

So how did Arians differ between ancient Persian and ancient India? Um I mean it would just had like two subgroups. one group moving into Bakria and just taking over a relatively advanced culture there and the the Persians they moved more westwards into Iran and they conquered a different different cultures there which helped to kind of divide the two subgroups of the Indo-Iranians at least according to my understanding although you're going to have some people especially devout Hindus news who

are just saying that the Arians arose in India and then they spread out from there and they'll have completely different theories. But the prevailing theory that I think is most plausible is that the indo protoindo-europeans arose like north of the Black Sea and spread out from there with the the protoarians being the ones that migrated uh eastwards into central Asia. And I'm not exactly sure where the Tokarians would branch off. Maybe from the Andronovo culture. Maybe the the Tokarans considered themselves to be Arian also, but I'm not sure about that. And I guess I should just move on. Next question. This is from Siovakad Zidana.

And Siovak and Cipad Zida says, "When an enlightened being talks about things in terms of their own cultural background, do they not know what they're saying? isn't literally true or are they engaged in a noble lie?

Excuse me.

Um, not I don't think that's necessarily I think that could be a false dichotomy. I think that the actual answer may like come in between these two. Like an enlightened being I mean here we're we're secondguessing the mental states of enlightened being the subjective experiences of fully enlightened beings here.

which is a prevailing theme on these
these Q&As's
these Q&A videos. So I mean an
enlightened being will know that the
highest truth cannot be put into words
that the name that can be named is not
the eternal name.

So, I mean,
if they're not going to lie,
then they just have to remain silent or
else they'd have to like speak in
conditionals, you know, like if this is
true, then that is true. That kind of
stuff. And I mean, that's not going to
work when you're you're speaking to like
ancient tribes people.

So, I mean, there's conventional truth

and there is ultimate truth. I mean according to Buddhist philosophy simutis satcha paramata satcha samuri saja is conventional truth which is what the people in general consider to be true ultimate truth is paramata satcha which I mean aside from attempts by abidama scholars and so forth you just cannot put into words. So they have to admit, I think a fully aligned being would have to admit that in order to communicate and interact with people, you have to adopt what they consider to be true, their working paradigm, their their world view and and speak in those terms. And these enlightened beings have been

born and raised into that culture.

Before they became enlightened, you know, they were assuming that it's all reality presumably, unless you know, they had some philosophical views that it's all illusion or whatever.

But still, I mean, when you're participating

in in a culture and you're speaking the language that the people speak, I mean, you're going to know that it isn't ultimately true, but I mean, it wouldn't necessarily be lying.

You know, it's like skillful means. It's you got to get the point across. And it's you're not trying to lie. You're just trying to communicate to to these

normies to some degree. I mean, not all of them, especially at first in the Buddhist career. He wasn't speaking to normies even at the beginning of his ministry, his his sassa, his dispensation. You know, he was talking to, you know, veteran aesthetic renunciates who were heavy hitters at first. But still, I mean, if you're going to say anything, you got to use ware. Wara Desa is just like the language of the world. It's just like I mean how you communicate. You got to if you're going to use words, you're going to have to use symbols that are not ultimately true.

So

let's see. Do they not know that what they're saying isn't literally true?

Well, I mean, they'd have to know. If they're fully enlightened, they would have had to have experienced ultimate reality to some degree, you would think.

So they know that the word the name that can be named is not the eternal name.

But at the same time I mean I mean if the only way you can speak is lying then I mean

I mean what do you what do you say to that? It's it's they're not trying to lie. I mean lying can only occur within the context of Simi Satcha anyway.

So

conventional truth I mean you're just dealing with conventional truth and conventional truth is considered to be true enough that anytime you say anything you're not a liar. I mean if this is true seovad zerna's like his his dichotomy here is valid then any enlightened being who says anything pretty much is going to be a liar.

So yeah, I I think that you take into consideration that lying is at the level of simisa.

So you can say two and two is four and not be a liar.

Um but two and two is seven. If you know that the answer is four, you're just

trying to deceive somebody by saying that for whatever reason, that could be considered lying. That could be considered wrong speech.

But there would be no right speech at all. I mean, unless you're just really clever at logic where you put everything into hypotheticals or conditionals or what that kind of thing, but even then that might that might not hold water either.

So yeah, I would say neither of, you know, none of the above would be the answer to SEO of action, Caden's question of them being ignorant that what they're saying isn't true or they're just

flatout lying. Yeah, I I would say
neither of those. So I'm just going to
move on to Seovo's
next question kind of along similar
lines. He says in one of Plato's works,
Socrates says that it is sometimes okay
to lie. The example he gave is of a
person you borrowed a knife from who
goes crazy and is at risk of harming
themselves or others then wants the
knife back. Socrates says you shouldn't
give the knife back and should lie to
them about not giving it or losing it
because it would be bad for them to get
the knife. What would the Buddhist
response to what would be the Buddhist

response to this? Well, I mean, you can just not give the knife back for the time being without lying. I mean, you wouldn't have to lie in that scenario. You just say, "You're you're being kind of nutty right now. I'll promise I'll give the knife back after you settle down a bit." You could say that. I mean, you're not really stealing if you fully intend to give it back at some point, but withholding it while they're a danger to themselves and to others. Um, I mean, you wouldn't necessarily have to lie about that. So, from the Buddhist point of view, like a Buddhist arant just wouldn't lie. If you're reading stories about Buddhist

arants in the text or the commentarial literature like in the Wudi manga or something, lots of examples of enlightened behavior in the Wudi manga too that um you know they're not going to lie that they'll remain silent while at the same time fully intending to give the knife back after this person you know is no longer a danger to themself or others. So I mean that would still be within Buddhist virtue within Buddhist sila.

Um you know it wouldn't be necessary to lie in that case but I mean sometimes it's it may be the lesser of two evils to tell a lie. Like one of my best my

favorite examples

is there's a story the the fourth wise man. It's a famous English story. I've got it in an anthology on the bookcase back there about the the Persian wise men who go to, you know, offer stuff to the baby Jesus. You know, they see the star of Bethlehem and they they move from, you know, their magi in Persia who go on this pilgrimage to offer frankincense, gold, frankincense, and myrr to the baby Jesus. And there's this fourth one who he's he tells the the other three, "I'll catch up with you guys. You guys just go ahead. I got to take care of some business. I'll catch up with you on the road, God willing." And then he's

continually through his virtue and generosity getting held up. You know, he he comes across some very sick person lying by the side of the road. He nurses them back to health before he continues on his way. So, he keeps getting late, you know. He never catches up to the other wise men. And so at one point he finally makes it to the Holy Land.

And the the king of Israel or Judea has, you know, Herod has made this this edict, all baby boys going to be killed. So, this fourth wise man who never really catches up to the other three, you know, he's got these treasures he's

going to offer. You know, he's got like this giant ruby, this giant diamond, and this giant pearl he's going to offer to the baby Jesus, but he keeps like, you know, by the time he gets there, he doesn't have any of it left by the time he finally comes across Jesus.

But anyways, he is staying in this woman's house. She's got a baby boy and Herod's soldiers are going door to door killing all the baby boys and this woman is just terrified. You know her, she doesn't want her baby boy to die. So this fourth wise man stands at the door. The soldiers come pounding on the door and he hands them like the giant pearl to the commander and says

there's no baby boy. There's no babies here. You know, and just kind of hands him this bribe of this treasure. And of course the the army officer's eyes go get really big. You know, he sees this huge pearl that he knows is worth a lot of money. And so he just says, "Okay, there's no babies here. We just continue." And so he saves the life of this baby by telling a lie. And probably the soldier doesn't really care if he's he's lying or not. He just sees the pearl and that's good enough reason. But still, the fourth wise man does tell this lie, but it's to save a baby. And of course, the mother of the baby is

just like weeping tears of joy and gratitude. You know, it's obvious that this is the better of the the two scenarios. He could just remain silent and let them butcher the baby of of the the woman who is providing him with food and shelter.

or he could tell one little lie, which is kind of a semi- lie because the soldier really doesn't give a [_] whether there's a baby in there so long as he gets this pearl.

So in a case like that, I mean like a hero, a tragic hero from a dharmic point of view may sacrifice his own virtue for the sake of protecting others. And you know that's sort of like I' I came up

with this idea. I'm sure others have come up come up with it also that a soldier for a Buddhist country could be seen as a kind of tragic hero. He's sacrificing his own virtue for the sake of others. So I mean he's obviously doing wrong by killing and so forth from a Buddhist point of view but at the same time he's doing it for a kind of you know a selfless reason you know at least if he's living up to the ideal.

So in some cases it may be preferable to choose the lesser of two evils and just take a hit on your virtue for the sake of for the sake of others or it's just the lesser of two evils.

But with regard to the noble lie like
Plato is talking about the noble lie
where the government may be justified in
lying for the sake of you know public
morale and so forth. Let's say the army
takes a blistering defeat, you know,
from some enemy and then, you know, the
the public announcements, you know, like
the newspapers
would say, you know, it's like, well,
there was an orderly retreat. You know,
we our side suffered considerable
losses, but there was an orderly retreat
from the battlefield and we we'll do
better next time. That kind of thing.

Um,

you know, it's sort of fudging on the

truth. not as bad as just declaring a glorious victory which some I mean it did happen like in Roman history that there were cases of of I think it was the emperor Alexander Alexander Severis who didn't last very long who went on some disastrous military um military campaign against the Persians got his butt kicked and then in in Rome they're saying it was a glorious victory when there was like rumors getting through that it wasn't a glorious victory at all, but the Romans got their butt kicked on that occasion.

So, I mean, that would not be a noble lie, but u maybe if you could uh twist

it a little bit, you know, it's like orderly retreat from the battlefield, that kind of thing, that it wouldn't be too bad.

Let's see.

But from the Buddhist point of view, lying is it's going to it is like a violation of of a transgression of virtue. You're going to be making bad karma for doing it. So you should make sure that it is the lesser of two evils if you decide to do that. And the lesser of two evils doesn't mean you lie to the police officer or you get in trouble.

It's just like I mean if you have like a virtuous reason it's going to cause more suffering overall

to to tell the truth then some people might opt for telling some kind of white lie like the fourth wise man in the story but still from the Buddhist point of view I mean there's no justification um that's going to remove any bad karma from that choice you're still take responsibly possibility for your karma.

So I guess I'm just going to move on to S of action Zeno's third question here.

He says in Majamakaya Suta 60 and I didn't look up which I don't remember what the 60th suta of the Majinaya is.

The Buddha says being an annihilationist is better than being an eternalist

because if you are an annihilationist and you aim for that then you will end up in Nibbana. While if you are an eternalist, you will be quote close to lust, close to bondage, close to delighting, close to holding, close to clinging," unquote. This seems contrary to most spiritual traditions where most are somewhat eternalists while denouncing annihilationism as nihilistic. What are your thoughts on this? Yeah, I do consider this not to be the best the best argument.

Um I mean in a way this this argument for annihilationist and eternalist also applies to no self and self. You know, most religions believe there's like an

eternal soul kind of a thing. Whereas in Buddhism, you go with no self. And it's a similar situation to this scenario in Majima number 60 where it's like both are kind of erroneous because the truth cannot be expressed in words. You know, so long as you're relying on some philosophical concept, you're you don't have reality. You don't know reality yet. But believing no self is kind of the lesser of two evils. You know, it's less of a mistake than believing in an eternal soul because believing in that eternal soul helps you to kind of cling to an idea of self. Whereas if you believe in no self, you know, it's in a

way it's less of an error. It's it's
it's setting yourself up for less of a
mistake, at least potentially, cuz then
you cling to this eternal soul, which
isn't going to be the the way your idea
is anyway.

I mean, the reality of it is is beyond
words.

So, I mean, it's kind of a lame
argument. You can find lame arguments in
the poly texts.

I would be a little bit skeptical that
the Buddha really said this just because
it is kind of a lame argument.

But I mean that's kind of the main point
though is that if you are an eternalist
then you believe in this eternal self

and you're kind of like making provisions for that and clinging to that. whereas you're just more of a nihilist, like a philosophical nihilist, especially with regard to no self and when you're dead, you're dead kind of a thing. Then I mean it's it's still erroneous. It's still like an invalid assumption because all assumptions applied to the absolute would be invalid.

But in a way you're it's less potential for just wallowing. You know there's you can wallow in any kind of idea. You can become a fanatic for any kind of idea especially even like

skepticism. You can be a fanatical

skeptic,

but

um just going with nothing

is I mean it's just setting yourself up

for less potential errors than just

fervently believing in eternalism and

like an eternal soul and all that

that it's just kind it was seen as kind

of skillful means I guess

that you're just going to choose this

one just because it's like the lesser of

two evils.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Moers. And

technically, this could have been the

first question that was asked, but I

don't like starting my Q&As's with a question that I really don't know anything.

Yeah, I mean I can answer the question by because the question is have you heard of and I can just say no I never heard of that and then just move on but I don't it's it's not really a good way to start the Q&A so it's it got bumped down the list a little bit. This question from Mooners is have you heard of argumentation ethics as developed and expounded by Hans Herman Hapa of the something institute and I've pronounced it myes before. or it's it's some kind of like right-wing economic philosophy.

And I've been told that that's not how you pronounce it. It's like Misesus or something like that. The Misesus Institute. Misus. I have no idea. I'm really not into economics. I mean, I have some basic general ideas about economics, but I'm certainly not the champion of any economic system because economics is just it's like the science of money and it just has never been particularly interesting to me. But anyways, Moers, after asking me if I've heard of argumentation ethics, he gives this very long essay describing it.

And it's it's too long for me to read the whole thing, but the the last

paragraph he kind of summarizes. So it says in short argumentation ethics holds that any justification for government coercion or really any act of one group of individuals forcing their will upon another group of individuals regardless of whether the latter group have done anything to violate the dignity of other persons must be evaluated not just in terms of outcomes or traditions but in terms of whether the justification can be made without contradicting the basic norms that make argument and therefore ethical reasoning possible. Now, just multiply that by about 10 and that's that's like the essay about

argumentation ethics. And so, so have I
heard of argumentation ethics? No, I
haven't heard of it. But I mean the
argument

these ethics I mean it's in a way it's
like a kind of idealistic philosophy for
a kind of libertarianism as far as I can
understand. And

libertarianism sounds good in theory,
but I don't think it works in reality. I
don't think it I mean, it'd be like
anarchy pretty much. Anarchy doesn't I
mean, it sounds good. There's there's
people on the internet just very
authoritatively like Stefan Molyneux would
be one. I mean, he's he got kicked off
of YouTube, I guess, long ago, but you

know, they're like libertarian like like philosophical

anarchists or something who think that anarchy would actually work. You know, you got no real system of government other than just what is everyone agrees on kind of. And yeah, I think it's just kind of like a an idealistic philosophy that sounds good, but I don't think it would work in reality. You know, who's going to accept the assumptions of argumentation ethics? You're going to have an entire population accepting the assumptions of argumentation ethics? I I really don't think so. So, I mean, it's I don't I think politics and reality are

a lot dirtier

and just there's a certain amount of unavoidable corruption that is just going to be there because we are human.

So,

yeah,

I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Tzasiz and Tzasiz says, "What would happen if you became a monk again? Would you be junior monk and start your way to Mahatera from the beginning or would your new preceptor somehow add your previous 29 or 30 reigns retreats to your new monkhood and make you a senior monk from the get-go?" No, you start from scratch. So anyone any monk who

disroes who reordains they got to start at zero again and then they'll have to take take dependence on a on a preceptor or on a teacher and just it's as though you just started completely over from scratch.

So yeah, I'd be a junior monk again if I ordain which I'm not planning on doing. Not in this lifetime.

So,

I guess I'll just move on to Trzus's second question, which is, "Is Mr. Fake Tig still meowing to you?" No, actually, I told him that the meowing just kind of makes him seem like a furry or something, so he stopped doing that.

although he he generally leaves one
comment to every one of my videos just
kind of reminding me that he still
exists and it he still would like to be
on the Discord server and so forth. So I
mean the absence of meowing is actually
a good thing that the meowing was just
kind of problematic. So he he realizes
that it was viewed as problematic and so
he has stopped meowing for the time be
for the time being.

So the next question is from thro orbar
mangrove

whose name is spelled like it should be
pronounced creel

and this is just kind of a it's like a
uh a rhetorical question I think I don't

think I don't know if he was really expecting this question to be answered but um I have come across this sort of thing recently um as you may expect once you hear the question. So, I'm just going to read this and it it does end in a question mark. So, technically this is a question. It's in the Q&A section. Fair game.

Says, "Wow, man. Trump, he is just following the Zionist masters."

Simplistic. Yeah, it is that simple.

Narrow. Zionists run your country. Two exclamation points. What a shame. Iran poses no threat to the US, but it does

to Zionists. Trump was the no new war and America first guy. More like the Zionists first and only wars that favor Zionists. Trump just bent over to the Jewish overlords in front of you. And here's the actual question. Is that a real man?

And yeah, I think Trump is a real man. man. Just if you assume that there are men there there there's any real men at all. Yeah, I would say that Trump is one of them.

So, let's just kind of review this a little bit. He is just following the Zionist masters and this I'm there's at least one other European that I have come in contact with and also a Canadian

at least one Canadian who has been saying the same stuff that he's Zion Dawn. He's just a subservient lackey to Netanyahu.

So he's just following the Zionist master. So when Trump like commands Netanyahu to retract his bomber planes, then what do you say to that? Well, that's just an exception to the this golden rule here. Yeah. And he says simplistic is no. Really? No.

And then he says, "Narrow Zionists run your country." And to some degree, I mean, Zionists are very influential. I mean, I think he's referring mainly to like, you know, the Jews,

at least, you know, the the Zion the
pro-Israel ones, you know, the ones that
take seriously their own scriptures
saying that, you know, Judea is the holy
land and all that.

So

yeah, I mean there is a lot of influence
of Zionists in America. There's much
more influence of like atheistic
Hebrews,

you know, in other countries in in
Western civilization like the EU, you
know, any Marxist country, you know,
they're run by essentially, you know,
atheistic Hebrewism.

The more leftwing a country is, the more
they're just subservient to the

atheistic, you know, non-Godfearing Jews essentially. I mean, Marxism and Christianity could both be called plausibly um, you know, schismatic sects of Judaism.

So, let's see. Zionist running your country. What a shame.

Yeah, Iran poses no threat to the US.

Although of course Iran I mean the the new iteration of like the Islamist Iran arose with the hostage crisis you know it's like they immediately took 52 American hostages at the US embassy in Thron and kept them for a long time using them as a kind of bargaining chip or or just sort of a part of a power

play that kind of thing. Iran has just threatened death to America so many times. They've funded terrorist organizations throughout the world, including the Houthies, that were like attacking American ships in the Red Sea, attacking pretty much all ships in the Red Sea.

So, I mean to say that Iran poses no threat to the US, um I mean they may not pose a threat to actually nuking New York or something, but obviously they are a threat to US economic interests. See, but it does. Yeah. Also, Iran also calls Israel the little Satan and America the big Satan and it threatens death to both. So Trump was the new no

new war and America first guy. Well, yeah, it's not really a war. I mean, Trump has done this kind of stuff before. Like he's taken out Solommani, you know, he was I think he was an Iranian, wasn't he? That was in his first term.

And so, I mean,

Trump, more so than Reagan, is just doing like these surgical strikes, just bombing stuff. And I mean, it's not exactly a war. I mean, it's military actions against countries, which he's been doing before. And if you're going to be a Chad superpower, there's going to have to be some militarism. You're

going to have to show the world that America is willing to kick some ass and that America is is good at it.

And taking the [_] out of the army is probably a good step in that direction.

and occasionally bombing somebody. Not like um like Obama. I've I've read just recently or heard recently that during Obama's administration, he was dropping on average over the course of his his his two terms, three bombs per hour over the course of his entire presidency. I don't know if that's exactly true or not, but I have come across that figure. So yeah, America first. Trump is still America first even though he cooperates

with Israel. But to say that he's just a subservient lackey. I mean, he is always saying and doing things that has Netanyahu

just on just like grinning his teeth that I mean, let's face it, Trump is stronger than Netanyahu and both of them know it. Apparently, some Europeans don't know that. some people that are just blackpilled because Trump isn't right-wing enough or whatever.

But the fact is that I mean he is he sees what American interests include.

But also there's also this other aspect in addition to I that Israel is like a strategically important ally in that

part of the world. Okay, there's that.

And so that to some degree, American interests and Israeli interests are going to coincide even if normies who write comments on on the internet are. I mean, they're not as aware of the situation as Trump is. He's got way the [_] better intel than guys that are just typing stuff on the internet from their bedroom or whatever. But also there's this other aspect to this whole thing

and that is as I never tire of reminding people that for well over a thousand years

Western civilization as a whole has worshiped a deified Hebrew

that we consider the Jewish god to be the one true god. You know, we worship or at least Western civilization in general, we worship a Jew. We consider their scriptures to be our scriptures. We've added to them with the New Testament, but still the Old Testament is the word of God and has been considered that by Western civilization as a whole for well over a thousand freaking years. So what the hell do you expect that you're going to have Western countries that are maybe more spiritual, more religious anyway than like the atheistic EU at this point that are going to be

believing that Israel is the Holy Land.
Their scriptures say it. Our scriptures
say it. So

I mean it's it's kind of different from
like the Crusades. I mean the Crusades
is is they were fighting to liberate the
Holy Land. They were liberating it for
Christians. You know they were
massacring lots of Jews, you know, in as
kind of incidental to the Crusades. You
know, it's like when the the first
crusade you had this rabble of like
semi-armed peasants that were, you know,
Das Vault and they're they're like
migrating
um westwards. And most of the ones that
made it into Asia never came back.

But they're they're sort of like making raids on like Jewish villages in Europe just to live off the land and you know get their food and stuff and and kill off Christ killing Jews supposedly on on the way. So it's like the the Crusades it was they acknowledged that Judea was the holy land. It's just that they didn't like Jews. But Jews have definitely like risen in in prominence and a certain amount of acceptance by Western civilization at this point. So now it's it's sort of transformed.

Protecting the Holy Land is also protecting the nation of Israel.

And it's like

devout American Christians. What the hell are they supposed to believe? You've got Christians nowadays that are like anti-Israel, anti-Jews and so forth. But I mean that requires either ignoring or just radically redefining certain basic tenets of Christianity which includes the Old Testament and the idea that the Jews were God's chosen people and that their land is the holy land and that God chose his only begotten son to be a Jew. I mean what the hell do you expect? So that aspect plus the idea that Trump really is not just some subservient lackey to Netanyahu that he does things and he he like commanded Netanyahu

essentially to pull back his planes and stop bombing Iran because he wanted to put an end to this. You know, Trump does want to be a peacemaker. He's willing to drop bombs or make some drone strikes in order to make sure that terrorists don't terrorize like he did in his first term. So, yeah, I really do think that this is just a narrow-minded, simplistic bashing of Trump by

unamerican people because they're not Americans.

But you have to bear in mind that

America is

it's much more Christian than Europe or probably Canada at this point. That

Canada and Europe have much much more
preferred the atheistic Judaism over the
theistic Judaism,
but it's still there.

So, let's see here. I think I'm just
going to move on to the next question.

This is from Xenithoid.

And Xenithoid says,

"Thoughts on Rasputin?"

Well, I mean, I my my knowledge of
Rasputin is relatively limited. About
half of what I know about Rasputin I got
from the movie Hellboy.

So, that's something to bear in mind.

But Rasputin

I mean there's there's you know he's
like the charismatic

like he was considered to be a stur in
like in the Russian Orthodox church they
have like this concept of the guru like
father zosa in dstvki's the brothers
karmazov is a strett you know he's like
a Christian guru and rasputin I'm pretty
sure referred to himself as a states
and he also apparently was involved in
some kind of shady schismatic Christian
stuff where they would indulge in like
orgies going with the idea that you know
God's forgiveness is more glorious when
he's got more to forgive that kind of
thing. He had like a hypnotic effect on
the the son of Thesar who had hemophilia
and he could to some degree like comfort

the child when he's suffering from the internal bleeding and all this because of all the inbreeding of European uh royalty.

And so like the especially the wife of the zar became like very emotionally dependent on Rasputin. He had a lot of influence.

Um but with regard to um some of the darker aspects or the more esoteric I should say aspects of his religion, I really don't know that much.

I suggest that you watch the movie Hellboy.

Um but I mean he was interesting. I mean the very fact that it was so hard to

kill the guy, I mean that's that's kind of respectable in Rasputin. I mean they he was like shot and poisoned and drowned and stabbed and all this kind of stuff just finally finally they were able to kill him.

But I mean, he may have had some kind of like psychic powers or just had influence over spirits or something that gave him kind of uh paranormal um you know, some kind of paranormal effects that he was able that were either centered around him or he maybe was even actually able to like control to some degree.

But I'm no authority on Rasputin. So,

I'm just going to move on to the
Xenithoid's next question, which is, are
there any other dark mystics you think
are interesting? And with regard to dark
mystics in the West, I mean, I really
was never interested in like Wikah or or
like Satanism or anything like that. Um,
which is where most of the dark
mysticism, like the witchcraft kind of
stuff. Alistister Crowley. He would be a
dark mystic, I assume. But I was never I
don't think I've ever read a book by
Crowley. I really don't know that much
about him other than just like
sensationalistic
documentaries I've seen like on YouTube,
that kind of thing, or on TV back before

YouTube.

Um, lately I think possibly you could even consider sticks hex and hammer 666 to be some kind of dark mystic. Although what actual power he has is questionable.

But the dark mystics that have the most interest to me would be like so some of those Tibetan Buddhist saints Padma Sambava. If you've ever read the the biography or the autobiography, I don't remember which it is, of Padma Sambava, he was doing a lot of darknistic stuff and he was an adept let's say you know he was very advanced much more advanced than Stixs

Hexenhammer

or probably Rasputin. Another one would be uh Millera who started off as a kind of dark mystic. He was like a dark wizard, you know, black magic kind of wizard at first and then he converted, you know, he sort of saw the light and converted over to Tibetan dharma and became a saint.

But the dark mystics that I think are interesting would be sort of like the the Vajriana Tandric ones. they would be some of the adepts, you know, some of the the more advanced cultivated dark mystics. And with regard to western dark mysticism, like quasi Christian dark mysticism, I really don't know all that

much. And I've always had sort of a
either just a complete lack of interest
or even a mild aversion for Western
attempts at that kind of thing, you
know, like witchcraft, wickah, crowley,
that kind of stuff. I really have not
been all that interested. And now that
Sticks Hex and Hammer seems to be going
off the dark end a little bit and
turning into a LOL cow with his leather
pirate hat and so forth, I'm losing I've
lost a certain amount of interest in in
him also.

So I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from RFS

and RFS says, "Is there a highest being

in the formless realm?" And there isn't any kind of hierarchy there other than just the different levels of the formless realm. So the highest heaven of the formless realm would be the realm of neither perception nor non-perception which is almost not it's just extremely subtle form of samsaric existence. The most the most subtle possible form of samsaric existence supposedly would be being a deva or a Brahma in the the realm of neither perception nor non-perception. And based on the the name of that heaven, then that's a pretty good indication that there's not a whole lot of social interaction there. You don't have a king. you don't have

like any kind of structured hierarchy or anything within that realm that the beings there have no sense organs. They can't even really interact unless maybe they've got some kind of really subtle empathy or telepathy, but they're not even thinking in words. I mean, it's just this like billions of years long bliss of being in this state of neither perception nor non-perception. You know, it's a state of perception. so subtle that you can't really tell whether it's really perception or not. That would be one way of describing it even though it's kind of self-contradictory.

But I mean neither perception nor

non-perception is itself
kind of self-contradictory. You know,
it's like it violates the Aristotelian laws
of thought. You know, A has to be either
B or not B. And when you're ruling out B
and not B, perception and
non-perception, then you're already in a
kind of paradoxical state.

So much so that you had like the the
hardcore rationalist Nyanovva. He was a
an eccentric

English theravada Buddhist monk who
lived in Sri Lanka in the 50s and uh
first half of the 60s. He was he started
off as an existentialist was converted
to Buddhism by reading Evola
you know Evola's book on Buddhism

and uh I mean he would his disciples
just would not translate that realm
because he was such a rationalist he
could not deal with the obvious logical
contradiction of the realm of neither
perception nor non-perception so he'd
just leave it in poly.

But so there really isn't a highest
being. I mean, you could say the highest
being would be like the the seniormost
inhabitant of that realm. Just, you
know, sort of like the senior most monk
is the monk who's been a monk the
longest, you know, regardless of
anything else. And you could say that if
there is a highest being in the formless

realm, he'd have to be in the highest formless realm, realm of neither perception or non-perception, and just be like the senior one there because they're not really interacting.

There's no real social structure or anything in these realms because they they don't even have they because they have no body. They have no physical matter composing them in any way. They don't have sense organs.

So maybe again there could be some kind of empathy. But I mean it just be they'd be experiencing all pretty much the same thing because they'd all be experiencing this realm of neither perception nor non-perception which isn't much of an

experience. It's the most subtle possible experience.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. Who has a Polish name apparently or a Slavic one anyway that I cannot pronounce correctly. So I'm just going to call him Nywall.

And Naziol says, "I've once asked you for advice for a guy straight out of high school. Here's a couple of things about me." And this does end in a question, so no worries there. He says, "I want to pursue a career in film making. This revelation occurred to me one year ago but since I don't have any success yet in the field portfolio is

required for film school I am going to study psychology in the best university in the country for the time being I was and then he says I was learning in high school physics and mathematics on extended level also taught myself B2 German whatever B2 means it's it's not probably not the bomber plane got to say I crashed the finals and it may be that Zywheel has not fully mastered the English language. I assume it's I crushed the finals which meant he did really good on them instead of just taking the finals uninvited or crashing in some other way.

But naiuel continues here. I don't plan on renouncing the world yet since my

reasons would be immature as I am now.

This Hindu idea of four stages of life seems better to me. How come here this is the actual question here. How come I think about the escape when I don't even know the danger and satisfaction? Well, that's just like a deep intuition. Like when I was 17, started reading Eastern philosophy, then just at a deep intuitive level, I'm just going, "Yeah, I I can accept this even though I didn't fully understand it and at the time was not ready to renounce ice cream and rock and roll and pretty girls and and and so on and so forth.

So I mean just backing up a little bit

going up the scroll here

um the Zywall wants to pursue a career in film making. I think you would have to take into serious consideration the fact that AI is going to be taking over a lot of this stuff that film making in future I mean I don't know what kind of films you're making but something like like a a documentary

I mean you could it'll get to the point where you just type in to the AI what kind of documentary you want and it'll just crank it out with almost no human effort involved in the making of the film.

Maybe fiction um you know like like a movie it could be different but even

then I mean AI is going to get so advanced that you very soon you may not have actual human actors in in films anymore. You know you there could start being John Wayne movies again because the AI will just start you know inserting John Wayne into these AI generated movies.

So I'd be very careful just try to take into consideration you know what you want to do compared with what AI is going to be doing if if not already then soon.

So let's see, high school physics and mathematics extended level. That's good. Although AI is going to be taking over a

lot of that kind of stuff, too. And
let's see. And so you get to the last
part here where the actual question is,
how come I think about the escape when I
don't even know the danger and
satisfaction? probably at a deep
intuitive level um based on parmmmy you
know just sort of the wisdom that you
have accumulated over previous lives
that even though your brain in this
version of samsara hasn't fully caught
up with that wisdom yet it still it's
there

um the the the Hindu idea the four
stages of life yeah I mean it's more
conducive more compatible
with a kind of social existence where

you know you you get married and you have your kids and all that before you renounce the world. But the problem with that is the longer you wait to renounce the world, it's like every day you postpone renouncing the world is two days lost because you've got one day left of your lifetime and also you got one extra day of accumulated habits that you have to somehow overcome.

So there's a saying in Burmese do a which means a monk who is ordained later in life is difficult to teach because the older you get the more set in your ways you are. So that if you renounce the world when you're young, you're more

flexible. You're more likely to be able to make significant progress. Whereas the older you get, the more set in your ways you are and just the harder it is to like deprogram a lot of your habits. So let's see.

Yeah, just just bear in mind the AI issue and I'm just going to move on to Nazi all's second question which is do you think there's room for Buddhism in mo modern western academia and he this is serious he's not joking here and he continues from my point of view the west is pretty close to anata postmodernism is famous for its critique of essentialism also Michelle Fuko and death of the subject. But at the

same time, it does not arrive at

Buddhist conclusions

about compassion, serenity and

discipline. This one mostly discipline.

Do you think that there is a possibility
of reconciliation?

Perhaps Buddhist view could purify

contemporary Western BS. Well,

uh, the first question mark is up at the

top here. Do you think there's room for

Buddhism in modern Western academia?

There's plenty of Buddhism of Buddhism

in modern western academia.

Um, and most of the Buddhism I've

encountered,

possibly just because of like algorithms

or something. Um, it's it's like
progressive like quasi Buddhism. You've
got like queer Buddhism, non-binary
Buddhism, lesbian Buddhism, this kind of
stuff. You got like these queer
non-binary lesbians are in academia. Ann
Galig would be an example of this. I
think she's at some university in
Florida. And they're just I mean it's
like they're just interpreting Buddhism
through a queer lens and just publishing
these articles, academ academic
articles, peer-reviewed articles about,
you know, how Buddhism is queer
friendly. you know, it doesn't condemn
homosexuality the way other world
religions do and so forth. And they just

reinterpret Buddhism. I've I've
mentioned before that like some Western
academic Buddhists
actually think that the second noble
truth should be revised
because all suffering doesn't isn't
because of clinging or attachment
craving. It's white patriarchal
oppression causes suffering too. So they
got to add that in. You know it's like
the second noble truth. The truth of the
the truth of of the cause of suffering.
You know it's you know like craving and
white patriarchal oppression. So
what I have seen in Buddhism, I mean you
do have serious Buddhistic scholars,

most of whom aren't Buddhists who are coming up with these theories about you know the origins of Buddhism and so forth and that can be interesting a lot of the time because they're not Buddhists they don't fully understand the philosophy you know they they haven't really lived the life kind of thing but uh I mean they do come up with interesting ideas and valid ideas. And so that that kind of Buddhistic stuff is worthy of of consideration, but it's it applies only to you know this school of Buddhism or that school of Buddhism and their origins and you know connections with with other systems in in that time

and so forth. So it's not like injecting
Dharma or Dharma into just the ac the
western academic world view. I mean,
there's a little bit of seepage, you
know, teensy bit of, you know, just kind
of bleeding over into other other
disciplines or whatever, but most of the
academic Buddhism,
I mean, it's either like this obscure
niche stuff that's very technical or
it's this progressive,
you know, like pseudo Buddhist [__]
I mean, it does have some real Buddhism
in it, but it's they've obviously got an
agenda which is like cultural Marxism,
and they're using Buddhism as like a

vehicle for that.

So

there is room for Buddhism in w mo mo
modern western academia, but modern
western academia is just like this
leftist shitow at present. And it's just
going to be taking Buddhist ideas and
inserting it using Buddhist ideas to
support this cultural Marxist stuff as a
general rule. There's lots and lots of
that.

Um, so there's going to have to be a
major shift in the whole attitude of
academia, which may be starting now
because cultural Marxism is to some
degree just falling. It's just going out
of style. So many people are rejecting

it as just cringe [__] now that to some degree the some of the major universities are kind of backpedaling kind of like pulling back from that kind of stuff especially now that you've got the Trump administration like outlawing a lot of it.

So like DEI hires and so forth. I mean that's that's one of the problems. You got DEI hires in academia writing this Buddhist stuff and they're they shouldn't even really be there just because they're only there because of a quota, not because of them being like the most qualified person to to get the position.

So, do I think there's a possibility of reconciliation between Western academia and Buddhism? Um, yeah. But it's it's going to require like I just was saying there's like the prevailing attitudes of Western academia are going to have to change. You know, you're gonna have to stop blaming Whitey for everything bad, for example, and start and before you can accept that desire is the cause of all suffering, you got to get rid of all this this Marxist [—] you know? It's just this spiritually bankrupt materialism where it's just like your your socioeconomic position in society is determining whether you're

happy or not.

But I mean it's it's theoretically possible especially if there's like some sort of like I don't know like a some kind of right-wing renaissance you know anti-marxist renaissance in academia then possibly

But I'm not holding my breath and I'm just going to move on to the next question also from Nzai all

which is as follows. What do you think about existentialist philosophy?

Sartra's nausea led me directly to Buddhism for which I am grateful. Well, existentialist philosophy, a lot of I mean, if you're interested in

existentialist philosophy and Buddhism,
you should you should definitely read
like the letters of Yanavvera. I
mentioned Yanava already. He's like the
eccentric uh English monk who lived in
son as it was called back then in the
50s and 60s. Um, and he started off as
an existentialist. So, he's talking
about not so much about Sartra. He
didn't take Sartra very seriously. He
was mainly into Kieragard who was like a
protoexistentialist. He liked Kimu. Um
he kind of oh who was that guy? He came
up with the idea of the axial age. Carl
uh I can't remember now but he kind of
lost he he kind of washed his hands of
him. Gosh I can't remember his name now.

He was an existentialist. Carl Jaspers.
He was kind of existentialist but then
he he moved to mysticism and nanopair
just hated mysticism. So he says
existentialist philosophers I mean they
kind of have a dilemma. They're either
going to just wallow in a kind of
nihilism, which is depressing, and
they'll often become suicidal, or they
just veer off into mysticism, which
Nyanova just absolutely hated because it
didn't really fit in with Arisetilian
rationalistic laws of thought and all
that. So what Nana Vera was doing he was
trying to come up with like
existentialism plus you know like the

pro version of existentialism which incorporates dharma so that you don't wind up with this nihilism and despair and you don't veer off into mysticism which nanao vera just could not accept at all. And so he came up with this this hyperintellectual ideas of how to turn existentialism into like right view where you don't just you don't hit this dead end of nihilistic despair.

But I don't think that nanao vera was correct in his interpretation of dharma even though he considered himself to be a sodapana and announced it to the world and he supposedly became a sodapana while walking back and forth just

philosophizing

majorly. So he just sort of thought thought his way into aryaahood according to him.

So what do I think about existentialist philosophy? I haven't read a whole lot of I tried reading some Sartra but his philosophical essays are almost unreadable. It's like Sartra in his philosophical essays at least apparently had this strategy of making sentences composing sentences so long and convoluted that nobody including him could see the flaws in his in his reasoning. His his biography of Tintterretto is well worth reading

though. I like that.

And I I mean he wrote some fiction too which was pretty good. You know it's he's kind of like Kimu a lot of absurdity in the in the fiction.

Um I've never read any Kieragard although Kirkagard just based on what Nanover was saying about him was uh intriguing that he might have might be one of the best existentialists to for a for like a Buddhist or a spiritually oriented person to carefully consider especially if you're not going to go the Carl Jasper's route and just veer off into mysticism which is what I would do personally.

So I mean existentialism for those of

you who are unfamiliar with it is just that there is no inherent meaning in existence and so you have to like create your own meaning or just wallow in nihilistic despair.

So yeah I mean it's kind of interesting. It's like a 20th century phenomenon.

um

kind of like Nichch's death of God was sort of like a leading up to it and uh yeah I mean it's it's interesting some of the fiction you know like Kimu I've read considerable amount of Kimu's fiction um you know it's worth reading you just kind of it can at least instill in you kind of a dissatisfaction with

wallowing in samsara when you realize that there's really no foundation to it and to to like meaning to a world view. It's just kind of arbit a lot of arbitrariness involved in that.

So yeah, I mean different strokes for different folks. I mean, existentialism is not my particular favorite branch of western philosophy or school of western philosophy, but it's it can be interesting. And if you're like Nyanava or into Nyan Vera, then you can apply that to dharma in extremely complicated ways.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Kundrew.

And Kundrew says, "What are your thoughts on the recent law in Texas requiring the Ten Commandments to be posted in every classroom?" Well, I I think that is kind of a deviation from the American ideal of separation of church and state.

And uh the Ten Commandments, I mean, as general moral guidelines, there is some goodness in it. Although obviously followers of the ten commandments still considered it okay to kill people sometimes. So I mean it's not the most advanced kind of moral code.

And of course there's that you know thou shalt not you know worship any god

besides Jehovah.

So I mean just having it on the wall isn't too bad. I mean, if they start being forcibly indoctrinated into Old Testament Christianity or something, then yeah, I would see more of a problem there.

But yeah, I mean, it does seem that it it is uh a reuniting of church and state to some degree as it's not even a particularly enlightened religious attitude.

But I'm not sitting in classrooms, so I just I really don't have any particular dog in that fight. I'm not in a Texas school at present.

So let's see. I mean, there's worse

things that could happen. It could be like the Quran or something.

So anyways, cander's second question is I was recently watching a video on no self or anata and one person commented something along the lines of if there isn't a self then stop eating for 4 weeks and you will discover that there is a self that will die of starvation unquote. How would you refute this claim to support the Buddhist idea that there is not a self? I mean that's not even an argument. I mean that's not an ar I mean he's just starting off. He's begging the question. He's just starting off with the assumption that there is a self and

then saying, "Well, you don't eat for four four weeks, that self will starve." I mean, he could use all kinds of arguments like that. You look in a mirror, you're going to see a reflection of yourself, right?

Or like um it reminds me of Dr. Johnson who wrote like the first major English dictionary. He was a famous guy back in like the 1700s in England. and he heard about George Barkley's immaterialist philosophy saying that there is no such thing as physical matter and so Dr. Johnson maybe just being a smartass but he wasn't very wise you know he's very sophisticated and worldly but not

particularly wise he just said I refute him thus and kicked a rock which of course doesn't refute anything so this person saying if there isn't a self then stop eating for four weeks and you will discover there is a self that will die of starvation I mean why even bother starve yourself why not just reach for a cup of coffee and see oh there's a self reaching for the cup of coffee.

That would be much easier way of coming to that realization if it were a valid realization, which it is not.

So, how would I refute this claim?

Well, I mean, you could use a little bit of doctrinal sophistication, use the

like the the simile of the chariot,
which is one of the basic arguments
against self in the poly text. You got
this chariot, right? And you take the
chariot apart, you disassemble it. It's
just a pile of all the parts. The exact
same parts are still there. You just
took them apart. Is that a chariot?
Well, not anymore. Or let's say you put
the chariot back together. You take off
a wheel. You put a different wheel on
it. Is that the same chariot? Well, you
could say as a matter of speaking, yeah,
it's the same chariot. Even though you
can change out piece after piece just
gradually one piece at a time until all
the pieces are different and it still

would be considered the same chariot
just like the human body you know it's I
mean you probably don't have any of the
same like materials in your body that
you had when you were a baby

just very few

but I mean so so it's like is it the
same body it's only as a matter of
speaking it's just it's like a
convenient generalization

and as Bert and Russell said before it's
like every word in the English language
is a generalization except for this and
that.

So um the self is a generalization. It's
just a convenient term or another

another example would be just a a fire like a candle flame. Not the candle flame that's behind me. I see right there. Not that candle flame. Where is it? right there because that's a fake candle.

But let's say just a candle flame. It's completely different from one moment to the next. And in Buddhist philosophy, your body, your mind also are are just different from one moment to the next. It's just in a constant state of flux. So I mean it's not the same self from one moment to the next. Even if you refer to a self, you know, there is no underlying essence that is like an individual self.

So just because there's this body that
is just a convenient generalization
like the chariot or the candle flame,
even though that would
disintegrate,
that doesn't mean that there is an
ultimate reality to that body.

It's just a convenient generalization.

And this is just one of the arguments
for no self. There's other one there's
other arguments that I won't even bother
to get into because this really isn't a
video just discoursing on on no self.

I have written a lot about no self and
probably done some videos about no self.

So you may be able to find a more

elaborate discussion elsewhere.

But I mean this I mean this claim that this person made is just is just really a bad argument. It's not even a valid argument other than people who just start off assuming that there is a self and then I mean it's just begging the question.

And that's one thing that kind of bugs me is that people use the term begging the question without really understanding what begging the question means. Begging the question as a kind of logical fallacy means you are assuming the truth of something that you're trying to be proving. You know, it's like you're you're arguing in favor of

something while at the very same time the whole argument is based on the assumption that your assumption is true that you know like you're you're arguing for the existence of Bigfoot. And it's like, well, if there was no Bigfoot, how could they have taken all those pictures of him? That kind of thing. It's you're just assuming that Bigfoot exists as a way of making this argument supporting the existence of Bigfoot. And it's the same that same kind of argument that this person has done. Begging the question is just, you know, in your argumentation, you're already assuming the truth of what it is that you're

working towards.

And I'm just moving on to the next question. This is from Romeo.

Romeo says, "Since I've been exploring Buddhism, I've generally experienced less suffering from applying its tenets.

However, there are fundamental aspects of Buddhism that I keep hitting a snag with. for example, that desire is the root cause of suffering. I get how lack of acceptance and longing for things to be different leads to suffering in theory, but I often don't grasp this when applying it in my day-to-day life.

For example, I enjoy Dunkin Donuts coffee and have a cup or two as part of my daily routine. Every now and then, I

skip a day or two and notice a subtle craving for it. I don't get how my daily enjoyment of coffee at Duncan is problematic. After all, I'm not addicted to it. I just enjoy it. Another more pressing example is my longing to change my current living situation. Presently, I live in a crappy part of the Bronx and work an incredibly stressful job at a psychiatric crisis center. While I realize that there are pros and cons to every situation in life and try to make the best of both, I have a daily longing and aspiration to eventually get out of dodge and start over. It seems that accepting my current situation with

equanimity and not making moves would be almost masochistic and counterintuitive.

If I am correct, Buddhism sees a value in cultivating a joyous mental state.

But how is one to cultivate joy without longing for and achieving pleasurable experiences to back it up? Please help tease this out for me. So, this is kind of subtle, you might say.

Um, let's see here. It's kind of a long question. Scrolling up and down here, trying to tease out a few things. Let's see. However, there are fundamental aspects of Buddhism that I keep hitting a snag with. For example, that desire is the root cause of suffering. Well, I

mean, I really don't see how that is problematic. It seems fairly obvious to me, like if I'm unhappy about something, I mean, it's a classic example. This is just a classic example. When I was in Burma, I was most places I lived in Burma had no electricity. I mean like monasteries, forest monasteries, no electricity.

Um, but there was this one monastery where I stayed at. It was in a military, it was on the outskirts of a military town. So they was on kind of the same military grid as this military engineering school. So the military government, you know, it

does take measures to make sure that in military areas at least, there's going to be some fairly kind of semi-reliable electricity. So when I when I moved there, the Abbott was saying, and there's electricity here like 247, and I'd lived in Burma long enough to know that. Nah, that that doesn't sound right. That just doesn't ring true. How can you have electricity all the time? So, and it turned out I was right. It's like the electricity was on most of the time, but it would kind of go off and on at random.

And so, there were times when I mean, this was up in the hills, like the the foothills of the Shan Plateau. And so,

the weather there was relatively temperate. You get down to about freezing in the winter time. And in the winter time when you don't have heaters, I mean, you can't I mean, most places in Burma, you just use like regular temperature water. You don't heat it up or anything, but at that particular monastery, it was just way too cold. Taking cold baths is something I've never particularly liked. And so, you'd set buckets of water out into the sun. Sometimes even that wasn't good enough, like in the winter time. So, you'd have like this stove, electric stove that you would heat water. I mean, you'd heat up

like a few gallons of water and pour that into the water that you'd been sitting out in the sun for for hours trying to warm it up and then it's it's tolerable.

And then so I'm decide I'm going to take my bath. I go over to to heat up the water and right then is when the power goes out. And just immediately I would be experiencing like aggravation, irritation, annoyance, dooka. And it was just so obvious why. I mean I want the electricity to be working it's not working therefore I am experiencing this annoyance and irritation and dooka I mean it's just a classic example very obvious and as soon as the electricity

comes back on again it's just like ah
you know it's just the whole problem
evaporates

so I mean you got to bear in mind that
Buddhist ethics is extremely subtle it's
way more subtle Well, then like any kind
of monotheistic

morality based on the will of God, that
kind of thing, like Christianity, that
kind of thing, Islam, that Buddhist
ethics are just extremely finely tuned,
extremely subtle. So that I mean, you're
experiencing dooka pretty much nonstop
that it's it's like this dooka, it's
like the thorn in the heart that is just
driving you from one moment to the next.

It's just this this restlessness, this restless dissatisfaction is just pushing us through samsara at all times.

And so, I mean, how subtle are you going to get? Um, let's see. Where's the Dunkin Donuts part? Okay, for example, I enjoy Dunkin Donuts coffee and I've I've heard that it's good uh and have a cup or two as part of my daily routine.

Every now and then, I skip a day or two and notice a subtle craving for it.

Well, that's a certain amount of dooka.

It's a subtle dooka, isn't it? I don't get how my daily enjoyment of coffee at Duncan is problematic. Well, I mean, that's up to you. If you want to see it as a problem, then it's a problem. If

you don't want to see it as a problem,
it's not a problem. But, um, if if you
if something becomes habit forming, then
first of all, when you're acting out a
habit, you're not being fully conscious.
And when that habit is interfered with,
just automatic knee-jerk like reflex
dooka arises.

So after all, I'm not addicted to it. I
just enjoy it. But you do have a certain
certain subtle craving for it to which
causes a certain subtle dooka. I mean,
that should be fairly obvious. I don't
really see what the problem is there
because I mean Buddhism, you want to
become fully enlightened, you have to

eliminate all of that or at least
transcend it.

I mean if it's still affecting you what
affecting you know what you consider
yourself to be then it's it's going to
be a subtle problem even though it might
be so subtle that you know you you don't
really want to see it as a problem
which is fine it's up to you
so then his other example is his longing
to change his current living situation
and I mean with regard to I see living
in a crappy area having an incredibly
stressful job at a psychiatric crisis
center. Yeah. I mean, you're making good
karma by helping people. I assume you're
helping people. Um, but there's going to

be some bad karma, too. And I kind of have some of that with my my new job. I've been working there for 6 months, but I guess it's still considered a new job. It's my newest job anyway, where it can be very hectic and stressful. There are times when I just do not like that job. And then sometimes, you know, usually as the it's like the first half of the day sucks and the second half of the day gets better because, you know, I'm getting [__] done, finally finishing up, and then there's like this kind of release of all this aggravation. But sometimes I'm thinking I'd be better off not doing this job. Other times it's

like, well, this is like the part of my spiritual practice is dealing with these situations that tend to aggravate me and I'm going to have to learn to deal with it, you know, because if you don't learn to deal with it, it's you just still got these uncooked seeds and it's you're going to have to deal with it sooner or later in some future life possibly.

So,

let's see. daily longing and aspiration to finally get out of dodge and start over seems with accepting my current situation with e. Yeah, I mean I really don't see what the problem is here other than maybe

maybe Romeo here just kind of doesn't

want to get very subtle in the situation. He doesn't want to get as subtle as Buddhist ethics clearly goes because I mean Buddhist ethics sometimes you'll see statements like even happiness is dooka and I mean like the traditional lame explanation for that. There are a lot of lame explanations in the text is that even happiness is dooka because it's impermanent. You know it's not going to last and then you're going to be unhappy again. But I mean, you could you could just twist that around the other way and said even even dooka is happiness. Even dooka is suka because the dooka doesn't

last. But the dooka is a chronic condition. So I guess there is that. So yeah, I mean you're just going to have to make up your mind. Is do you are you willing to use this incredibly stressful job as a kind of spiritual practice where you're going to have to learn to accept the stressfulness or if it's just you know it's just not going to work that way or for whatever other reason you just want to switch to a different job I mean you can do that too whatever is going to make you happier I suppose but still I

Let's see. Let's see if I am correct. He says Buddhism sees a value in

cultivating a joyous mental state. Um, yeah, it depends on what kind of joyous mental state it is. That I mean, just like being high on heroin or something in a way that's kind of blissful, I suppose. Not that I've ever taken heroin, but that is not like really a good kind of bliss or good kind of happiness. The the best kind of happiness is like the bliss of meditation or just having like a a clear conscience, that kind of thing or just the sort of neutral happiness of just kind of like an equanimity and and just contentment.

That would be considered a a good kind
of of joyous mental state rather than
like ecstasy which is going to going to
have to balance out with its opposite.

You're better off with a kind of
happiness that has no opposite.

See, but how is it how is one to
cultivate joy without longing for and
achieving pleasurable experiences to
back it up? Well, I mean ultimately you
have like the aesthetic mental state of
you have this equinimous

bliss regardless of pleasurable
experiences. You have this economical
bliss while just lying on a concrete
floor with a piece of wood for a pillow
eating one meal a day, drenched in

sweat,

a little cloud of mosquitoes around. I

mean, if if you can be happy like that,

no money, no friends, no family,

homeless,

you know, living like a beu in ancient

India,

then I mean, if you could be happy in

that situation, you can be happy in any

situation.

which is kind of like the Buddhist

ideal. That's one of the reasons why

Buddhism emphasizes a certain amount of

aseticism

because I mean if you can be happy with

an empty stomach drenched in sweat, you

know, no money, no home, all of this,
then you can be happy under any
circumstance.

You do not require the pleasurable
experiences.

So, I mean, if you're going to be living
in the world, you just have to accept
that. I mean, the four noble truths are
still true. And just duka is just
extremely subtle. What is what is called
suffering in English, you know, the the
usual translation of dooka. I I prefer
the term unease. John Tenisero prefers
the word stress. But still, I mean,
there's there's no one word because it
at the one extreme, it's the most
unbearable agony and at the other

extreme, it's just the most subtle
vague like semids,
which is almost always there in
everybody.

Like I remember reading this book, The
Tangled Wing, Biological Constraints on
the Human Spirit, where as a biologist
he's saying that it's like everyone is
always got this like
it's like subliminal anxiety,
you know? It's just everyone is all
conscious beings are motivated largely
by this restless dissatisfaction. This
this subliminal anxiety that just makes
us want to be doing something other than
just sitting there.

But I mean, it seems like Romeo just has
um a limit to how subtle he wants to be
in his interpretation because I really
don't see that there's anything
problematic at all. I mean, if you're
going to you're going to eat you're
going to drink Dunkin Donuts coffee,
maybe even have an apple fritter on the
side. And I mean, you do it almost every
day. So that on a day that you don't do
it, there's like this feeling of what
what is the word that he says? A subtle
craving. Well, it's just a subtle dooka.
And that's just the way life works.
Like some people you forget your cell
phone. It's like what the [__] am I
going to do? I don't I forgot my cell

phone. You know, it's the more attachment you have for something, the more you're going to suffer. you got subtle attachment for Dunkin Donuts coffee, you're going to have subtle suffering because of it. And if you don't see that as a problem, you're willing to accept a certain amount of suffering as as an equitable trade for a certain amount of of happiness or pleasure, then fine. It's your choice to make.

And I suppose I should just move on to a less subtle question here. This is from Ruie and Ruie says, "What was in your experience

the most intense inner visual field
imagery that arose during medit
meditation metaphor
or at all and the most intense inner
visual field imagery that arose during
meditation? Well, just set aside any
kind of like psychedelic drugs cuz I've
that's where most of the intense inner
visual field imagery has occurred to me
would be like through like LSD,
iawasa, that kind of thing. Also, there
was one time when I was I had pneumonia
about the age of about 19 and I was
hallucinating like in a kind of delirium
from that, but I wasn't meditating I
guess. So with regard to actual
meditation that is not like influenced

by like chemicals

at least not like artificial outside
chemicals

that uh the most intense inner visual
field imagery there was mostly that
would happen when I was sleepd deprived
like if I'm doing intensive practice and
getting by on the least sleep possible
then I would start dreaming even when I
was awake Like I' I've talked about when
I was doing intensive practice at
Pandida Rama where I was starting to
dream in the evening cuz I was getting
trying to get by on as little sleep as
possible and I like there's one time,
you know, I'm I'm like sitting in front

of a fireplace and there's a person standing with their back to the fireplace in front of me talking to me and I'm just getting ready to respond and then I realize no, I'm sitting in a meditation hall in Pandita Rama and Rangon.

So I mean it was all very clear. It was like it was really happening at least to my sleepy mind.

So I mean there was that kind of intense inner visual field imagery. I was like when I was at Alando Kasaba doing intensive practice um it was just these weird dream images that would just keep coming up and sometimes it was just strange stuff. is

largely random like dream spam like
somebody riding a bicycle across the
creek down below. You just have this
image of somebody riding a bicycle.
Suddenly the bicycle shoots out from
underneath them and they go flying
backwards or and then after that maybe
there's like this numeral nine just
appears in my field of vision just it's
like

dream images coming up. So there's that,
but it I mean that would literally be
the most intense inner visual field
imagery that arose during my meditation.
It was just dream images coming up at
random largely

due to sleep deprivation through the intensive practice. Um, I did experience the nima on at least one occasion, which was sort of like this duck egg kind of elongated oval, sort of a grayish whitish, you know, cloudlike thing that you're supposed to experience as a sign of neighborhood concentration as it is called. But I mean, that's not mentioned in the sutas. But I mean that would be maybe the most significant inner visual field imagery I experienced that wasn't just due to dream images coming up through sleep deprivation.

I did experience that nimita that time even though I mean the sutas really don't put much emphasis on it but

like in the paw out method you have to experience the namita before you can get into Janna.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from PSA.

And PSA says, "Are you minimally exceptional?" And I'm not even sure what that means, minimally exceptional.

I mean, I suppose so in certain ways, but I'm not exactly sure what minimally exceptional means.

Just kind of exceptional, slightly exceptional. I don't know. It's it seems like a value judgment or just a matter of opinion and I might not be the best person to give such an opinion because

it's I'm just too close to the subject
which is me.

But I guess in some ways

I don't know and I will say that

Tzasquez is came up with a question

responding to that question which is are

you exceptionally minimalist

and I don't know if I'd be exceptionally

minimalist. I am kind of minimalist

though. Um whether I'm exceptional I I

guess in certain ways and I'm also

minimalist in certain ways. For example,

if I did not have a woman, I'd be

sleeping on some mat on the floor. You

know, I wouldn't be having all kinds of

decorations on the walls. You know, I'd

be living pretty much like a monk in a

cell at least uh some of the time. Um
but when you when you have a woman,
women, they they do like comfort. And my
my woman has like an artistic
temperament, you know, she's very
aesthetically oriented. She likes
everything to be looking nice. You know,
there has to be like a picturesque
balance of stuff, you know, colors and
textures and all this that I mean, it's
fine. You know, I'm I'm willing to to
let her do her thing in that regard.
Every once in a while, I'll even add a
little input. You know, I think we
should get a certain kind of plant and
put it there. That kind of thing.

But,

uh, yeah, I'm I'm more of a minimalist than most people, I think. Even though I'm kind of living in a non-minimalist environment at present, largely because I got a woman that um I I do like to keep in good humor. I like when she's happy.

So, yeah, I guess so. And now I'm just going to go back to PSA who asked another question here. It's kind of a strange one. What do you think of Lily Phillips and Bonnie Blue? One had s intercourse with 100 men in one day and the other one did it with 1,000 men in one day. Yeah, probably. Uh they didn't last very long to get a thousand of men

in one day. And then anyways, um PSA continues, "Are you sure we're not headed towards the 7-day free-for-all sword fight?" Yeah, the seven-day free-for-all sword fight is is like in there's a Buddhist text, I think it's in the dean kaya, talking about how human beings are devolving at present and eventually we're going to get down to like a lifespan of 10 years with puberty at five and everyone's going to be like killing and and eating each other and all this. So, what do I think of Lily Phillips and Bonnie Blue? Um, I've seen pictures of them. Neither one of them really struck me as attractive. And just

the very fact that they had done what they had done kind of makes them even less attractive because they're sort of like a walking petri dish.

So I mean yeah I mean the thing is though there have been women like this for a very long time. There have always been women like this. You know, you read like *Aphroditi* by Pierre Louie who I mean this was written in the like 1898 but it's extremely pornographic in the literal sense because it's writing about prostitutes and he's writing about prostitutes in Alexandria Egypt um during like the late Roman Republic back when Cleopatra was 12 years old approximately. Cleopatra II, the famous

Cleopatra,

and this kind of [_] was was going on
big time.

So,

yeah, I don't think that it's really a
sign that we are that civilization is is
in decline. I mean, there's way better
signs than that. I mean, there have
always been hoes,
including rather extreme hoes like this.

So,

yeah, it does seem that we are not
headed towards the 7-day free-for-all
sword fight, and we're not even headed
for like really dark age barbarism and
savagery unless civilization collapses

due to some cataclysm like, you know, World War II or an asteroid strike or something like that could trigger it. But and until that happens, um I don't think that really we're going to be devolving down to a 10-year lifespan and just universal violence, that kind of thing.

So, but what do I think of Lily Phillips and Bonnie Blues? Neither one of them is my type at all. I really there's a slight aversion looking at their face when you see them on like X or something, you know, just some something about them. Um, yeah, just knowing that they did what they did just makes them seem like just a a walking STD.

So, anyways, I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Blitz Man, also known as Whoa, Whoa, Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. So, let's just call him Blitz Man because it's hard to get the number of woes out correctly without counting them internally and so forth. So, Blitzman says,

"Not sure if you've ever addressed as I have only started reading or watching your work a month or two ago. I'm curious as to if the process into settling back into your life as a layman after years of being a monk. Did you feel guilt or inadequate in partaking in

the world? Were your senses overwhelmed since you weren't in the forests anymore? What does your meditation routine look like now with your job and being with a partner, living in the world, etc. Okay, I guess I'll have to take it apart at a time. And then did I feel guilt or inadequate in parting in the world? Not really. I used when I was a junior monk I remember my father asked me you know what would you do if you were just drop out of the monkhood and I at the time I was still a junior monk I said I'd feel like a failure but after being a monk for several well I was a monk for 30 years altogether but it was after I've been a

monk for

probably less than 20 years 20 let's

just say 20 years that I just stopped

making progress you know I just got as

far as I could get with it under the

circumstances. And so, I mean,

eventually, it's just common sense. I

mean, if you've been trying something

for years and it's not working anymore,

try something else.

So, I really had gone beyond the the

feelings of filth, feelings of guilt or

inadequacy when I stopped being a monk.

And I mean I've taken to heart

especially I mean I was talking about

this in the previous Q&A that guilt

after the fact or is called cuca in poly
it's always bad karma to feel guilt or
remorse about anything is always bad
karma always.

So I've taken that to heart and so
feeling guilt or remorse is almost alien
to my nature.

See, were my senses overwhelmed
since I weren't in the forest anymore?

The only I mean, the closest I came to
sens sensory overwhelm

really was all of a sudden I was free. I
was liberated so that I could just walk
to a refrigerator in my own home, open
it at any time of day and just help
myself to any food in there. For me,
that was just like this weird miracle

because being a monk for 30 years, you only eat what somebody gives to you. You can't just help yourself at a refrigerator and you can only eat in the morning and so forth. I can go to the refrigerator in the afternoon and just pour myself a glass of orange juice or something, which is I mean it was just like forbidden for 30 years, but that was it wasn't really overwhelm. And I I have to admit, I just say nobody gets the right amount of whelm. Everyone I mean they're either overwhelmed or they're underwhelmed. I mean, nobody's just I just got the perfect amount of whelm on that one. Nobody says that.

So, let's see. What does your meditation routine look like now with your job and being with a partner? Like I've said before, I don't do formal sitting practice anymore.

Um I do like spontaneous oming sometimes at work even. And then there's just like the the standard mindfulness of of daily activities. Like for example, when I went like this, you know, you just feel like it's it's kind of hot. We're in South Carolina and it's summertime. And so it's hot and I've got like this little film of perspiration. And so I go like this and you just feel the coolness as you move your hands and it increases the the evaporation of sweat on the

hands. you feel like the air and you know the urge to do this, keep doing it, that kind of thing. So it's like that would be like my meditation practice such as it is is just sort of, you know, basic mindfulness of events and mental states, you know, actions and mental states, including mental actions and just spontaneous coming from time to time.

Let's see.

So I mean the general process into settling back into life as a layman. I mean it was a the most radical change for me is I'm sharing my life with another person now. You know it's not a

whole lot of privacy. We're just there's like this third entity which is like the us entity.

And so that took some getting used to.

Um but it's fine. I mean, I'm certainly not complaining that I I've got like this beautiful woman limiting me.

So, let's see. Where was I actually going with that?

Yeah. I mean, just sort of there was a little bit of not so much overwhelm, but 30 years of programming of just being like this aesthetic following monastic discipline and all of a sudden, you know, I've got this woman sharing my bed and I can just eat whatever I want and all this kind of stuff. So that there

was like this kind of like habitual or even mildly neurotic just no sort of inhibition that I had to like struggle through to some degree. And I don't I think my 30 years as a monk really has kind of permanently changed certain aspects of my mind, how it works with regard to I mean I was always kind of tending towards austerity that kind of thing but um see curious as to if the process into settling back into life as a layman after years of being a monk and it was actually pretty easy because I mean when

you're a monk I mean it was pretty easy for me. It wasn't really that radical of a change because when you're a monk you're supposed to like deal with any kind of stimuli as just stimuli. You know it's just you see a person in front of you talking to you sort of deconstruct that person into like visual perceptions, auditory perceptions and so forth. And it's just it's sort of like seeing the world on like a a television screen in a way, you know, it's you just sort of deconstruct the meaning of everything until it's like stimuli. And so when I stopped being a monk and started being a lay person again, you know, it's just like a

change of movie on the TV screen to some degree that there was some of that also.

And so it was I made the transition fairly easily. I'd already been a lay person before. It was to some degree it was just sort of like the the reactivating of of old layman's um habits and so forth.

But I mean it really wasn't all that difficult. It wasn't really that big of a deal. Um like it wasn't problematic other than the few little things that I've already mentioned.

And so I guess I'm just going to move on next question which is from Phil Lees.

And Phil Ley says, "Have you read

William James's Varieties of Religious
Religious Experience and what do you
make of it?" Yeah, I've I've read it.
I've got two copies of it on on my
computer and I had another copy on my
bookcase, which I looked for it just
before starting this and I I didn't see
it. So maybe I don't own that paper copy
anymore, but the print was really small,
especially the footnotes. But William
James, Variety of Religious Experience,
I have recommended it before. It is uh
like a significant book for me in my
reading history. You know, every once in
a while you read a book that really
makes an impression on you. William
James varieties of religious experiences

like that that he's very intelligent.

He's got lots of interesting case histories of what it's like to be religious, different aspects of religion, including like aseceticism.

And uh I I pretty much agree with a lot of what he says.

And um the the main shortcoming I guess of William James' varieties of religious experience is that he's I mean it was composed like around 1902, you know, well over 100 years ago. And so most of his case histories, his stories that he's drawing from as examples are Christian cuz western civilization has been

traditionally Christian for well over a thousand years. And so I mean he he includes a little bit of what was it Ramach Krishna or Swami Vivikananda or something just a teensy bit of Hinduism. There's I don't think there's any Buddhism at all. There might be just a slight reference to it or something, but it's mostly Christianity, but still he's dealing with general aspects of the religious mind and religious experience. And so people are people and they might the experiences might be interpreted somewhat differently, but they're similar experiences between a Christian and a and a Buddhist, for example. But it's well worth reading. I think

anyone who takes religious experiences seriously would benefit from reading the varieties of religious experience by William James.

And so I'm just going to move on to Phil Lee's next question, which is once you mentioned the general epistle of James essentially contains a discourse on the second noble truth, could you reexplain this?

Okay. Well, as it turns out, I got my Bible right here. This is the best Bible I've ever owned. I think it's a Catholic one. It can it contains the Apocrypha Deuterocanonicals.

And uh at the it's got like alternate

readings. It's got all these footnotes, you know, like the story of the woman taken in adultery and and Jesus says that he is without the first sin cast the first stone. you got this footnote saying that in some early manuscripts that was actually in Luke instead of at John. Other manuscripts it switched over to a different part of John. you know, it's apparently like a later edition like um where it's talking about Jesus's mother being a virgin and it's supposedly quoting the Old Testament about the the prophecy and there's this footnote saying, you know, in the original Hebrew of the book of um book of Isaiah, it doesn't say virgin, you

know, it just says a young woman of marriageable age, the word the word in Hebrew, the original word in the Old Testament just means a young woman. And then that got mistranslated into Greek as virgin. And then the the New Testament authors were relying on the Greek translation more than the original Hebrew and just assumed that this statement in in Isaiah, you know, there were a young woman will give birth to a son and his name will be Emmanuel, which means God is with us, etc., etc. that that was somehow a prophecy of the Messiah, which it wasn't.

And and so you there's like timelines in

the back. There's maps. See, see, let's see here. Maps.

So, it's it's a good Bible. Anyways, um getting back to the actual question though, let's see. I mentioned that the general epistol of James contains a discourse on the second noble truth.

Could you explain this? I might as well just read it. So, it's the beginning of the general epistle of James, chapter 4, and it says, "Where do all the fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your desires for pleasure, which are constantly fighting within you. You want things, but you cannot have them, so you are ready to kill. You strongly desire things, but you cannot

get them, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it. And when you do ask, you do not receive it because your motives are bad. You ask for things to use for your own pleasures, etc., etc. So, I mean, that's that's like right out of the kalaha suta of the atagawaga is just very archaic Buddhism. You can find this sort of thing in the text. I mean, it's it's essentially the second noble truth. And this the second epistle of James. I mean James apparently was the su the successor of Jesus as the leader of the Christian church. He was like the leader

of the Christians in Jerusalem.

And then Paul just kind of became schismatic and was emphasizing the the non-Jewish element of Christianity.

But James apparently was like the the successor of Jesus as leader of the the the early Christians and he got kind of outco competed by Paul and he's almost absent from the Bible. you know, he got edited out of the Bible apparently, aside from this one epistle, and it's got more wisdom in it than possibly all of Paul's epistles combined. It's got a lot of really basic

um

basic like moral advice and a lot of

what could be called dharma.

So

anyways,

I think I answered that question.

So I'm just going to move on to the next one which is from Sedarta Lohachita.

And Sedarta Loha says, "Do you think the common man can experience glitches or failures in samsara or the matrix as people would say today? I've seen in inexplicable videos like a vehicle appearing out of nowhere and crashing into another defying all laws of physics. In general, these are unexplained phenomena. What do you think could be causing them? Well, I I want I

read this book. I've talked about it so many times. Some of you are probably just sick of hearing about it, but it's *The Trickster in the Paranormal* by George P. Hansen. And his explanation of paranormal events resonates with me. I think there's a good chance that he is right. In a conventional sense, ultimately nobody's right. But in the conventional sense, he's saying that I mean, in a way, it kind of agrees with early Buddhism like this this universe is mind-made.

And so there's going to be anomalies because our minds are not perfectly rational. If our minds were perfectly rational, we'd be robots.

And we're not robots. There's a certain
like inspiration. There's like a a
consciousness of life, a living
consciousness in us that really can't
have everything locked down and
completely regular. And so there are
like gaps and weak places between the
rules. You got like the so-called laws
of physics. Also, you've got like
just the laws of physics aren't enough
for for a human. you've got to have like
social laws and taboos and all that, but
still there are like weak places like
joints between the rules where sometimes
like chaotic impossible stuff can come
in. And that's his explanation of how

the paranormal works that it's sort of like cracks between the rules where this stuff seeps in. And so according to him, you're never going to be able to standardize the paranormal. Like parapsychologists are never going to lock it down, explain exactly what it is because there aren't any rules that like universally apply. It's just like stuff leaking in between the rules.

So yeah, the common man generally I think most people I've read like in a parapsychology book that most people if you ask most people they will say that there has been some kind of inexplicable paranormal event has occurred in their life.

So yeah, I think that's just it's always with us that there's never that the rules that govern our version of samsara are never going to be so complete and universal that it's just going to lock everything down so that nothing can break the rules.

And it probably happened more before science than now. like the scientific world view has like a more comprehensive like

comprehensive and

what's the word?

Uh coherent coherent set of rules so that you're going to have less weird stuff leaking in than like in premodern

times when people believed in magic and gods and that sort of thing. that left more gaps.

So, let's see. And of course, some like wizard and witch types deliberately make gaps by violating taboss, that kind of thing. That then allows the paranormal to to leak in more easily, you know, it's like this gimmick.

So,

yeah. And then of course like normal people that approach like very advanced saints are going to be ex exposed to even more of this

or on the other like the other extreme you know they're exposed to like demonpossessed psychopaths. there's

going to be weirder stuff happening
around them too just because they're
breaking rules that is like causing a
certain amount of chaos and more gaps
between rules in a sense
weakening the matrix in that way
deliberately producing glitches.

So yeah, I'm I'm really I'm not a
materialist. So I'm not saying that you
know that there really is this material
world around us that is just slavishly
obeying laws of physics that kind of
thing that it's like the first verse of
the damapata it is all mind-made
and we do the best we can but we're not
perfect and so we do not create a

perfect world

and all of a sudden I realize we're at the last question. My golly. And this last question is from liberating insights. And liberating insights says, could you talk a little bit about Buddha and how authentic his translations are? I understand he has biggest influence on the terravada tradition. Yeah, Buddhosa is the main commentator to the terravada tradition. In fact, Orthodox Terravada might become might be more correctly referred to as Buddhagosism than Buddhism.

Because a lot of orthodox terra doctrine comes from the commentarial tradition especially like Abidama commentary but

Buddha Gossa lived like in the fifth or sixth century of the common era in Sri Lanka. He supposedly came from he was supposedly a Brahman who came from India and he was converted to Buddhism and um

with regard to his translations I mean he

that could be a misunderstanding on the part of liberating insights. The only translations Buddha is known for would be translating

like ancient Sri Lankan commentarial literature into Pali. So Buddha there was already like a commentarial tradition. There were already

commentaries before the time of
Buddhagosa. But in Sri Lanka there were
like the poly or whatever language
originals had been lost and all they had
was sinhali translations. And so one of
Buddha's jobs when he's like editing and
compiling these this commentarial
literature was he was translating it
into poly from sinhales into poly. So
there's some of that that was about the
main translations that he did was
translating like pre-existing
commentarial literature um into poly
from from sinhales.

And I'm I've never really had a high
opinion of Buddhaosism. I mean, when I
became a Buddhist, I wanted to follow

the teachings of Gorama Buddha and not
Buddhagosa.

And like I've said, a lot of just basic
terra Buddhist doctrines are more
Buddhagosism than Buddhism.

So yeah, Buddha is the author of many
commentaries. in the commentary the the
atagatas including the central
commentarial work which is in terra
Buddhism the sudi maga the path of
purification.

So

um some some schools especially Burmese
Buddhism like the P out method. Yeah.
Buddha is just considered to be just
infallible in in Buddhist Burmese

Buddhism in general. the commentarial literature of Buddha and and others are just I mean that's it has to be right you know you can't question it this not only are the sutas correct but the commentaries are are correct and in fact the commentaries are in some ways more authoritative than the sutas themselves because if the Buddha says red and the commentary says when the Buddha said red what he really meant was blue without the commentaries you wouldn't know that it's really blue and not red, so to speak.

And so I used to just really bash away at um Buddha ghostism as I called it.

But that was when I was in Burma because

that's where everyone's taking it seriously. I come back to America and like scriptural dogmatism and just believing the commentaries as just the infallible word of Buddha when it's really the fallible word of Buddha and others.

Um it just wasn't as much of an issue in the west. There's in the in the west there's these other issues like scientism sort of supplanting dharma as the main explanation for reality. So when I was in in Burma, I bashed away at like Buddhosism and just kind of Abid Dhama, which is largely Buddhosism because some of the most um basic

teachings of Abidama so-called isn't even found in the in the the Abidama pitica. It's found in the commentaries on the Abidama.

So let's see here. I keep saying so and I'm noticing that.

Um so could I go talk a little bit about Buddha Gossa and how authentic his translation translations are? Well the translation part I already I already discussed. Um Buddha Gossa

you know in a way some people compare him to like the St. Paul of Terravada.

Although probably it would be more correct to say that a monk named Mowgali Puratisa is like the St. Paul of Terra. He's like created terra at the third

council by presiding over the third council and introducing Abidama texts and so forth. Buddha Gossa might be closer to like a Thomas Aquinas of Terravada Buddhism something like that but I think most westerners would be better off not taking him very seriously. I mean, if you want to be like literate in terab Buddhism and know what the official doctrines and that that sort of thing are, you have to be familiar with Buddha and the commentarial tradition. But if you just want to understand what the Buddha originally taught, then Buddha Gossa can do more harm than good

because the commentaries are often just making wild guesses. And it's not um necessarily the case that this commentarial literature really goes back to the time of the Buddha. Some of it might, but a lot of it is just apparently wild guesses from monks in Sri Lanka and southern India about stuff that happened hundreds of years previously in northern India. And a lot of it is guessing and some of it is not very good guessing.

So let's see here. Did I answer that question?

Talk a little bit about Buddha. Well, I did talk a little bit about him and how authentic his translations are. Well,

yeah, his translations you can't really say cuz he's just translating some commentary literature into poly from and it's it's a different style of poly, too. It's much more convoluted than like scriptural poly.

Let's see. I understand he has the biggest influence on the terra tradition. Yeah, he definitely he's he's one of the the main names in terravada defining terravada as like an orthodox system of doctrine. Yeah, he he's one of the the central people for that.

But there are others and even like you you've got the tapitica, you know, which is the Buddhist the Buddhist scriptures,

the polycanon.

Then you've got the atagatas or the commentaries that most of the main ones were composed or at least they're attributed to Buddhagosa.

And then you've got the tikkas which are the subcommentaries

and then after the tikkas you've got the anutikas which are the sub

subcommentaries. So it's like the tikkas are commentaries on the commentaries and

the anutikas are commentaries on the commentaries of the commentaries. And

from the Buddhist point or the the

Burmese Buddhist point of view, it's all authoritative.

So like the Mahasi method resorts

resorts to obscure claims made in an Anu
tikka that was written like in early
modern times probably.

That's I mean the the validity of the
the orthodoxy of the mahasi method rests
on some obscure statements made in an
anutua like maybe in the 1600s.

But Buddha yeah I'm I really am not
extremely impressed by Buddha. I'm not
extremely impressed by Paul of Tarsus
either from you know from like the
Christian scriptural point of view.

So

yeah, I think if you just want to be
literate in what terra Buddhism is all
about, including what is official

orthodox doctrine, you have to be familiar with Buddha. But if you just want to follow the teachings of Buddha, then Buddha may cause more harm than good. You're better off just trusting your own intuition when you're reading the original texts without relying on commentarial interpretations of what those texts are saying because sometimes they have to twist things around in order to make it fit this this later orthodoxy that's superimposed on the texts. That's one of the one of the main reasons of the commentaries is just try to interpret the entire typica along this later developed orthodox lines. And sometimes it takes stretching and

twisting.

And that's it. I'm done. I got other stuff to do today, too. Like I got to finish digging the fish pond and move bags of cement and so forth.

So, I'm just going to uh call it good.

If if you got any questions, etc., etc., you know, you know the you know the the score on that one. If you think I can answer, feel free to ask in the questions in the comments below. And uh like and subscribe if you have not done so already.

And be happy.

Alrighty then. Hello and welcome to
question and answer number 152.

I am your host Po Basa and 152 of course
is pathetically nonprime.

This is my beverage

and we're doing a late one. This is the
most late night question and answer I I
have ever done. pretty sure it's well
after midnight and long before this Q&A
is done, that fish tank back there is
going to be completely turned off. It's
already in in moonlight mode

cuz I've been kind of busy today. The
the fish tank is is very close to being
finished. The digging is done. I put
down the liner today. found out that one

end of the pond where the where the
overflow is going to be um is is like
six inches too low. So, I have to do
some masonry, mixed up some concrete and
uh and and build that up. And so,
probably

maybe a week from now, it'll be done and
even have like fish in it and stuff,
which is kind of nice. I like fish. Like
fish ponds.

So, I guess I should just start
answering questions.

Uh, it's going to be like after 3 in the
morning by by the time I'm done, but I'm
kind of a night owl. I'm more nocturnal
than most people anyway.

So, first question is from Gnostic

Rocker. And Gnostic Rocker actually asked these questions last February in a in an email that I overlooked.

And so he's he's got

he he has the the privilege of asking more than three questions this time because the first three questions he asked were several months ago.

So anyways, Gnostic Rocker says, "Can you tell us about any fantastically insightful, ostensibly mad or deeply eccentric one-off kinds of people you've met in the temples in your time in Burma? Whilst staying in hermitage o hermitages over the years since the late 1980s, I soon realized it was far better

to suspend judgment for a while. Some of the people I initially considered half mad turned out to be full of spiritual insight. Some of them deeply original. Some of the somewhat wacky eccentrics turned out to have brilliant gems of wisdom. Whilst conversely, some whom I'd initially considered profound, it turned out were just mouththing cliches and following orders by the book. So, let's just get back up towards the question.

Mark, can you tell us about any fantastically insightful, ostensibly mad or deeply eccentric one-off kinds of people you've met in the temples in your time in Burma? Well,

um

I mean it should be pointed out that really saintly people tend to be rather nutty. They tend to be very eccentric. I mean, that's just the way it is. Like William James the uh in his classic book the varieties of religious experience starts off by pointing out that saints you know like medieval kind of saints because he was mainly talking within the context of western civilization and Christianity that that saint saintly people would be considered mentally ill nowadays. A lot of them probably most of them. And so good monks tend to be rather strange. In fact, monks in general, especially western monks, tend

to be kind of on the fringe anyhow
because like a western monk is just kind
of deviating from his entire culture in
order to adopt Buddhism unless maybe he
was born and raised in a Buddhist ashram
or something.

So

nevertheless, most monks, most people
who live at monasteries, you know,
they're not enlightened. You know,
they're going to have plenty of
foibles. And most of the really nutty
kind of monks,
um, I mean, they were just kind of nutty
to the point of being somewhat
dysfunctional.

Like there was a Chinese Malaysian

monk who was just very confused. I mean it's like he could not make up his mind about stuff and he had this habit of like walking into my room. I met him first in Rangon at a meditation center in Rangon and then I met him again at a forest monastery in central Burma and he did the same thing twice where like he he needs help with his visa and he just gets this idea that somehow I can help him with his visa. So, he'll just walk into my presence and then just stand there in silence with his back to me until I ask him, "What do you want?" And then he'll he'll ask if I can help with his visa. But he he starts off just

walking into the room. It's just the two of us. And then he'll just stand there with his back to me in silence until I address him. And then he'll he'll say what what's on his mind. There was another Vietnamese monk that I met at a forest monastery who

I mean he hadn't been in Burma for very long but and I had been in Burma for well over 10 years at the time but still he had been to way more places than I have. He's just going to place after place after place. None of them is satisfactory. And he's asking me where is a good place? Where is a good place? And I'm telling him, I mean, if you've been to that many places already and you

still haven't found a good one, chances are the problem is not with the places. And he had this phobia of lay people. It was like if he was sitting in front of his cave and lay people came just to pay respects or something, he would just take off, hide in the cave for the rest of the day.

I mean, he just the lay people. I mean, he would had this just mortal dread of interacting with lay people except when he was like with his bowl in the village and he was pretty much the same way. He just could not make up his mind about stuff. So, I mean, there's monks like that that are just nutty. And it's it's

not the good kind of nutty where you're just sort of, you know, you've kind of broken free from the samsaric wheel to some degree. you know, you're just kind of calling your own, you know, you're no longer enslaved

to a lot of cultural conditioning that most people are enslaved to that sort of thing. That's kind of a good sort of eccentric. But there are probably most of the nutty inhabitants of monasteries are sort of the other kind where I mean they are on the fringe, you know, they're more able I suppose to renounce the world and and strive for enlightenment or whatever, but also it's just they're kind of dysfunctional.

So I mean some of the dysfunctional types also um became canonized as Catholic saints like St. Gertrude for example I mean there was a lot of medieval saints they're just like hallucinating hearing voices and seeing stuff all the time but St. Teresa of Avila, I've mentioned her before, where she was seeing visions so often that her father, Confessor, just told her to make the sign of the cross every time you see a vision. And it was tiring out her arm apparently. So, she just started carrying a crucifix and just like holding it up every time she saw one

or heard the voices or whatever.

But with regard to

like really eccentric

monks that were relatively highly

advanced,

there's one in particular and um he was

an American. He was from Texas. His name

was Waytherizabu. In fact, he had his

name legally changed to Ves Vesa Raja

Biku.

Um in Burmese pronunciation beethza beu.

And then after he'd been a monk for like

14, 15 years, something like that, he

dropped out of the monkhood and became a

kind of recluse. He still wore monk's

robes, still went for alms round.

Sometimes he grew his hair long and had

a beard just so he wouldn't be accused of pretending to be a monk. And he lived in a big hollow tree, big a huge banyan tree. I've sat inside that hollow banyan tree with him. you know, it was it was sort of like maybe eight feet long and maybe like three or four feet wide. So there and you could stand up in it. So it was plenty plenty enough room to live in there. and he was sort of like a Buddhist Rambo that I've probably mentioned him before in these Q&As's where um I had a a friend of his tell me before I ever met Urizza that most Buddhists when when they're trying to walk the middle path they

stray over into the self-indulgence side
whereas Urizo is one of the few that
I've come across that strays the other
way into like the self- torture side or
just just excess, you know, his his loot
strings were too tight instead of too
loose, that kind of thing. But he was he
was held up as like the uh just sort of
the role model, you know, he was kind of
my hero before I ever met him because
the Burmese monks would all be praising.
He was he was ordained in the same
tradition as me, the Tom Pulu tradition.
He was ordained by Tom Pulu Seattle
himself
and he was just held up as this role
model for me to emulate when I was a

junior monk and he was just completely strict with Gardivinia. I think I've mentioned before the story of one time he was in America and he was asked to give a dhamma talk at this monastery and where he was already staying so he didn't have to go anywhere. So at the time of the dhamma talk he just comes in and sits down and he just sits there in silence for like five minutes and after sitting there in silence for five minutes he just gets up and walks out. So then the organizer of the retreat who invited him to to talk at this at at this you know it's sort of like the dhamma talk the evening dhamma talk she

chases after him and asked him why
didn't you say anything and he said well
there was somebody there wearing a
stocking cap and it is against vineia
for a monk to teach dhamma to someone
who has their head covered and it was
like the middle of wintertime and there
was one of one of the women there had
like a stocking cap on so I mean it was
easy to rectified. They just went and
asked her to take the stocking cap off
and then uh Theresa came back and and
gave the doat talk,
but he was trying too hard, I think. You
know, his his strings were too tight
instead of too loose like most people.
And he just kind of I mean, it was like

at the surface level he he dropped out of the monkhood and he started kind of criticizing Dhamma a lot. You know, he once said that in his opinion, the Buddha was just sort of like a an ancient Indian, Joseph Goldstein, this kind of thing. But deeper down, you could tell that he still had faith that he was just sort of at the surface rationalizing.

And I guess he's still alive. I think he's he's living in Burma still last I heard which was just a few months ago but he he really did try too hard. It was one of the he was trying to do all of the the 13 dutongas at the highest

level which I mean in ancient India only Mahakasapa could do it you know it was like only one monk could do the dutongas at the highest level according to tradition and now he was like a like the Buddha's successor a senior member of the sangha after the Buddha attained Pari nibbana here's ouriza trying to do all of the dutongas at the highest level and he just had sleep deprivation He he kind of cracked up one time because I mean he was trying to sleep. I mean one of the dutangas is you never lie down and you've got three different levels for each dutonga. The hardest level of the sitting duta is you're not even allowed to lean back against anything. You're

not allowed to sit in a chair. You just have to be like sitting as in meditation sleeping that way. And he did fudge a little bit. He put his alms in front of him and leaned forwards resting his forehead on his alms but still he wasn't getting enough sleep and he eventually kind of cracked up because of that. Got sent back to America and as soon as he got better he just came right back to Burma again and reordained and just went at it again.

But he was uh one of the most um eccentric advanced practitioners that I ever really had any dealings with. But just about any kind of monk is going to

be at least a little bit eccentric,
especially the western ones.

So let's see here.

Let's see.

I'm trying to think of any advanced kind
of nutty Burmese monks, but I really
never I didn't really interact much with
other monks when I was in Burma. Western
monks, it's interesting to talk to
Western monks because, you know, they
have interesting insights and there's no
culture barrier, no language barrier,
that sort of thing. Whereas Burmese
monks, they tend to think pretty much
alike. They tend to have pretty much the
same interpretation of Dhamma with just
minor variations. You know, it's sort of

like talking about Christianity to a medieval European. You know, they just they all have just been indoctrinated since like toddlerhood about, you know, what to believe. This is the true belief. This is this is what you have to believe in order not to burn in hell. That kind of thing. The Burmese to some degree are still like that.

So, I think I answered that question at least to the best of my my memory at present. And so, I'm just going to move on to Gnostic Rockers question. Second question of last February, which is, have you ever met Korean Zen monks in Terravada temples? Many of the Korean

Zen monks I have met have profound respect for weasana, particularly the Mahasi Seattle approach. And yeah, I I met one Korean Zen monk in particular. I assume he was Zen. He was wearing like gray pajamas when he arrived at Pandida. I was doing a two-month intensive retreat at Pandama in Rangon. And there was this Korean Buddhist monk there, Mahayana monk of some sort, wearing gray pajamas. And he was very serious. He was very friendly, very nice person. You know, he had definitely had deep faith and respect for Dharma, including Terravada.

And

he didn't like though that he was

treated like a lay person because he's wearing the gray pajamas. He's not a a biku. He's not a pongi in in Burmese, that he's seen as sort of like a member of some other religion. And so he he got to go first in line after the monks, you know, before the regular lay people, but still he went after the monks, like like going for um you know, going into the the the the refactory to eat the daily the morning meal or whatever. So he didn't like that. And so he was ordained as a biku at Pandita Rama without even like disroing from being a Zen monk which is probably against the rules. According to my understanding it would

be against the rules. I mean you you'd have to like disrobe from being a Zen monk before you can be ordained as a as a terrau

because I mean just the the whole wrong view thing that kind of thing.

So

he was uh he was a deep meditator. He got praised by Upandida a lot although his med listening to him at meditation retreats it was surreal. I mean, he's talking about, you know, his body just dissolving into particles and he's flying through the sky, lighter than air, just on and on. It sounds it sounded like he was having some kind of acid trip while he was meditating. And

he would just sit like a statue for 3 hours straight. You know, he could just his legs would just flop into the full lotus position. He'd just sit there motionless for three hours. Although I mean I'm not exactly sure like the value of his meditation considering that it was really like psychedelic experiences that he was continually having. But I mean he was a serious practitioner. I have no doubt that he was more advanced than most dharma practitioners.

And he and I would talk a lot about like nagarina like majamaka and like he would say that according to his tradition

nagarjuna is like a second Buddha this kind of thing. So it was kind of interesting talking to him about that although we did keep talking to a minimum because we were in an intensive meditation retreat. So, every once in a while we might talk a little bit, but as a general rule at a Mahasi retreat, you're supposed to be looking down, moving in slow motion, not talking to anybody except for the the seat who's interviewing you, that kind of thing. So, in a way, it's kind of like a thought reform camp. I mean, there are similarities. I don't need to get into this, but there are similarities. So, let's see. I think I answered that

question. So, I'm just going to move on to

move on to Gnostic Rucker's third question of last February. And oh, wait a minute.

Yeah,

I'm lagging and I don't have the computer plugged in. Just a second.

I have to move to a different desk and I sometimes I forget this.

Just a second.

We're having technical difficulties.

Okay.

All right. I'm still lagging though.

That's not good.

Yeah,

maybe it'll catch up eventually.

So, the third question

from Gnostic Rucker is, since you live in the Bible belt, what do you think Christians really believe in?

That's kind of an interesting question.

How so what Christians really believe and especially in the Bible belt like South Carolina where I'm where I'm living now.

Um they

it's hard to say. I mean I'm not really I've never been a Christian.

So um it's just sort of like an anthropological observation thing for me to try to answer this question. But like I've had two bosses before this present job. The two jobs I had before the

present job I'm working at were devout Christian bosses. The first one was an ordained minister in fact although he decided to uh be the manager of the sheet metal shop instead of uh preaching to a congregation I guess. And you know, he would say grace before he would eat a meal.

And

he he believed the Bible, I assume.

Although at the same time, um, he would, uh, talk about like shooting trespassers, you know, it's like he he'd be going into gory detail about blowing holes and people breaking breaking into his house, although it didn't really

happen,

you know, but if it did happen, he was going to blow holes with that person, which is not particularly Christian.

And then the second boss I had, really nice guy. He wouldn't swear,

you know, that was like an obvious thing about him and he know he knew his Bible.

But one thing about Christians is they really don't care much about the whole gather not up your treasures upon the earth stuff. like the whole renunciation of the world that you find in the New Testament

that Jesus taught and and like you should be poor.

Very few Christians take that seriously

in America as far as I can tell. So like forgiving your enemies, they might have to admit that they can't do it, but you know, they'll they'll say, "Yeah, that's right. you should forgive your enemies and you know you should like uphold basic morality that kind of thing and at least they have that as an ideal um except for like the not not gathering up treasures upon the earth. There's a few other ones, I suppose. You know, there's just a few things. It's it's the same in Buddhism where there's some precepts or teachings that are so inconvenient for like a modern lay person living in

the world, you know, in the world and of
the world

that

it's that's one reason that Christianity
has survived this long is that it
doesn't really require Christians
to fully follow the teachings of Jesus.

So, I mean, you know, selling all that
you have, giving the money to the poor,
and then taking up your cross and
wandering around casting out demons and
healing the sick and that sort of thing.

I mean, that is just it's sort of like
in Buddhism, rousing the world and and
just sleeping under trees, that kind of
thing. It's just in order for it to
become like a math like a national

religion

then I mean it has to get watered down a lot

but for the most part a lot of

Christians in South Carolina you know

they know their Bible they read the

Bible they'll say grace before meals you

know they they'll refrain from cussing

and so forth

But still, it's it's just sort of like a

Christianflavored worldly lay person as

a general rule. And like Buddhists in

the West are kind of the same. It's like

a a a Buddhistflavored

worldly lay person.

So

I think what Christians, American Christians in the Bible belt really believe, I mean, they believe in Jesus.

You know, Jesus is their savior. you just believe in Jesus. I mean, that's that's like the main thing I think.

Believing in Jesus is more important than actually living a saintly life.

Pretty obviously.

And it does seem like I caught up on the lag and then I started lagging again.

And I'm not exactly sure what the problem is. And we've already been going for well over 20 minutes. So, I don't want to just start over.

So, this could be like a shitty recording for all I know.

And I'm just going to move on to Hooligan Rucker, who is actually the same person as Gnostic Rucker. He just changed his name since February. But I guess this way it kind of is a pass for asking three more questions because really in all fairness he asked the first three in February and I just kind of overlooked them when I was compiling questions that time and it just didn't happen. So Hooligan Rucker says when you were a monk were you ever allowed to develop meaningful deep friendships with other monks or would that have been considered attachment of a worldly kind? If the answer is no, wouldn't that be a

lonely existence? But maybe that otherworldly state of being is an axiomatic given within monasticism anyway. Well, I did have some I did have friends. I had Burmese friends, a few or just monastic friends. I had some Western friends including Uriza who was kind of a friend, but he was definitely like a hermit.

But I mean I'd hang out with him sometimes and you know it was it was interesting.

Um

but let's see here. Were you ever allowed to develop meaningful deep friendship? Yeah. I mean being f monks being friends is certainly not forbidden

in the text. It is in fact encouraged if you find a friend who is wise and helps you in your practice that sort of thing. So yeah, I mean it is allowed to develop meaningful deep friendships with other monks. You know, it is praised in the texts,

but I'm I've always been pretty much of a loner. And so,

um, I really didn't have a lot of friends. And sometimes, you know, just you just move on, move in different directions. You don't see the other person anymore.

So,

but if the answer is no, wouldn't that

be a lonely existence? I guess that's an extra question, isn't it? I mean, it depends on the person. I mean, some people are just reclusive. It's um I remember living living near that uh the Texan hermit who lived in the hollow tree was an Australian monk and it was I was sort of intermediate between them with regard to my tolerance for conversation. Like the hermit monk would he would I mean outhier he would just burn out on conversation pretty fast. He just did not like human companionship very much at all. Whereas the Australian monk, I started avoiding that monastery just because he would be talking all the time. You know, he'd be

just kind of dropping by under some pretext and then just sort of holding forth just talking about all kinds of stuff. Sometimes about Dhamma, but as often as not, it would be, you know, this really great cricket bat that he had or motorcycle accident that he got in when he was a teenager or some such. or how he was like rewiring something and just going into long detail, not really caring or it just didn't consider it didn't occur to him that maybe another person wouldn't want to hear a 20 minute long monologue about troubleshooting the wiring in like a circuit box or something.

[Music]

So I was sort of intermediate that I would burn out on conversation with the Australian monk first, but if I was hanging out with Uriza, the Texan monk, he would burn out first. So people just have a different need for human companionship, a different need for talking. And I am kind of on at the lower end. Like I really don't. At work, there's some people that are just talking all the time. They talk to everybody and pretty much the only people I talk to are the people who talk to everybody because they're talking to me because I'm part of everybody. But for the most part, I just do not

engage in in any kind of
like sociality.

I'm just not a gregarious person.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to
Hooligan Rocker's second question.

And it does kind of concern me a little
bit that uh this this video is is sort
of lagging and then catching up and then
lagging again. I assume it was because I
didn't plug in the computer and it was
working on a battery that was barely
keeping up and I don't know but it seems
to be doing okay now.

Anyways, Hooligan Rocker,
formerly known as Gnostic Rocker, says,
"Do you ever feel depression or has

Buddhist consciousness lessened that very human tendency?" And depression runs on both sides of my family.

Um, and so I mean, I have it I have been relatively seriously depressed a few times in my life, at least twice when I was a monk. I mean, the two worst depressions I had were both when I was a monk and um I mean I I won't go into details, but I was seriously depressed. Not not like incapacitated, not just like lying in the fetus position, just wanting to sleep all day, that kind of thing. But still, I mean, it was it was unpleasant.

And the thing is,
part of the thing is

that my mind, my consciousness expands and contracts kind of like the Buddhist cosmos, but a lot faster and with probably less regularity, less you're you're able to predict it less, I guess. So, I mean, that kind of runs in the family and I think that is pretty much what depression is about. In this case, it just seems to be like constitutional factors. You know, it's just runs on both sides of the family. At least going with like a scientific, you know, genetic kind of explanation that it's my consciousness kind of expands and contracts. And when I was a monk and it was in a contracted phase, I

wasn't necessarily like in a state that most people would call depression, but I was vulnerable to that. And it was like you're not really interested in anything. Meditation becomes almost impossible when you're in a state like this. When your mind is just sort of contracted, it's like trying to meditate, trying to keep your mind on the object is like trying to balance a marble on the tip of a sharpened pencil. I mean, it's it's practically impossible.

On the other hand, when it's when I'm more my consciousness is more expansive, and I assume this is sort of like bipolar, but I'm not clinically

significant,
like mental illnesses as a general rule
tend to be exaggerations of normal
states. You know, there's like a
spectrum of, you know, just how far
along you are. And so with regard to um
bipolar or manic depression as it used
to be called um you know I'm I'm kind
maybe a little farther than most people
in that direction although not enough
that they need to lock me up in a padded
room or anything and or I don't have to
take lithium or anything like that
but it you can just feel it just
sometimes the consciousness is
contracted sometimes it's expanded and

when I and I'm expanded it's like dhamma is more interesting. Meditation can be so easy that it's practically effortless.

And so I mean I did learn through mindfulness, you just being mindful of what your own mind is doing, you know, how you're feeling, that sort of thing, that I could uh sort of I wouldn't say brace myself against depression, but you could take precautions like if if I'm in like a contracted state, there are certain things I learned that help to kind of hold full-blown depression at bay. day. One is just sleep a little extra. Sleep a little more than usual. Another thing is just accomplish

something every day. Even if it's just like cleaning your cave, cleaning your room, just accomplish something positive every day. So you don't just feel like the whole day was just a stagnating waste because that helps the depression to feel as your life is just stagnating. You're not accomplishing anything. So, uh definitely it does help to just do something positive every day if if you feel like your mind is sort of getting contracted and you're sort of feeling vulnerable to possible depression. So, I'm much more resistant to it now than I was as a lay person before I was a monk

or as a junior monk. The last really serious depression I had was I had been a monk for about 10 years and I've talked about that. It's it's uh uh I've even I think it it might even be in uh one of my books a discussion of that.

So,

um, still I feel like the expansion and contraction and sometimes, you know, when I'm in a contracted state, I'm just more flat, more blah, you know, just less effusive, less talkative, that kind of thing, which my woman, I mean, sometimes she just thinks that something is wrong and I try to explain, you know, it's just I'm going through a contracted phase and then it gets expansive again.

And, you know, it's just that's just the way it is. And because there is no self, you can't really make it be otherwise.

You cannot say with regard to your own consciousness, let it be this way, let it not be that way, and reliably have it happen.

So,

I'll just move on to the next question from Hooligan Rucker, which I won't answer because I already answered it because his third question, the third question from Hooligan Rucker is the same as the first question from Gnostic Rucker, which is about the deeply inspiring or really eccentric monks you

met over the decades you were in robes.

I mean, I guess it's slightly different because he's talking he's emphasizing the deeply inspiring rather than the really eccentric.

But

I don't know. I mean, every once in a while you'd meet a monk in Burma that, you know, some old Seattle who seemed like he really gets it. You know, he seems like he's he's attained something, but sometimes you could be mistaken. You know, it's like first time I met Tangjidoni, venerable Tangidon, I thought, wow, he might really have attained something. But then I went to a Tangidong Seattle retreat in Pagan in

Burma and yeah, it's is it was rather disillusioning.

Upon was kind of the same way. It's like um you know, he he has attained something or he had I mean he's passed away now. He had to tame something. But still, I mean, he was just a very really angry person.

So, I mean, how how enlightened is someone going to be when they get pissed off pretty much on a daily basis?

But, I mean, that's that's kind of a philosophical question. I'm sure that his followers would say, "Well, that just goes to show that even a highly advanced Dharma practitioner can get

pissed off on a daily basis.

So I mean there's like Yuaniato. I met him a couple times.

He got me into a bit of trouble. In fact, he was this old monk who lived in a cemetery and the people around thought he was an arant. That's why the I was brought to see him. You got to come see the Arhant. And you know he was this monk who lived alone in a cemetery in this little hut built on the edge of the cemetery. Very friendly. gave me a bunch of Red Bull,

like the Asian Red Bull that would probably be illegal in America nowadays.

And uh you know, but that's it. I mean, it's like he's considered to be an

orahant and he didn't do anything really unsaintly when I was there.

And you know, it's like I I liked him.

You know, there was something really likable about him. He's very sincere, but

he uh he liked me too, apparently. And so one time some people from a nearby village from near the cave where I was living, they went to visit him. They rented this toaji, it's called in Burmese. It's you see him a lot in Thailand, too. I think it's called a tuk tuk in Thailand. Um it's just sort of like this iron wagon that's has like a lawnmower engine on the front of it.

Sometimes you steer it with like handlebars like a motorcycle. Sometimes it'll have a steering wheel. No suspension. You know, it was just bonejarring to ride in one of these things. They rented one of these and went to visit venerable Yuan Moni, you know, the reputed Arahan. And when they told him where where they were from, or when they told him where they were from, he he said, "Oh, you live near that American monk. He's very venerable. You should make sure to put alms in his in his bowl. Even if it's raining, you should you should be sure to make sure he has enough food." And so the day after that, I went to the nearby village

for alms and it was like a circus and it was just so much people. There's there's no way it would all go into my bowl.

It's like a tenth of it wouldn't go into my bowl. And so it was just like the people assumed like this arhant says that this other monk is very venerable. That must mean that that other monk is is an arhant too. So I got this reputation for being an arhant because of yuamuni at least in that area.

And it was it was it was not I mean some people might think oh it'd be great to be famous you know you get a lot of support but I mean there is such a thing

as too much of a good thing
and just having like a hundred people
all lined up waiting to offer food when
you've just got a bowl that's like this
big. I mean it's the same bowl that's
back on the table there.

Man, it was it was a headache.

So, let's see here. I guess I should
just move on. The next question is from
Kundrew. And Kundrew says, "What is the
worst physical pain that you've ever
experienced?" And that's kind of a
strange question because as a general
rule, I think we tend to kind of block
out memories like that of like the most
unbearable agony or but then again, it's
like if you really hurt yourself, it's

like it's like it's like you go numb,
you know, you get a really bad injury or
something. And fortunately, I I haven't
really had a really horrible, you know,
I haven't been maimed or anything yet.
So the when I read this question, what
is the worst physical pain that you've
ever experienced? There's one memory
came to mind and that was I was living
under the big rock ledge at the on the
northern boundary of Alando Kathaba
National Park and I felt like I was
starting to catch a cold. So I asked for
a couple lemons. I was going to get
vitamin C from eating these lemons and I
just ate the lemons like they were

oranges.

And then like that evening and for a few days afterwards when I tried to brush my teeth, it was just this searing pain. It was a pain like I've never felt before.

It was just my face would just start sweating. It was just like just this exquisite agony from my teeth becoming so sensitized from the acid from the lemon juice that I ate from the from the lemon that I ate. It was weird. It took It took a few days, like three days for it to finally fade back out again. But try to brush my teeth, like after eating that lemon. And seriously, I mean, it was it was it was like I I don't know. It was like some kind of torture. It was

really weird.

But I've probably experienced worse physical pain than that. And I just can't think of what it is just because as a general rule, you don't want to think about that kind of stuff. You know, it's just human nature. I mean, there are some people that have like a morbid morbid kind of personality trait where they'll just kind of dwell on that kind of thing which helps them to be depressed or whatever. But in my case, um I really can't think of like really exquisite agony that I've experienced um physically.

Emotionally, it's always, you know, at

the at the business end of a of a an
angry female or something, but generally
one's lover.

But uh yeah, I guess it would be the
thing that really comes to mind would be
um you know trying to brush my teeth
after eating a lemon. Although I mean
every once in a while I have had dental
work done with no anesthesia in Burma.
So I mean that's that's kind of painful
too. But it wasn't just this exquisite
searing agony that just caused my face
to just sweat.

Oh, just

I guess that's that's all I can think
of. So I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from sea of

action sepad zedina

and sea of action sepad zedina says you

said sometimes you might have to

sacrifice your own virtue for the

greater good but the dharmapata says

don't sacrifice your own welfare for

that of another no matter how great

realizing your own true welfare be

intent on just that and that's verse 166

from the dhamop and then he says

thoughts

And I can see that we're lagging again.

So, I mean, I don't know if I ever

really said that you might have to

sacrifice your own virtue for the

greater good, but I mean, you may choose

to do that. And it's everyone's right to choose, I suppose. Like, you know, I've said that the soldier, especially a Buddhist soldier, could be viewed as like a tragic hero who sacrifices his own virtue for the sake of others. And I mean, how else is a Buddhist culture going to um justify or even respect soldiers who are protecting their borders for example.

So I mean sometimes to sacrifice your own welfare for that of another I mean I mean

like spiritually you may be getting welfare when physically you're taking a hit like there's the story I think it's a Mahayana story of the Buddha as a

bodhicatta or bodhicattva previous life
how he sees a tigress who is starving to
death and so he offers his own body to
the tigress so that she won't starve to
death and she eats him and you know he
goes to heaven or something afterwards.
So I mean like at a physical level you
can be sacrificing your own welfare
while still getting spiritual benefit.

Um

but still I mean this kind of this kind
of attitude like found in the dharmapata
I mean it can be taken to the extreme of
sort of like the monk who just sits on a
riverbank and watches a pretty girl
drown because it's against the rules for

him to touch a pretty girl.

And in a case like that, then yeah, I think you might be better off breaking the rule and maybe even, you know, feeling unh wholesome feelings. I mean, some some monks are so desperate that touching a pretty girl, even if she's like semiancual desires that happen to arise or some such.

But yeah, I mean it can be taken to an extreme that you're not going to sacrifice your own welfare for for another to the point of just being like I don't know just sort of like stingy being a kind of ass insensitive ass that kind of thing. I don't know.

But I don't think you you necessarily have to sacrifice your own virtue for the greater good. But it may be a choice that you have to make sometimes.

So anyways, I'm just going to move on to Sea of Action Caden's next question.

Lagging as I am again, I catch up every now and then though.

Why did the Buddha want the SA to stay in touch with the common person and depend on them for food when normies ruin everything and every community?

Normies ruin every community. I think every community is composed of normies.

I mean that's what a community is. It's it's an accumulation of normies

as a general rule. I mean you might have like an advanced spiritual community, you know, off in the some remote area, but the overwhelming majority of communities are composed almost exclusively of normies.

But the thing is the Buddha he had at least according to tradition he had compassion and he would tell his enlightened disciples go out and preach the dharma for the benefit of the many you know it's kind of like a lot of there's a lot of overlap between what Jesus was teaching you know gather not up your treasures upon the earth and all that give no thought for tomorrow what you will eat or where you will sleep

common to both religions and pretty much ignored by both religions in most cases. So I mean the Buddha did that largely as a way of helping people helping to raise the level of consciousness by having aesthetics you know as in plain sight. In fact, I mean, according to the tradition, that's what inspired the Buddha himself to to renounce the world. This like you saw the four sightes, the fourth sight that really caused him to make up his mind was the holy man, the the renuncient monk. And in the Mongalas Suta, which has the the 30, was it 30 something blessings?

The exact number of blessings escapes me at the moment. Seeing seeing aesthetic, seeing like homeless renunciance is one of the blessings of life.

You know, it's it's sort of keeping that in the consciousness of of the culture when you've got renunciates. I if they just go off and hide in the forest, then they're not going to be helping society nearly as much. not going to be helping people who need help nearly as much and also they're going to have to get their own food by digging the ground and and killing animals and that kind of thing which is inappropriate by ancient North Indian standards.

So that's the main reasons I guess and so I'm just going to move on to SEO of action zed's third question which is as follows. Does Buddhism agree with Carl Schwab? Isn't it Klaus Schwab or is there are there two Schwabs? Anyways, he says, "Does Buddhism agree with Carl Schwab from the WF that you will own nothing and you will be happy is is the ideal?" So, does Buddhism agree with you will own nothing and you will be happy for the advanced practitioners? Yeah. And it's again it's an overlap with Christianity where um you know like if you read the acts of the apostles in the New Testament like

the the the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem after Jesus was crucified you know they were essentially a commune. It was communistic. They would donate all of all of their wealth to the to the group and it would be distributed according to need.

So I mean they didn't really own anything then. And if you're fully enlightened, there's no I, me, mine anyhow.

So, um, communism like this, it I mean, it doesn't work for normies because it's so much at variance with just normie human nature. It's so much at variance in fact that it can only be enforced at gunpoint.

But for an like very advanced spiritual community then yeah I mean that would be the way to go I guess that if you have a bunch of arans with no concept of IE mind they're just naturally going to be a kind of anarchocomunism not like Antifa is uh trying to establish but I mean it would be like a genuine anarchocomunism because there'd be no IE mind but most people have these ideas of IE mind and are much more willing to work for their own benefit and the benefit of their immediate family than they are for just anonymous comrades distributed throughout the country.

So

Buddhism does agree

that if you are very spiritually

advanced, you will own nothing and you

will be happy. But that's not going to

apply to the average householder who

just isn't ready for that.

Regardless of how communistic

governments try to force it on them, it

just doesn't work very well.

So I'm just going to move on. Next

question. This is from Sedarta Loha.

And why he's his his name is Sedarta

Coppermind,

I don't know.

Maybe loa is he's he's like interpreting

it as red or something like the word for

red is lohita or no that's blood is
loita

h anyways sedarth lohachita says does
competitiveness have anything positive
and then he has this little comment or
this sort of commentary here the Tibetan
lo jang says I will take the defeat upon
myself and give the victory to others.

Or quoting the Dhamapata verse 201,
conquest begets enmity, the conquered
live in misery. The peaceful live
happily having renounced conquest and
defeat. Yeah, that's that's like right
out of the pura suta of the atikawaga
also. So getting up to the question
here, does competitiveness have anything

positive? And I've been trying to think of something positive from that you get from competitiveness. I mean, it might inspire you to to be better, but the thing is, I've never been a particularly competitive person. I mean, you know, I'd play card games, stuff like that. Like when I was in college, my roommate and I would play a game of cribbage every day and the loser would have to wash the dishes. So, I mean, that kind of competitiveness. And then you can like tease the other person if if if you if you really beat them badly, that kind of thing. But from a spiritual point of view and competitiveness, it really I mean it

can inspire you to do better. Sort of like if you're at a meditation retreat, you don't want to be the first person to change position or get up and walk out, that kind of thing. It's sort of like the other people around you kind of, you know, it was it would like demean your dignity, something like that, if you just like were the first person to just get up cuz your legs were sore or something.

So, I mean, something like that maybe.

But competitiveness, I mean, you're really comparing yourself with other people and that is I mean, that's bad karma. That's that's not good. That's a

kind of mana. In fact, the word mana, which is usually translated as pride or conceit, literally means measuring. It's like you're measuring yourself up against others.

So that in the atakawaga says, if you consider yourself superior to others, that's mono. If you consider yourself to be inferior to others, that's also mono. And if you consider yourself to be equal to others, that's also mono. because all of them are you are comparing yourself to other people which you're not supposed to be doing cuz there ultimately there's no self to compare anyway.

So I mean there might be some beneficial

side effects of competitiveness just in that it kind of inspires you to try harder and do your best. It might not be for the best reasons. You may have bad motives for being as good as you possibly can, but at least you're being as good as you possibly can, but if you can do that without comparing yourself to other people, um, I mean, myself, I've never been particularly competitive, but I do my best just because it's like the job you do is a reflection of your character or it's like you're competing with with your own self trying to be better than what you were, that kind of thing. That would be

a more wholesome kind of competitiveness, just competing against, you know, what you have been.

But still, you're better off not having any kind of mono, not comparing yourself to others, not even comparing yourself to yourself.

But the question being, does competitiveness have anything positive?

Then yeah, the positive might be that it's it's kind of a bad motive for nevertheless causing you to try your best.

You know, just try your best because that's what you should do is a better reason for trying your best than trying your best in order to do better than

these slob next to you.

So, I'm just going to move on to Sedar Loha's next question.

On one hand, I like competitiveness.

Perhaps my greatest attachment. At one point in the past, I was a wrestler and I enjoyed winning. But I also understand that this whole modern world revolves around competing for women, money, and all kinds of unsatisfying things. Should men give up all competition? Well, competitiveness is a masculine trait.

And so there have been moves by, you know, by progressives to make like the workplace, you know, like in business, big business, that kind of thing, less

competitive so that women will be able to compete better because women are more agreeable. You know, they're they're more inclined to kind of back down or not like stab somebody in the back.

Well, I guess I mean they can be catty, that kind of thing. That's sort of a feminine trait, a stereotypical feminine trait. But genuine competitiveness tends to be more of a masculine trait. And so, should men give up all competition? I mean, it's it's an unrealistic should because it's just human nature. I mean, you can try to program it out of men and then you wind up with a bunch of wimpy betas, you know, just toxic masculinity. you

want to abolish toxic masculinity, you wind up with a bunch of feminized betas, which is pretty much a death nail for that society.

So, should men give up all competition?

Uh, yeah, they should give up like all unh wholesome mental states. They should give up all badness, which sounds nice.

It's not going to happen anytime soon.

So, it's just kind of a it's it's kind of a silly should,

you know, should men gather not up their treasures upon the earth? Yeah, sure.

Jesus says so, and the Buddha says so to some degree also, but I mean, it's just not realistic to say they should or

shouldn't. I mean, it's it's just academic, you know, it's all just, you know, thought games.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. And this one's kind of peculiar. This is from Austin.

And Austin says, "There is a logical synonym."

Let me start over. There is a logical syllogism by the DNA school that goes like this. Premise one, only what is causally efficacious is real. Premise two, to be causally efficacious is to produce an effect at a particular time. Premise three, something eternal would be unchanging.

Premise four, an unchanging thing would

have no reason to produce an effect at one time rather than another. Premise five, therefore, nothing eternal could be causally efficacious.

conclusion. Hence, no existing things are eternal. So, that's that's the the uh the syllogism. And then Austin continues here, Nirvana and samsara are considered eternal and uncaused in Buddhist thought. How can this be reconciled with the syllogism? Well, some of the syllogism I would agree with. Let's see.

Like premise three, something eternal would be unchanging. Yeah, I would agree with that from a Buddhist point of view.

Premise four is seems pretty solid. An unchanging thing would have no reason to produce an effect at one time rather than another. Yeah. I mean, how could it something that doesn't change cause anything?

But getting up to premise one, I think this is really the Achilles heel of the whole syllogism. Premise one says only what is causally efficacious is real.

And that seems like an arbitrary premise that

um it's just not really self-evident to me. What is I mean you could say that um what is real would not be causally efficacious. Like what does Nirvana cause? If if we if we say that Nirvana

or Brahman from an upanesic point of view is ultimate reality

then I mean what does that cause other than just serving as maybe as a kind of ground of being

you know it's it's the uncarved block that gets carved into an infinitude of imaginary statues.

So yeah, I would say that premise one is problematic.

Only what is causally efficacious is real. Yeah, I think that is just like an arbitrary

arbitrary idea that isn't necessarily true. I mean, if you could prove that that is true, that's fine. But I think

that since premise one is problematic and not self-evident at all, then it just causes pretty much the whole it causes the conclusion to be I mean it could be um validly deduced based on the premises, but it's not necessarily true at all.

And then you get to the end here where he's saying Nirvana and Samsara considered eternal and uncaused in Buddhist. Not necessarily. Samsara is not uncaused because going with dependent core rising at least the traditional formulation of it samsara is caused by ignorance. Avija avija is causing samsara moment by moment.

So nirvana would be eternal and uncaused but samsara would not in my according to my understanding of dhamma.

So I'm just going to move on to Austin's second question here. In classical

Buddhism, is consciousness ontologically identical to, distinct from, or

dependently arisen from the physical

body? And how do they interact causally?

Okay. So in classical Buddhism,

consciousness is distinct from the body.

You know, in according to Abhidhamma, which

I assume would qualify as classical

Buddhism, you got four ultimate

realities. mind, mental states,

matter and nibbana.

So that that mind or consciousness is qualitatively radically completely different from matter.

So it would be distinct from the physical body. But when you get to how do they interact causally, I don't think Abidama really has a good answer for that.

Um, I mean like Mahayana Buddhism has an easier answer because most Mahayana Buddhists are philosophical idealists. They don't even believe that physical matter is real.

So I mean that just that just kicks the mind body problem right in the head. You no longer have a problem.

see here.

But I mean with regard to like Abhidharma
um how do they interact causally? I
don't think there really is much of a
like how it works. It's just like it's
just accepted as a fact that it has to
work. And there are certain things like
karma ja rupa where you've got physical
matter that is somehow created by karma
which is a mental state. So there is
like a an interaction like a
relationship between mind and matter.
But Abhidharma really doesn't do much as
far as I know to actually explain how
that happens.

So I mean being a being like a a

philosophical idealist just solves the problem just cuts through the Gordian knot immediately.

So I think I'm just going to move on to Austin's third question here. If consciousness is not reducible to the physical body, how does it condition a new existence after death in classical Buddhism?

Well, it's like how does it condition a new existence? That's I mean the only thing that moves from one life to the next is comma and it looks like I'm not lagging right now or if I am it's very little.

So let's see if consciousness is not reducible to the physical body which it

is not how does it condition a new existence after death in classical Buddhism? Well, the way it works in classical Buddhist at least like orthodox tantra is at the moment of death the very next moment the momentum of your mind your karma your you your china your your will you know in the in the schopenhauerian sense it has to continue existing because it hasn't like dissipated yet it's you know it's still you know your the force of ignorance and delusion and whatever is just keeping it going. And so it just has to like inhabit a new a new body just it just jumps instantaneously from this dying

dead body to this like fertilized egg in the case of a human or or like an organic organism on this planet.

So for example with regard to um like how a new being takes rebirth in a woman's womb you know there have to be the man and the woman coming together.

There has to be a certain amount of moisture and also there has to be the gandaba which is interpreted as this karmic momentum which is just has to enter the the fertilized egg. And so according to orthodox terravada um rebirth happens at conception.

Personally I'm a little skeptical of that. But I mean how is a fertilized egg going to contain the karma of a complex

adult? you know, who was someone who was
a complex adult just moments before
that most of that, you know, the sort of
the anus, the latent tendencies are
going to be extremely latent, you know,
for years, even
several months at the very least.

But again, I'm not a materialist and
just trying to drag the physical body
into these equations is facious in my
opinion.

So, you know, it's like mind
conditions matter rather than matter
somehow generating mind, which is more
of the the scientific attitude.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next

question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo's got

kind of a

somewhat of an autobiographical sketch

here. And I noticed we're we're lagging

again. This is so weird.

Maybe it's just the computer is sleepy

because it's well after midnight. In

fact, it's after 1:30 in the morning

now. So Romeo says, "I live in New York

City where a Muslim Democratic

socialist, i.e. a communist recently won

the Democratic primary for mayor. Even

though he still has to win in November,

barring some miracle, it's pretty much a

foregone conclusion that he'll be

victorious. Mamani winning will be yet

another nail in the coffin of this city, I'm afraid. Anyway, members of a Buddhist temple I sometimes attend sent out emails strongly urging fellow attendees to vote for Mam Dani. They said, quote, "His plan for attending to those in need comes closest to embodying the Buddhist ideals of Donna and loving kindness."

Even though the head monk of this temple wasn't responsible for these emails, reading them made me feel like not returning to it. Politically contentious topics have come up there before, so the Mamani emails are merely the straw that broke the camel's back. Besides the fact

that I disagree with them politically, I go to this temple for spiritual development, not political procililitizing.

After all, one of the main things that drew me to Buddhism in the first place was its focus on the inner rather than the external world. Okay, so that's the the autobiographical sketch setting us up for the questions. So the first question is I think I know how important it is to accept things without resistance and realize that my thoughts are not returning to this temple are that my thoughts of not returning to this temple are based in aversion. But forcing myself to hobnob with people who

constantly push their leftist politics
doesn't feel right intuitively. Should I
go against my grain and tough things out
and continue attending this temple
trying to be as accepting and
non-judgmental as possible or go with my
gut and go the path of the horn of the
rhinoceros?

So, it's I assume it will depend on how
much benefit you're getting there
compared with how much like
detriment you're getting there. So if
you're getting more benefit from going
there than the the detriment and you
should separate the detriment that
you're getting from just aversion that

is sort of volitional.

I mean you could use your aversion for these communist western Buddhists as just something to work work on. You know it's like you've got a version for this. You know you still have this uncooked seed. So, I mean, you could just be friendly and accepting and, you know, just have a little compassion, I guess. And I mean, so long as they're not just getting in your face and calling you a fascist and all that. I mean, even then, I mean, you could still use that as a spiritual practice and just like return blessings, you know, bless those that curse you, that sort of thing. But I mean, if you're not really up for that,

if that's just too advanced practice,
then yeah, you might just avoid the
situation. Like resisting temptation or
resisting bad reactions

to a certain stimulus by just avoiding
that stimulus, that's kind of a shabby
way of dealing with the situation. But
for I mean, for a beginner or for
someone who just isn't ready yet, then
that may be what you have to do. when
the Buddha did like he did recommend
that you know it's like you just avoid
the temptation

um as a way of resisting the temptation
more easily if you're not so sure that
you can resist it

but I mean you could use it as a kind of spiritual practice and even if there is a certain amount of aversion if you are getting more benefit from going there than you would from not going there I mean that's that's something that only you would be able to decide that I I wouldn't really know.

Let's let's look at here. Okay.

So, yeah, I mean it would be sort of like a just write out a balance sheet, you know, formulate an equation with, you know, is is it you're getting are in the in the black or in the red by by going there overall?

And really, I mean, just being nice to to to like hysterical leftists

who might just freak out if they knew what your real beliefs were. I mean I mean that's one of the best things you could do spiritually. As a general rule, like even on like X, I'll do a bit of trolling on X. I used to be on minds.com, but now I mean X has pretty much taken over with regard to freedom of expression.

You mind you have a much larger audience with X anyway. You can, you know, have more access to more more points of view, I guess. But still, I mean, you got somebody calling you an idiot and a racist and a fascist and all this. Um, as a general rule, I don't just like

respond with, you know, just invective
going the other way. It's like, you
know, just
address their accusations,
you know, or just, you know, just remain
civil and just continue. And and really,
it's
that's that's the best way to go about
it, I suppose. But again, I mean, I
doubt that Romeo here is just being
confronted by hysterical leftists
accusing him of being a Nazi.

So

yeah, I mean you're just going to have
to decide for yourself if I mean in my
case if there's a lot of, you know, gay
pride retreats and just sort of sexual

deviants flaunting their sexual deviance
at at the meditation center, that sort
of thing. Yeah, I think I might stop
going there. But if it's it's more kind
of subdued than that.

But um I mean you could just uh do the
the honest civil responses to those
emails and then you might just get
kicked out and then you wouldn't have to
make the decision.

I mean if you want to you could do a
little bit of spiritual polite
compassionate trolling, you know, just
at the Q&A session. It's like what what
about if you support Trump?
That sort of thing.

But really, I mean, you are the one who knows whether you would make more get more benefit from going or not going.

And so, you're just going to have to work that out because

all I know about the situation is what you've written in in a few paragraphs here.

So, I'm just going to move on to Romeo's second question.

Are these temple attendees correct that socialism or communism comes closest to what the Buddha prescribed? Well, I mean, again, it's sort of like in Christianity, too. like an an advanced saint

would probably just I mean a a community

of advanced saints like Arahans would just automatically be anarchocomunism because there's no concept of I me mine you know there's no possessiveness no competitiveness you know so there there's no ambition anything like that so yeah for like very advanced beings something like communism uh would come closest to what the Buddha prescribed. But for most people, it just doesn't work that way. Also, I mean, there is one kind of weird suta in the dean kaya where the Buddha is saying that crime is caused by poverty and that kings should subsidize farmers by giving them all the seed grain they need to get

started running their farm, that kind of thing.

So technically in the sutas there is some support for sort of a proto paleo socialism to some degree but

yeah the Buddha really was not prescribing much in the way of normie politics or normmy economics. There's that one suta in the deanaya which is kind of questionable because it deviates so far from what the Buddha is usually saying in in the sutas but

yeah I mean

whether the sa of monks would even be socialistic or communistic I mean it's a

radical democracy where you need
consensus everyone has to agree on any
like formal act of the sa one person one
monk monk at this monastery. He could be
the most junior monk there. He could
have been ordained just that morning. If
he says no, then it's no. Everyone has
to agree.

So, I mean, that's I mean, that can work
in a monastery, but it's certainly not
going to work in a like a a national
government. Nothing would ever get done.
You'd always have some people
disagreeing.

H

so I mean

some of the Buddhist teachings would be more of you know it'd be more capitalistic but not with regard to economics. It's just like you know it's not he's not trying to enlighten everybody. It's just the like the elite the spiritual elite who are ripe for it. That's those are the ones he's mainly helping. you know, he's helping the others, you know, just the normie like villagers, the householders who enjoy pleasures of the senses, you know, he's helping them a little and at least getting them kind of going towards the light instead of towards the darkness. But the ones he's trying to save to liberate, trying to help them to

liberate themselves,

you know, it's I mean it wasn't any kind of, you know, like socialized enlightenment.

And that's mainly what he's teaching.

Duka and the cessation of dooka. I mean, that's that's like what the Buddhist teachings boil down to. And it wasn't for everybody.

It was for a kind of spiritual elite.

So yeah, communism is just sort of like standardized mediocrity in a way

and that wouldn't be what the Buddha was teaching. I mean he in fact I mean with regard to

with regard to like helping people

it's it's really a false dichotomy to say that you just either socialize like food stamps and in like welfare that kind of thing you have a welfare state or just people you just let people starve to death and don't give a [__] I mean that's a false dichotomy because you can have private charity you know like it churches and church groups that were taking care of the poor for over a thousand years. They might not have done a really great job everywhere, but then again, the government doesn't either. So, I think that private charity is better because you're actually gathering up treasures in heaven. I mean, you're doing good by helping the poor much more

so than if the government is just automatically or your boss or whatever is automatically deducting income tax from your pay and then using that to fund like a bureaucratic welfare state. The only good karma you might get would be like when you're voting in favor of it, that kind of thing. or you're just sitting there feeling good about all the taxes you're paying that some of that is helping people.

But the Buddha really was not a politician.

So he really wasn't teaching economic systems. I mean in in the ancient Ganges Valley you had sort of like oligarchic

republics that were on the decline and
you had like militaristic
like imperialistic kings were like on
the in the ascendant and eventually not
too long after the Buddhist time you had
almost all of India united under the
empire of Magada
and so I mean certainly the Buddha would
recommend that kings be benevolent. But
he was talk I mean it was mainly
autocracy was just the default political
setting in the Buddhist time other than
sort of some of these oligarchic
republics that were in decline
like the oligarchic republic from which
the Buddha himself was allegedly born.
Capilawatu like a city state of

Capilawatu. it was just wiped out and just really not very long after the Buddhist time.

So

compassion, you can say compassion is is important, but I mean to what extent is socialism or communism really compassionate when, as I say, you're just getting money automatically deducted from your pay or from you buy something at the store, there's a sales tax, that kind of thing. And I mean, it's not a volitional act at all. You're not helping anybody volitionally. It's just automatically that this money is being siphoned off to some

bureaucracy where they're pretty much helping people sometimes.

So, yeah, this is kind of a trick question, I think.

So, I'm just going to move on to um Romeo's third question here about Mam Dani. Mam Dani embodies the so-called red green alliance of radical leftism and Islam. You have previously cited how the Muslims wiped out Buddhism in India in the distant past and I am fairly sure that Islam's essential view and treatment of Buddhism and Buddhists hasn't changed much since then. But what has occurred when Buddhism has encountered communism or socialism especially in other parts of the world?

Well, I mean, just you can just look at 20th century history, early 21st century history with regard to Buddhist cultures that got taken over by Marxism, for example. Well, you got China, which I mean, most Marxist governments will just ban religion. China allows a little bit of religion so long as they got pictures of chairman she on the wall. And, you know, it's not really spiritual. was just for like tourists to go and see the Shaolin Temple and that kind of thing as a general rule.

Then you got like Cambodia, we know what Paul Pot did to the Songa in Cambodia.

Um you had in Burma you had socialism under UN win for a while which failed utterly but I mean at least then it was like a Buddhist socialism because the government was sort of like the mafia where you know the mafia in America or at least

outwardly to some degree Catholic you know they're not going to they're not going to shoot a nun probably.

And so it's sort of like that in Burma where the generals the military dictatorship they did have a certain respect for the SAS unless the SA was like denouncing the military dictatorship or protesting against the military dictatorship then the monks

might wind up in a prison cell or worse.

But just sort of ostensibly the government did endorse Buddhism even though it was socialistic but it was like an incompetent socialism.

But as a general rule communism or socialism like in the guise of Marxism has a dim view of religion. You know they're trying to replace religion which is like superstition with the gospel truth of Marxism which is just more superstition.

But I mean it has sort of worked at least like Vietnam is communistic and I do think that they they tolerate religion. I don't think that the

Vietnamese government has just flat out banned religion. Certainly not just like working monks to death in the fields like like the Chimera Rouge did.

So I mean it is possible that you could have like a Marxist or socialist government that is tolerant of religion. But um I think I better just move on to the next question.

And it's it's like almost 2:00 in the morning here. It's it's going to be well after three by the time I'm done I think. And Phil has asked a transgressive fourth question. Shame on Phil. Phil's name is going on a list. Although it could be that this first question is just a rhetorical one.

Phily says, "Did James really get out
competed by Paul?" How do we know this?
That's incredible. And I think I was
mentioning this in a video. Could even
be

Alrighty then. Looks like we are recording. I already did the sound test. The microphone is working now. By the time I get to the end of this, if the microphone is still working or not, I can't say.

I am PO Basel. This is Oh, I forgot. I got hair in my mouth. I forgot.

Welcome to question and answer number 153.

and also the second half of question and answer number 152 because those of you who didn't watch the first half of 152 may not have noticed that the microphone died halfway through which it turns out was due to a loose connection

which is now tightened.

This is my beverage

and I am your host Po Basa.

Uh, and I'm starting kind of late again, especially considering this may be the longest lulu of a question and answer that I have done thus far. This could be a record breaker because as I've already intimated, this is one and a half Q&As's. This is all of 153. 153 not a prime number.

It's let's see here. It's $3 \times$

51. And then 51 is also $3 \times$

let's see 3×17 . So it's $3 \times 3 \times 17$.

If I did my math correctly.

So, I did a Q&A last week, another late one, a nocturnal one, and uh the

microphone died. So, I've got to do the second half over again, which it's it's just my karma, I think. I mean, some of you who've been watching these for a few years may recall that I was using a different video uh processing software at first and it just stopped working after a while. I'd be doing a Q&A and I'd get to the end and find out that the whole thing had not recorded at all. One time, one really horrible time, I had to do the same Q&A three times.

But the show must go on.

And so I sit before you in my 100% natural fiber custommade Lithuanian

linen robe.

And I'm going to commence to answering questions because I'm going to have to kind of be a little more concise than usual maybe just to keep this less than like four and a half hours.

So the first question is from Phil's and Phil Leys asked the transgressive fourth question in the last Q&A causing his name to go on a list but now he's he's asked three more. So now we're up to seven. But the thing is some people are going to be mentioned twice. So, if you your your questions aren't answered the first time, bear with me because I've added the the the later questions below the second half of the first list

of questions. So, some people are going to be mentioned twice. And those of you who like to hear your name mentioned, it's just going to be just that much more gratification.

So,

this first question may have been rhetorical, but there is actually a question mark in it, and so I'm just going to go ahead. Um, this is in response to some statements I made in question and answer number 151, which was a prime number. 151 still is a prime number, in fact, regarding James and and St. Paul and certain struggles for

whatever.

So this is Phils asks, "Did James really get out competed by Paul?"

How do we know this? That's incredible.

Well,

um, my understanding of this sort of competition between James who wanted things to stay Jewish and still and I mean, he knew Jesus way better than Paul did because allegedly he was Jesus's brother, James, who became um, the leader of the church in Jerusalem after Jesus was crucified.

St. Paul on the other hand was like the apostle to the Gentiles who was sort of anti-Judaism.

He wanted to make a break with Judaism,

you know, no more Mosaic law, that kind of stuff. No more circumcision, which probably was causing a lot of prospective Christians to balk at the idea. You know, it's like you can join our religion, but first we got to cut off the end of your PP.

A lot of people didn't like that in those days, you know. It's like, okay, well, I'll just uh kind of be interested in Christianity, but not really commit because I don't want the end of my peep cut off. That kind of thing.

But mainly what I know about this competition between James and Paul and how James pretty much got edited out of

the New Testament, there are very few mentions of him despite the fact that he was a Jesus's brother and b essentially the leader of Christianity after Jesus died.

So most of what I know about this I learned from a man whose last name is Tabore. I think is it James Tabore? He's the author of the Tabore blog. He has uh contributed to a lot of like biblical archaeology

kind of newsletters and magazines, that kind of stuff. And he's got a YouTube channel and he's got long exhaustive videos discussing this very subject. So if you really want to know like about how Paul and James were sort of

competing for dominance in in the the
new Christian church

because it was new at that time then I
would recommend that you watch Tabour's
T- A B O R his videos or read his his
blog his articles. I'm sure you could
look it up fairly easily. But James, I
mean, I've I've also read in a Bible
commentary, not from Tabore, that the
general epistle of James, which is
almost the only press James gets in the
in the New Testament, was a kind of
rebuttal of Paul.

You know, faith without works is dead.
Whereas Paul was saying, it's faith
that's going to get you into heaven.

So

um it's one thing that I learned from
Tabore from learning about this whole
you know James the just stuff
is that probably Jesus did consider
himself to be the Messiah and the also a
descendant of King David.

And so the early Christians had to have
someone a branch of David as the leader
of the Christian church. And so it was a
family thing within Jesus's family.

After James was martyred, then I think
there was a cousin named Simon who
became like leader of the the church in
Jerusalem.

So let's see. Yeah, the Paul faction won
out. You know, it was sort of converted

Gentiles became, you know, the overwhelming majority of Christians. the the Jewish Christians, you know, the Christians who remained Jewish became a smaller and smaller minority and then they were persecuted. For example, they weren't allowed to live in Jerusalem.

Um I think it was the emperor, not Trajan, Hadrien. Hadrien tried to set up Jerusalem as a pagan city and Jews were not even allowed to live there. they might have entered surreptitiously from time to time.

So just Paul's side of the the controversy, you know, the competition won out. You know, the Ebionites

eventually went extinct. You know, the the Jewish Christians still you got Jews for Jesus, but it's it's not really uh mainstream Christianity anymore.

But again, if you want to know about this whole sort of rivalry between Paul and James and James kind of losing and getting almost edited out of the New Testament despite his importance, then uh yeah, I would uh consult with I think it's James Tabore, but I'm not sure about the first name. Tabore T- A B O R. And I'm just going to move on to Phil Lee's second question. And Phil Le asked some extremely long questions. I asked him to try to be more concise and so we're getting like the reader digest

version of the first first time he asked the questions. He asked them again in shorter terms. So the second question he's asking if pure land can be said to be a cataphatic or positivist version of something like Zen which is more nondualistic and is describing nibbana in positive terms. And I really don't think so. In a lot of Zen Buddhism, maybe most Zen Buddhism nowadays has pure land elements added. I went to a Zen monastery in California once and I was surprised to see all the pure land stuff. There was even some pure land kind of chanting going on like in the Dharma. You know, the monks and nuns

would get together and they'd be chanting about Amitaba, this kind of thing.

So even so, I do think that it was two very different schools of Buddhism that were like the two main schools of Buddhism in like medieval Japan that just sort of got conflated. They got kind of added together. And yeah, I do not think that pure land could really be said to be sort of a well like an exoteric, is that a word? Exoteric version of Zen or anything like that. Zen is just meditation. Stay away from dogmas as much as you can pretty much. Not always in in practice, but that's, you know, sort of a theme of Zen

Buddhism, you know. don't don't be
dogmatic, that kind of thing. Whereas
pure land Buddhism is

I mean it relies heavily on mythology,
you know, it's it's just like invented
whole new Buddhas out of
who knows what.

So

yeah, I I really don't think so. And I'm
just going to move on to Phily's third
question here. He says if he he wants to
know if you can say pure land is rooted
in the polycanon as in the mahanama suta
where the Buddha says reciting the
Buddha name is the first method to
mental purification uprooting unh

wholesomeness after cultivating the five
strengths and I haven't read the
mahanama suta lately

um but in the long version of this
question he was pointing out that the
mahanamama suta isn't saying just
reciting the Buddha a name is the first
mentioned it's one of the the
meditations of orthodox tantra is
recollection of the virtues of the
Buddha

and it starts off EDP so
and you know and just continues this
it's sort of like this formula you know
recollection of the virtues of the
Buddha recollection of the virtues of
the dharma recollection of the virtues

of the song recollection of your own
past meritorious deeds recollection of
the dāvas
you know those are five kind of
recollection um meditation techniques
that are mainstream orthodox tier
and so it's not really using the Buddha
name not godmma or sedata anything like
that it's just a recollection of the
Buddha's qualities or virtues which then
at some point got crystallized into this
formula that gets recited it almost like
a mantra. And in Burma, for example,
that's one of the main kinds of
meditation that lay people do. They use
a mala, like a Buddhist rosary. And it's

like you go through the the nine qualities of the Buddha, which is the nine, the first nine and the 969, which has a movement named after it, the nine qualities of the Buddha, and then one bead. And then maybe you'll switch to the the six qualities of the dharma or just keep doing the nine qualities of the Buddha and it's a bead for each time.

But it's not using the name of the Buddha

um as a kind of meditation technique.

The Thai forest tradition has adopted buddo or bhau as a kind of mantra that is very very common in Thailand. I never heard of it happening in Burma, but it

wouldn't surprise me.

um you know some people at least who have been influenced by the Thai forest tradition who are living in Burma may may use that but um it's it's not the same as just reciting the Buddha's name or just Buddha uh in the hopes of being reborn in some kind of heaven realm which according to Pureland Buddhism isn't even in Samsara which is very strange. just kind of playing hob with orthodox Buddhist philosophy right there. And I got to be careful that I don't accidentally loosen the cord on this microphone, but it seems to be working. So, let's

just continue here.

Um,

yeah. So, yeah, I don't think that pure land is rooted in the polycan. It's like at some point people were trying to practice

Buddhism as found in the ancient texts so-called Hinayana

or more politely Shravakayana text the pre Mahayana texts and most of them like most people nowadays just couldn't get enlightened you know they just weren't ripe for it yet or whatever and then they would just say well this is the Kaluga you can't get enlightened anymore so we're just going to pray to some cosmic being to help us at least get

reborn into a situation where it's easier to get enlightened.

And uh yeah, I do not think the Buddha would have endorsed that at all.

I mean, you do what you can to become enlightened in this life and most people fail. Sorry to say, the overwhelming majority of people fail. Even the people who are just diligently striving wholeheartedly,

even most of them fail. And partly it's just they're not ripe yet. They've still got all these latent tendencies, blind spots, and so forth. So I mean even people who can just sit like a statue for three hours straight still most of

them you know they still got these quirks and biases and attachments and so forth that it's hard to to deal with.

Especially if you're practicing on your own or you're practicing with a with an unenlightened teacher then if you're if you're practicing on your own you don't see your own blind spots. you can just drift off into eccentricity if you're not getting feedback. And the best feedback of course would be from an enlightened teacher.

So people that don't have access to that have like a major handicap in their practice.

So,

I think I'm just going to move on to

Phil Lee's fourth transgressive

question,

which is with regard to Amitaba's 35th

vow. And in the first version of this

question, he just he was like, "What do

you think about Amitaba's 35th vow?" And

I have no clue. I don't even know what

Amitaba's first vow is. I just never had

once I learned what pure land was about

I just lost all interest

because it fairly clearly fairly

obviously does not represent what the

earliest Buddhism was teaching. So

anyways Amit this is here's what here's

what Phil is asking. He wants to know

Amitaba's 35th vow is his highly

controversial statement that women who are good pure land Buddhists will be reborn as men. Whether in this life or the next, or whether metaphorically or literally is unclear, but I have noticed this short line is fuel for immense mental gymnastics among Westerners since you have such a statement from a supposedly enlightened being. So he wants to know what I think about Amitaba's third 35th vow even though there's no question mark in this abbreviated version of the question. And I mean, if you're a good pure land Buddhism, a good pure land Buddhist, then presumably you're going to be reborn into the pure land of the West or a pure

land somewhere. And technically, it's not in Samsara, but then how are you going to be reborn as male or female in such a like a paradoxical realm that isn't even in Samsara?

I mean, if it's if it's not in samsara, there's not going to be any kind of discernable qualities.

So, I mean, it's it's this kind of really bad logic in Mahayana Buddhism in general, in some schools of it, and in pure land in particular, that I just I just don't understand.

So anyways, it is common in like Asian Buddhism, traditional Asian Buddhism, a traditional Asian culture, it is

traditional to assume as it was in the west up until modern times is preferable to be a man than to be a woman. Even even like post-modern feminists are trying to be like men without really admitting that they want to be men or like men, but still they're trying to be like men.

A lot of them are.

So anyways, like traditional Asian Buddhism, for example, there are a lot of what are called votive tablets. like when they dig up like a medieval Buddhist temple in Asia, they'll find lots and lots of these votive tablets that are inscribed maybe like they're scratched into clay or something like

that. It's it's somebody makes this inscription, this little inscription, they'll donate to the temple and they'll set up this this tablet as sort of like um sort of like memorializing this vow that they've made or some such. And a lot of these votive tablets that are dug up in places like Burma are women like like they're praying to be reborn as a man in their next life because they consider that to be an improvement over their lot which I mean socially speaking in medieval Asia probably was pretty right on there.

So, it was apparently a belief back when Amitaba was making his 35th vow that

it's better to be a man than a woman,
that it's like a step upwards on the
evolutionary scale somehow. And so, it
was just kind of built into the pure
land uh Amitaba vows. And I still I have
no no clue whatsoever what any of the
other vows are. The 35th one is the only
one I know about just because Phily's
explained it to me.

So let's see here. Yeah, the mental
gymnastics are

Yeah, that's that's not surprising at
all. I mean, modern western, especially
liberal kind of Buddhists just don't
want to accept, you know, like a lot of
terra Buddhism too. They just they just
really have trouble with that. And so

they will have to go through mental gymnastics and they'll just say, "Well, the Buddha didn't really teach that part. That must have been added later because it's so politically incorrect by postmodern western standards."

So I guess I better move on to the next question because I really do have to kind of be concise to keep this thing less than five hours.

This is from Kley and Clefy says, "Could you make a video about three aspects of existence, impermanence, uneasiness, and no self?" And I probably already have u maybe one of my videos with Brian, but also one of the first philosophical

essays I wrote as a monk was on the three marks of existence. And um I don't look at my own website. It's like my sweetheart has set it up for me. She's put everything on it. And so I don't even know if that essay is on there. It used to be on the older nepapanchona.org website. It was one of the the philosophical essays that you could read on that website, the three marks of ex on the three marks of existence. And one of the main things of interest to me, I mean mainly I was defining the the key terms. I mean sab we got that that just means all and sankara is conditioned things you know ana impermanence duka is you know

unease

anata no self although some people will quibble whether it means no self or nonself that kind of thing and the fan is on it's it's kind of sweltery here in summertime South Carolina lately thunderstorms almost every day lately.

Um and also dhamma sub dhama anata. So one of the interesting points I discuss in the essay is why is it subcara you know all sankaras are impermanent all saras

are unease or conducive to unease but all dhamas not sonaras but dhhamas are without self

and I mean the the reason it seems uh

most obvious to me is that sab sankara
is referring to samsara this samsaric
phenomena but sab dhamma is referring to
anything including nibbana itself
there's no self according to the formula
of the three marks not even ultimate
reality or conventional reality neither
samsara nor nibana
nothing

but uh yeah if you can't find that maybe
you can get back to me. Like if it's not
on the website, then it should get put
up there. And um I'm just going to move
on to the next question. This is from
Super Lump. And Super Lump says, "How do
monks in Burma and America deal with
health insurance and medical bills?"

Well, if you protect Dhamma, Dhamma protects you. And um I don't know. I'm sure that there are monks in the west who have health insurance but in Burma um you know there's not much health insurance in Burma but for and for monks like with in my case there'd be devout Buddhist doctors who would just say if you need if you have any health problems just let me know and and I'll help you. I mean, with regard to something minor, you know, you've got a fever, an infection, something like that, they can help you with that. I mean, if you've got something really serious,

then you're pretty much pretty much screwed. You know, you can take some kind of herbal stuff and if you get better, that's fine. If you don't get better, well, may you have a good rebirth if you have to be reborn.

And I remember in the previous Q&A, the the half that didn't get recorded, I was mentioning how um the way my my karma worked was sort of as follows that I I've told this story before, but when I was living in this remote forest monastery, I would continually be biting into rocks in my food, mainly because rice and beans are threshed on the ground. So little white rocks get mixed in with the rice, little brown rocks get

mixed in with the beans. And so I'd be eating and all of a sudden crack, you know, just this it hurts and there's like this audible cracking sound and I'd be like feeling around in my mouth to see if I broke a tooth or knocked a filling out or something. And I'm and it would hurt. And I'm thinking, man, if this if I break a teeth, you know, if I break my teeth biting into a rock out here in the middle of nowhere, what am I going to do? But as it turned out, living out in the middle of nowhere, I didn't break a tooth. I didn't even knock out a filling. But then I happened to be staying in a relatively wealthy

area of Rangon. one, there was a supporter of the Tong Pulu tradition that had this empty building on his property where Tong Pulu monks could stay for free. You know, when they got business in Rangon, they can just stay there. So, that's what I did.

And so, I'm going for alms round in this relatively wealthy neighborhood of Rangon, this servant girl gives me some bean curry with a rock in it, and I bite into that bean curry and break three teeth. And it's like it it like was right in between. You know, you got two teeth coming up down this way and two teeth here. It was like right in between there. And it broke three of them all at

the same time. But as it turned out, that servant girl was the servant girl of the dean and rector of the the Rangon Dental College. He was the number one dentist in the entire country. And so he just said, "Well, come on over and I'll It was just almost right across the street. Just come over. I'll fix your teeth for free." He had like a little dental clinic inside his house. Fix my teeth for free. And he said, "Anytime you need any kind of dental work, just come to me and I'll take care of it." So for a while I had the same dentist as the dictator.

Um,

but yeah, in America, I don't know. It's like if you're a monk, I mean, how did monks in the Buddhist time deal with this stuff, you know? It's like they're not going to be going to hospitals and having like \$10,000 tests done on themselves, that kind of thing. It's like take care of Dharma. Dharma takes care of you. You live a clean life. You're less likely to have health problems. You have you live a moral life and you're more likely to have good karma. Less bad karma. Less bad things happen to you.

So,

I don't say so a lot. It's just kind of a filler, I think.

Some of the time.

Um,

yeah. I mean, having like a chronic health condition as a monk is kind of it's it's it can be somewhat problematic. But as a general rule in Buddhist Asia, the people are very devout and the some of the doctors are devout Buddhists who are quite willing to help monks and also there's uh there are SA hospitals in Burma.

So uh monks can go to the SA hospitals that are um I mean a lot of them were started by a certain seat who may as well remain nameless who just is a very rich man and has collected lots of money

and some of that money has been used to build hospitals for the SA. So that's another option for sick monks in Burma. Um, but as a general rule, a sick monk in Burma, you just have other monks or noviceses or maybe family members looking after you and treating you as well as they can, at least keeping you relatively comfortable, you know, keeping you clean if you're lying in bed soiling yourself, that kind of thing. And nature takes its course. And that's the way people have lived for almost the entirety of our existence on this planet. So insurance and medical bills are seen as some kind of necessity nowadays, but really they're not.

And I guess I'm just going to move on this question also from Super Lump who says, "Did being a monk for 30 years doom you to never being able to retire? I'm planning on retiring around the age of 72." So that's like 10 more years of laboring as one of the proletariat.

After 30 years in the leisure class, I decided to come back and become a manual laborer.

So I've got it set up like my 401k.

And by the time I'm 72, I should almost certainly have enough hours in to collect social security. I mean, it won't be like top tier social security, but

it'll be enough to live on. I'm pretty sure.

I mean, lately I've got 15% of my income going into the 401k. So, so long as the economy doesn't completely crash, I should be able to support myself and my woman um without too much hardship. I don't think we're going to be living under a bridge, panhandling, anything like that.

So, I guess I answered that. I'm going to move on to super long third question.

Do you have any stories about the poly examinations in Burma? And like I told you last time, and you didn't hear it because the the microphone didn't work.

Um I did spend one year

um at Mahagandon which is in a suburb
pretty much a suburb of of Mandalay. It
was it's in the city of Amarapura the
deathless city which used to be for a
short time the capital of Burma
and Mahag Gandhi is a school monastery.
So almost all the school all the monks
there are students or teachers you know
they're they're studying or teaching for
the the poly examinations so that you
can get like this title you know like
the Damasara degree which is sort of
like a bachelor's degree in Buddhist
studies and it's prestigious then
there's the Damakatika degree which is
sort of like a master's degree in

Buddhism and then there's like special honorific titles like some of you may have heard of for example a Burmese monk whose whose name ends in biwa

um I think that uh gosh I yeah I can't remember his name now there's there's a rel two two relatively famous monks with the same name that end in biwa uh one was the founder of Mahagandayon the school the school monastery I attended for a year and if you get this bwama degree or you get you get that bwa added to your name that means that you you it was like you had to score really high on this special test in order to get that degree. So it it means that you're a brilliant scholar essentially.

But anyways, getting to the story of the poly examinations in Burma. Here I'm digressing all the time when I've got one and a half Q&As's to do.

Um the year that I spent at Mahagandon nationwide there was this announcement from the government that everybody failed the their their poly test their their tests in in Dhama like poly examinations because there was so much cheating going on they couldn't sort out who did it honestly and who cheated.

It's like um a copy of the test paper somebody got their hands on it and started distributing it. So there was lots of monks who were reading the the

test questions in advance, knew what the test questions were going to be. And because of this, so many monks cheating on the test, they just threw out the results and said, "Nobody passes this year." And that's it's not the only year that that happened.

But one one thing about like a school monastery like finals week at a school monastery in Burma is very different from finals week at like a university in the west. At at a university in the west finals week it's like silent. You know it's like everybody is studying. Whereas in Burma finals week, you know, right leading up to the examinations, it's just it is just earsplitting because

you've got all these people that are just reciting out loud the these answers to, you know, questions that might appear on the test. You know, it's like the way it works is wrote memorization. And so you've got these people just sometimes they're practically shouting just rapid fire just memorizing it just like building grooves in their brain for for these answers that might get might get asked on the test or for sure it'll get asked on the test if they're cheating and saw the test in advance. So it's it's very weird. is the like the Burmese educational system is mainly based traditionally on wrote

memorization and so you don't even really have to understand the answer to the test question so long as you can just parrot the the correct answer and I do think that's changing a little bit there's more sort of western ideas coming into Burma with regard to education I had a few Buddhist teachers is like monk teachers asking me, you know, how could we improve this because really just memorizing, you know, the answer to a question and without even having to understand it is is not the best way of learning.

Although I have to admit there are some phenomenal scholars, just totally phenomenal Buddhist scholars in Burma.

So

uh I suppose I could tell stories about that but I got to keep going here. So the next question is from Ruie. Ruie says, "Hello Pa, do you think state of flux and impermanence are the same thing? Where in the scriptures would one find the expression state of flux?" So that's the second question there.

Barring the contemporary Buddhist scientist explanation that says the cup on the table is made of flowing particles, something which is inaccessible to experience. What would be the sotariological value of state of flux? So this is actually three

questions, so I might as well separate them. So we're above 60 questions this time. This is probably the largest number of questions ever on a Q&A because reasons.

So, first question, do you think state of flux and impermanence are the same thing? Well, they're not necessarily the same thing that state of flux would be a kind of impermanence, but impermanence is not necessarily state of flux that I mean, it's like a frogs and amphibian, but frogs and amphibians are not necessarily the same thing because you got salamanders, for example.

So, I mean, a state of flux would be just like continuous change.

Whereas impermanence I mean that's you know it's like you're going to anyone anything that has a beginning has an end you know so if you're born you're going to die that kind of thing that's not necessarily state of flux but if you get into Buddhist philosophy especially abhidharma then everything is blinking off and on at a trillion times a second. I mean matter is blinking off and on at like a trillion times per eyeblink and mind is flashing off and on like 17 trillion times per eyeblink. mind goes way faster than matter does with regard to its state of flux.

And just philosophically,

just setting aside Buddhism really, that there has to be something changing every moment. Otherwise, you're dead that moment. That you're not even going to notice the passage of time. If everything stays the same two moments in a row, you're just going to know you're going to be aware of one moment at most. There always has to be something changing. And it creates a kind of dependent core rising of you have there has to be like a a kind of balance between change and stasis because if everything is changing like every moment that's just like primordial chaos you know it's like you don't have anything remaining the same at all then nobody is

going to have a memory anything like
that it's just going to be just like
static on on an old TV screen whereas if
everything remains the same now I mean
or like if nothing stays the same then
it's it's chaos but if nothing changes
it's death so you got to have like the
middle path between chaos and death
which involves

some things changing and some things at
least apparently staying the same at
least remaining within the same theme
you know sort of like oh these these
tweezers for example

Well, you can say that they're the like
the molecules or the atoms composing

these tweezers

are arising and passing away. This this
this whole thing of tweezers here is
blinking off and on at a trillion times
a second according to Terra. But at
least it's staying the same within the
realm of you know what kind of atoms in
the same positions and everything more
or less.

So there's that kind of stasis has to I
mean that has to be involved in the
equation because just total change of
everything at all times would just be
like staticky chaos.

But if nothing changes then that's
death.

So I'm just going to move on to Ruy's

second question here. Where in the scriptures would one find the expression state of flux? And I mean nowhere because the scriptures are in poly and what I mean what the poly equivalent of state of flux would be um I really can't say offhand. Um but it could be that some poly term could be reasonably translated as state of flux.

But really the state of flux that everything is flashing off and on a trillion times per eyelink is mainly found in Abidama and the commentarial literature.

So um it might not say in in like that term state of flux but still the idea

that everything is just blinking off and
on a trillion times a second
approximately
that that is just integral to the the
the orthodox terravada Buddhist
explanation of
samsaric reality that nibbana itself
isn't flashing off and on but everything
in samsara is
so the term itself may not be found in
the texts but the process is there
so I'm just going to move on to Ruy's
third question barring the contemporary
Buddhist scientist explanation that says
the cup on the table is made of flowing
particles something which is
inaccessible to experience what would be

the soteriological value of state of flux
soteriological means like the like with
regard to salvation

you know it's like how are you going how
is it going to help you to become
enlightened by being aware of the state
of flux well I mean from the Buddhist
point of view just believing in this
everything is flashing off and on um
from the Theravada Buddhist point of
view I mean that's just understanding
reality so that's going to help you
become enlightened because you are
penetrating through the illusion and
seeing things as they really are but
then again the Sarvastiva Buddhists

didn't believe that everything's
flashing off and on. They would say that
any combination of these atoms, these
dharma is impermanent, but the the
dharma themselves are like eternal. So
that's a different school of Buddhism
very closely related to tantra that
really didn't have this state of flux
idea except still something has to
change constantly.

just for us not to be dead for that
moment.

So let's see here.

Uh something which is and what would be
the soteriological value of state of flux?

If it's just a theory, then there's
really no liberating value other than it

might weaken your attachment to like
normie samsara, you know, just being
philosophical and questioning the
reality of everything around you, that
kind of thing, which is kind of what
philosophy does. Um, you know, that can
kind of loosen your grip on your own
unenlightened version of samsara. But I
think from an orthodox Tibetan Buddhist
point of view, the main value of
believing in the state of flux is that
it'll help you to see the reality of the
state of flux. Um, but not all schools
of Buddhism believe in this state of
flux. At least not with regard to the
all the particles flashing off and on,

blinking off and on.

So, I guess I'll just move on this question. This is from PSA. And PSA says, "I was having a massive panic attack and extreme anxiety because your video, which was like 151, dropped a few hours late this week. What should I do about my paneobasa addiction?" That's note it. Note it, let it go. Note it, let it go. Whenever arises, note it, and let it go. That's that's questions like that are really easy. You just adopt the mahasi method. You know, it's like what a mahasi instruct meditation instructor would tell you at a retreat. You know what? What should I do about this? Note it. Let it go. Note it. Be aware of it.

Observe it like an ichthyologist
observes a dead fish.

So, I'm just going to move on to PSA's
next question.

When you were a child, did you dream of
growing up to become this wiggling
bearded Viking marauder? No. I never
really I've never really had much like
intuitive affinity with like Germanic
paganism or ancient Germanic tribes.

Like if I were a pagan, I'd have to be
like a neoplatonist, you know? I I would
I'd go more like classical Greco Roman
that I'm just much more interested in
like ancient Greco Roman religion
especially Roman I guess rather than you

know Thor and and Odin and that sort of thing.

So, no, I didn't I didn't had no idea that I would ever even grow a beard.

That for a lot of my life, I just had this idea I could not grow a good beard.

So, I didn't even try. And then finally in my late 50s or maybe even 60, I tried to grow a beard and whoa, hey, it works.

And then just I had this idea of a bearded like a a like a braided beard or like there's this guy on YouTube. He does like heavy metal covers of non-heavy metal songs. His name is Leo Moricholi. He's just got this long beard and it's not really braided. He's just got rubber bands going all the way down

the length of it at at intervals of about like, you know, an inch or so, which looks pretty cool. I just think it looks looks cool.

So, let's see here. So, the idea is I'm going to grow my beard long enough that I can have like a muer bead at the bottom of it and keep it that way a little while and then probably just cut it back off again.

So, let's see here.

Uh, it is true though that I have like northern Germanic ancestry. In fact, most of my ancestry is northern Germanic apparently.

But if I was I'm I'm like more I take a

more of an intuitive interest in what apparently was my past lives rather than my like materialistic ancestry, empirical ancestry.

So I think I probably was like Roman more than I was like Germanic.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. And this was the reason why the scheme pagota was on the previous Q&A's thumbnail because my sweetheart made the thumbnail before I realized that the second half of the video didn't work that it was I was just sitting here.

Yeah, I just tricked you just now because I really I really uh wasn't talking just then. But uh yeah, I have

been to the pagod several times and it's well worth going to. It's this huge goldplated pagoda with just encrusted with jewels way up high where you can't really see it. Although there are like little viewing telescopes that you can look through in the like the what's the what's the word the the area the walking area all around the pagoda. There's all kinds of interesting things there.

There's smaller pagotas, there's like museums, that kind of thing, all on the platform around the scheme. And most people don't know this, but there is a higher platform on the Schuagon where men could go up and look around,

including I've been up there before, but women are not allowed. And because so many Western women were making scenes like trying to sneak up there just to prove a point, that kind of thing, that the government finally just banned all foreigners from going up on the the the higher platform.

Just part of that idea that men are superior to women in Asia, traditional Buddhist Asia, probably traditional non Buddhist Asia also like Islam for example.

So yeah, Leuagon is well worth seeing.

It's it's not my favorite like religious place to go to in Burma. My favorite religious place to go to in Burma would

be Poindon, which is in northwestern
Burma, not too far from
um from the city of Monua. And it's a
it's a a cave complex. It's over a
thousand caves, I'm pretty sure. They're
like dug into this sandstone mountain
with Buddha images and so forth inside.
It's all medieval. There's a few murals
still existing in these caves
representing Mongols and so forth. So,
probably happened back when Burma was um
after Burma had been conquered by one of
Kubla Khan's generals.

But my favorite thing is not so much the
caves or the Buddha images or the
murals. So, it's the troops of scy

monkeys because I just love feeding monkeys. Whenever I'd go, I'd bring like this grocery sack of just monkey food, little bananas and little oranges and juju bees and stuff like that that monkeys like.

I just love feeding monkeys for some reason. There it's like they're my brothers.

So, I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Muners and we're still doing the second half of 152 at this point. Muners says, "Suppose that a Buddhist were to be asked by a Christian, why do you worship an idol? Would it be in poor taste for the Buddhist to reply back with, why do you

worship a dead Jew on a stick?"

And yeah, that'd be in poor taste. I think that's fairly obvious. Maybe Mooners just asked the question as a kind of joke.

Also, I mean, it could be considered perusa va or abusive speech. If you're saying it deliberately to insult the Christian, to make him feel bad or make her feel bad or is it zer or whatever that I mean, if you if you say that just to be nasty, then not only would it be poor taste, but it'd also be bad ethics. You'd be violating a a precept of wrong speech.

So, but with regard to myself, I don't

really worship idols. Um, I have that
the little Buddha statue
up there on top of the bookcase. Closest
thing I've got to an altar. Um, I have
bowed to that sometimes,
especially in in times of crisis or
something. just it's just sort of like
focusing on me bowing to, you know,
whatever enlightened beings and saints
are out there that might be aware of my
presence really. You know, I'm not
bowing to a little statue really. I
mean, it's just sort of like a focus,
you know, a convenient direction to be
bowing. But I know that that little
statue up there is just a little hunk of
marble, which probably doesn't look very

much like the actual historical goddamn.
And most of my time in Burma, I mean,
the Burmese are very devout, kind of
medieval in their their approach to
religion. And like at the beginning of
the Uosata ceremony, all the the SA
would convene in the congregation hall,
they'd always start off bowing to the to
the image on the altar. And I would just
sit there and not bow most of the time.
Most of the time I would not bow. And
then sometimes um a Burmese monk would
say, "Well, you get kudo. You get merit
for bowing to the statue or bowing to
the Buddha." And I'm saying well I mean
that statue has no sila no samadei and

no pa has no virtue

has no concentration and it has no

wisdom is just an image it's rupa

so let's see here I guess I'll just move

on this question this is from arpad and

arpad says is having a home shrine

really useful in Buddhism doesn't it

lead to attachment to rights and rituals

um a home shrine.

Uh I mean it depends on the individual.

Some people I mean it's just a

convenient room that is just set aside

for like meditation and devotion. A lot

of Burmese houses have this um you know

they just set a room aside for the this

shrine room and you know you're not

allowed to do worldly stuff in there.

It's just sort of like a pure space which I mean there's nothing wrong with that. um poorer people that don't really have the option of having an like a a separate room just for that. Sometimes they'll have built onto the side of their house. If you go to Burma, sometimes you'll see built on the side of like a wooden house, this niche thing sticking out from the house. And that is a way of having like a Buddhist shrine kind of in your house, but at the same time it's sort of separated away from this worldly stuff of like people, you know, pooping and having sex and that kind of thing. Not not at the same time,

but still, you know, just this worldliness stuff. It it's sort of like a symbolic separation from that.

And a lot of like monks cabins will have like that niche thing just like this lump sticking out of one wall where the Buddha image is like the little shrine is.

Um it's not necessary though. I mean if you're not into idolatry, you know, it's just you're like a an iconoclast or something, then I mean that's fine, too.

I mean, first few hundred years of Buddhism, there were no no Buddhist statues. They might still have had shrines of a type, but it would be, you know, a bodhic leaf or, you know, an

empty throne or something representing, you know, the Buddha, but at the same time emphasizing the fact that he was no longer in samsara. He had left the scene.

So, some people might be more attached to rights and rituals as a result of that, but not everybody. Some people can navigate that fairly skillfully. And I'm going to move on to the next question.

This is from Xenithoid.

and xenithoid.

Um I this is this is a long one. This is a long essay question which I already answered once but I'm gonna answer it again. Xenoid says can you please give

your thoughts on this argument against materialism and then this is what follows is the argument. He says the way I like to argue against materialism goes like this. Imagine I am the materialist. My perception was quote, "My perception of truth is a product of my neurochemistry. My neurochemistry is constantly changing and could change in such a way that fundamental truths would appear blatantly wrong. Therefore, I have no way to justify that my perception of truth at the moment is actually lining up with the objective truth of the physical world. The only reason I believe that what I understand to be true right now is actually true is

that my neurochemical state is like this more often than not." unquote. A materialist may not appeal to other minds, but materialism has no good way to argue against solipsism. An idealist can say to a solipsist, quote, "If your mind was the only one, then you will should be omniscient because the knowledge would have no other minds to escape to." A materialist can't use that kind of argument because they think knowledge is not a real thing and just a side effect of neurochemicals.

For the materialist, the ultimate truth of reality is in matter which they can never access directly. For the Buddhist,

ultimate reality is directly
experiencable through consciousness.

Okay. So, I mean the whole thing
aboutism,

I don't think that's really a very good
argument. Um the idealist argument
against ellypism, namely if your mind
was the only one then you should be
omnisient because I mean

I mean just because you your mind
contains all the knowledge um that is
accessible.

Well yeah I mean you'd still be limited.

I mean, let's say there's a cypism, you
know, which is like you are the only the
only being that exists in the entire
universe and all other beings are just

sort of like a dream that you're having,
but still you wouldn't know the cube
root of 96.

Presumably, there is a cube root of 96
and you wouldn't know it. So, I mean,
you still wouldn't be omniscient. It's
just that

it's kind of hard to explain,
but I mean, you don't know how many
hairs are on your own head unless you're
completely bald.

Well, I don't know. But that's not even
really the question. The question up
here is, could I please give my thoughts
on the argument against materialism? And
it's it's it's not going to make much of

an impression on like a scientific realist. The scientific realist will acknowledge fine when you're diseased when you're out of your mind then you might be just hallucinating in which case you can't trust your own mind. But when you've got a consensus or at least you know uh an overwhelming majority of scientists who are all like doing the same kind of experiments you know verifying what other scientists have done reproducing their experiments then there's going to be enough of a correlation between what is out there presumably causing our perceptions and what we are perceiving. I mean that's that's what like a scientific realist

would argue something along those lines that there is a correspondence between what we are perceiving most of the time when we're in a right mind and we're being logical and rational and empirical especially when you've got the like an agreement of many different scientists. you know that they they just assume that there has to be some reality out there beyond our perceptions that is causing our perceptions and it's causing them to be in this consistent way that can then be like codified and and you make mathematical models of it and so forth and apply that to the external world. Even though we don't have direct access

to the external world, still scientists would assume that there's bound to be a correlation between our perceptions and an external world, especially when you've got so many people agreeing and reproducing scientific experiments and all that. So, I do not think that the argument against materialism produced by Xenithoid would really make much of an impression on someone who is firmly committed to scientific materialism.

I mean, my favorite argument, I mean, I don't know if you could even really prove that there's no physical matter out there, but um one argument that I like is just George Barkley. George Barkley lived back in the 1700s. He was

like a he lived in Ireland a lot of the time. I think he was like an Anglican vicer living in Ireland. And I think it was before he became the Anglican vicer. He wrote um his philosophical texts about immaterialism.

And George Barkley had this theory that all that exists in the entire universe is consciousness and perceptions. Minds and perceptions. as a Christian he I don't know why he didn't say souls and perceptions but he had this idea all that exists is minds and perceptions but there's this one central mind that coordinates the perceptions of all the

other minds and that central p that central mind is God and so according to Barkley when you see an apple sitting on the table you're not really seeing a physical apple sitting on a physical table it's just that God is implanting the perceptions into your mind as though you're seeing a physical apple on a physical table. And the thing is, I don't think Barkley was right. But I have to admit, I cannot prove that Barkley was wrong. People have been trying to prove like philosophers have been trying to prove Barkley wrong for centuries at this point, at least a few centuries. And to my to my knowledge, none of them have succeeded. I don't

know how they could possibly succeed unless you want to use the argument of just like radical monism that ultimate reality is just this undifferentiated you know just unified essence with no multiplicity whatsoever. You could use that kind of argument, like a very deep metaphysical kind of argument. But so long as you're going to accept like a phenomenal world with phenomena going on, then I don't know how you could possibly prove that physical matter does exist. And I'm not so sure you could prove that it doesn't exist either, so long as you are accepting like a pluralistic phenomenal world that is

real.

But if you can just you can go to a deeper level of metaphysics and just kind of admit that all multiplicity is an illusion, then maybe you could prove Barkley wrong in that way, at least within the context of the the initial assumptions.

So I guess I just better move on to the next question. I really I'm just perversely

digressing and and taking more time than necessary. I guess it's just the way I am.

Cut me some slack.

So, Xenithoid's second question, which I've answered before, but nobody

nobody listened to me because they couldn't because the microphone wasn't working.

Xenithoid says, "What are your thoughts on the no true Scotsman fallacy?"

Personally, I think it's a confusion of conventional truth and ultimate truth.

Ultimately, there is no Muslim. But to say at the conventional level that there is no true Muslim would imply that there is also no false Muslim and therefore the word Muslim loses all meaning, at that point I can call Sam Harris a Muslim." And this Muslim stuff I don't fully follow. just see if if there is no true Muslim, it would imply that there's

no false Muslim. That's not necessarily the case. Like um like going with conventional truth, there's no true unicorn, but there's lots of false unicorns, you know, fictional unicorns, for example.

So, I mean, you could have a false unicorn without having a true unicorn. Likewise, maybe you could have a false Muslim without having a true Muslim. But let's just get up to the no true Scotsman fallacy, which I didn't really fully know what the no true Scotsman fallacy was and I had to look it up. And so I think it was the AI associated with duck duckgo

um came up with this. The no true Scotsman fallacy is a logical error where someone defends a generalization by excluding counter examples, claiming that those who don't fit the generalization are not true members of the group. This fallacy often involves shifting definitions to protect a belief or argument from criticism. And I guess the original example of the no true Scotsman fallacy is someone makes the statement no true no Scotsman would put sugar on his porridge. And for a Scotsman I assume the porridge would be oatmeal. So let's just go with oatmeal. So somebody says no Scotsman would put

sugar on his oatmeal. And then this other person says, "Well, my uncle Angus who lives in Aberdeen in Scotland, was born and raised there. He put sugar on his oatmeal." So then the first person kind of deflects and says, "Well, no true Scotsman would put sugar on his oatmeal." And so that implies that it's just practically by definition that if you put sugar on your oatmeal, you can't be you can't really be a Scotsman.

So I don't think that that's the confusion of like let's see conventional truth and ultimate truth because ultimate truth I mean you can't even put it into words. Ultimate truth is just beyond language beyond symbols.

So this is mainly just moving the goalposts and trying to redefine the term to like prevent any counter examples from coming up. you know, it's moving the goalposts and it's mainly just a person who wants to be considered infallible on this point. And so it's like they just redefine the term how they please regardless of how you would define the term. Like you might think that it's not impossible for a Scottish person, Scottish man to put sugar on his oatmeal, but they just redefine the term. And that happens in politics all the time.

happens all the time.

So yeah, I don't think it's a confusion of conventional truth and ultimate truth. I just think it's like a stubborn person who makes this blanket generalization and then when somebody provides a counter example that you know is disagrees with the blanket generalization, they just sort of change the definition to exclude any counter examples.

So, in a way, it's just sort of doubling down and refusing to admit that that your generalization has exceptions to it.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Master Poe.

And Master Poe says,

I've been going for an hour and we still haven't got to 153 yet. Master Po says, "Sitting here watching yet another near-death experience story, and the person was describing the communication process, which was telepathic, uh, very common aspect of near-death experiences, but it's always the person's native language. Makes me wonder why not an otherworldly language one never heard of yet comprehended as if it was the personal native tongue. What seuasa?"

I think a lot of the time it could be just sort of assuming that near-death experiences have validity and just or

just assuming that every once in a while you might have some sort of paranormal communication that um it could be just that just the knowledge is sort of implanted into your mind which you then translate into your own language. But then again, in a near-death experience, um the the standard type where you know, you you die, you rise up, you go through like go towards this bright light, you wind up in like in a heaven realm, you've got a spirit guide there who, you know, discusses things with you, asks you maybe if you want to go back, you know, just sort of points out to you that some of the mistakes you've made, that kind of thing. then you probably

see their mouth moving in sync with the English that you're hearing which would indicate that it is like a kind of mental

is mentally generated sort of like in the Tibetan book of the dead where it's talking about how after you die you're in the BTO realm you're going to be seeing all these beings you're going to be seeing Buddhas you're going to be seeing demons you're going to be seeing all this stuff some of them will communicate to you but you have to bear in mind that it's all mindmade It's all a figment of your imagination.

And I mean from the Tibetan point of

view and from some Buddhist point of views, I mean this whole world is like a figment of our imagination.

So why not otherworldly language? It kind of reminds me of when I'm dreaming, I generally can't read very much in a dream. You know, a sign with just a few words on it or like a book that just has like a title on the cover. that much my my imagination can handle like like spontaneously but like an entire page of text then my mind my imagination is not good enough for me to dream an entire page of text that I can read in the dream and so I think it's kind of along the lines of that that um you just can't

come up with like a whole new language that you will stand like spontaneously as you you're you're generating this experience and it's pretty clear that to some degree at least people who have these near-death experiences are generating their experience like Christians will have in some cases Jesus or Mary or some Christian patriarch or saint or this kind of thing that that it's the like the spirit guide and a Buddhist would have a different kind of a different kind of heaven realm that they're going to. A Muslim would have a different kind of heaven realm. A materialist would have a different kind

of heaven realm. So, it's very much conditioned by your mind. And that's not to say that it's completely bogus because to some degree what we're experiencing now is generated by our mind.

So, I better just move on. I really should try to get these down to 20 words or less. My answer is just yep. Next question. Nope. Next question. Stellar Supreme is the next questioner. Formerly known as Libra Lamb, etc., etc., etc., etc. He changes his name all the time. Or at least he did enough to be troublesome.

So, let's see here. Stellar Supreme, etc., etc. says, "Which is better in

your opinion, Pacheka Buddhaana or Bodhicattvaana?"

and that this is with regard to a discussion, a very brief discussion of the Lotus Sutra uh that took place on the discord server. So, Stellar Supreme continues, "A pacheka Buddha is one of the greatest sources of merit in that they're an ideal receiver of charity for the giver, whereas there seems to be no mention of merit tied to one who has made a commitment to someday be perfectly pur purified and liberated." Well, I mean, this is just an academic argument, I think. I mean, I'm not really a Mahayana Buddhist. I'm not so

sure that there really is a pacheka
Buddhaana. And the bodhicattva is an
like a an anacronistic artifact of
Buddhist philosophy.

Um I mean the bodhicattvaana
would be someone striving to become a
Buddha I suppose, but the pacheka
Buddhaana isn't someone striving to
become a pacheka Buddha. It's like
pacheka Buddhas. So it's it's sort of
apples and oranges to some degree.

Um, and Pacheka Buddhas, I mean, it's I
answered this a question about Pachka
Buddhas a few Q&As ago where and really
the Buddha or maybe it didn't even
originate with the Buddha, but the idea
of Pachka Buddhas may be just a way of

accounting for enlightened beings before the Buddhist time that weren't Buddhists.

So, which is better in my opinion? I mean, it's just an academic matter of opinion, I guess. Um, I really can't I mean, if you're saying that who would be more like meritorious to donate to a bodhicattva or a pacheka Buddha, well, a pacheka Buddha is is a Buddha, whereas a bodhicattva is someone who's just trying to become one. So, I mean, you get more merit from like interacting with a pachek, although they'd be pretty much of a hermit and wouldn't talk much. They wouldn't be

explaining dhamma very much to you, but just being in their presence, you know, offering alms food or whatever. Yeah. I mean you're offering on the one hand to a fully enlightened being supposedly higher or or more advanced than an ordinary fully enlightened being an aura and then the other hand a bodhic sattva I mean they could have just started on their bodhic sattva path and still be just laden with defilements and so forth but I mean in a way it's it's not really a fair competition because you've got pacheka Buddhas are already fully enlightened whereas the bodhic sappva is someone destined to become a sama sam Buddha and if you're going to compare

pacheka Buddhas with sama sam buddhas
then I think orthodox tradition might
say it would be more beneficial to offer
to the sama Buddha but I mean both of
them are fully in line beings
I'm just going to move on to stellar
supreme etc etc second question did you
enjoy being in a monastery less than
solitary practice despite the
difficulties of living outside the
monastery yeah as a general rule I
avoided monasteries I mean, if you're
trying to practice vineia strictly, as a
general rule, you have to avoid
monasteries, especially Asian
monasteries, because there's almost no

monastery in all of Burma where it's not technically against the rules even to just set foot on the property. Any monastery that has been paid for, at least in part, even one penny, one pia, by a monk,

that's it. I mean it's it's *nisia pacita* and it's a *duca* offense an offense of wrongdoing to make use of that like the standard standard example I' I've said more than once in the past acc court in in the commentaries a monk buys a mango with money which is it's it's he has transgressed by buying this mango he eats the mango and throws the pit the pit germinates grows into a tree a hundred years Later, a different monk

sits under the shade of that tree. He's breaking a rule. He's committing an offense of making use of something that was paid for by a monk's money.

So, there have been monks. There was a famous Italian monk back in British times in in Burma who just avoided monasteries. He would not go into a monastery. Maybe very briefly or something, but as a general rule, he just avoided monasteries. She wandered from place to place and just slept in like they're called a zyat. It's just like a a public like a a shelter just a a roof on posts with like a raised wooden platform and people can rest

there. You know, there's usually water pots there that you can drink from that kind of thing. So, I mean to some degree it was like that with me. I generally avoided other monks as just whenever possible

um and just preferred to be living in solitude. I the the one monastery I lived at longer than any other place. I lived there for gosh 10 years approximately. Um most of the time I was living there there was only two monks there. Me and one other monk who lived down by the river. I lived up on the hill and he eventually got bitten by a cobra and died. Then I was by myself there for a while.

And so I mean you could have the best of both worlds just have uh live in like a very

crude monastery. I mean still some of the buildings there probably were paid for with monk's money but that monastery property was just owned by the SA didn't have to be paid for. It had been there for hundreds of years. There was like like medieval ruins just right outside this the the boundaries of that monastery where there apparently had been another monastery like possibly almost a thousand years ago.

So,

uh, yeah, I I I liked living alone in

the forest that it was like camping and you didn't have to worry with all the like the culture barrier stuff with Burmese monks and and also the the monastic discipline stuff with Burmese monks handling money. 98% of them handle it. And so it's just like you want to avoid this kind of corrupt stuff in in your practical Buddhism. You're better off just going alone like the horn of the rhinoceros. And I took that to heart and I did prefer it that way. And so I'm just going to move on to Stellar Supreme, etc., etc., etc.'s third question. Could you provide some of the details of the fish pond, like how long it took to dig and the materials you're

using? Well, um, I was digging the fish pond. It's It's I'm done digging it now, but I was digging the fish pond on, as a general rule, one day per week. I mean, I work my butt off at work five days a week. And I wanted to have at least one day of glorious laziness, which was generally Saturday, which would be the day I would I would record these Q&As's. And so Sundays

I would dig maybe I think on average it was about eight wheelbarrow loads. I was I'd use a mattock and a shovel and a wheelbarrow. That's that's pretty much all I used for for digging the pond. And bless their hearts, women just do not

fully appreciate the value of a matic. I mean, you use the matic to chop up hard ground, make it soft, and then you just scoop up the loose dirt with a shovel instead of trying to get that shovel into the hard ground, hitting rocks and so forth. The Matic makes it way easier. And so last weekend, we put in the liner and put water in it. Now there's fish in there. Although two of them were dead this morning. I think they just over ate because I put um some blood worms in the pond. I was going to try and inoculate the the pond with like some biod diversity. And I think that these two big goldfish that we bought, they bought them at the same time out of the same

tank at the same fish store. So, it could be that they were just like had some kind of disease or something. But it also could be that they just both of them gorged on these worms I threw in there and just gorged themselves to death.

So, I mean, dig a hole in the ground, line it with first it was like an put a little bit of sand, then put in like this felt underlayment, and then we got like this super heavy duty pond liner made by Firestone. It's made pretty much out of the same material that like inner tubes are made out of.

And uh eventually we we're going to get some rocks. Tomorrow I'm going to try and set up the the pond filter because the the water is still kind of murky. So, we're going to put a a pond filter with a little fountain in there and and it's off to the races. After that, all we got to do really is just line the the outside with with ornamental rocks. And my sweetheart is trying to pressure me into digging like a a notch around the entire pond even though the liner is already in so that you can put the rocks like down closer to the water. The water level can come up to the rocks without completely overflowing and then you don't see as much liner. But place we

lived at before we had a fish pond and that wasn't done. And I'm I'm kind of resisting the extra work of cutting this notch or all the way around the pond to make the liner a little bit less visible.

So yeah, when it's finally done, I'll probably do a Q&A hopefully kind of late fall where it's not totally sweltering outside with the pond behind me so everyone can gaze upon it in awe and wonder.

And we went out today looking for fish.

I was trying to find some dojo loaches to put in the pond. And

I there was one fish store. We hit

pretty much all the fish stores. There was one fish store that had dojo loaches, but they were the wrong color. I didn't like them, so I didn't get them.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is the last question of the the previous Q&A that I've already answered, and then we're really going to start getting into genuine 153 after this. And this this last question from the previous Q&A that I've already answered is from Nermi. And Nermi says, "What would the Buddha say about illegal immigrants? Do you think he will be in favor of deporting them?" And again, second-guessing the

attitudes or opinions or mental states of a fully enlightened being is pretty much of a fool's errand.

I' I've written made an entire video not too long ago just people are continually asking me what would the Buddha think or what would the Buddha say or what what are the the what what are the mental states of an enlightened being like and it's just it's pretty much pointless.

The only way you could possibly understand what it's like to be a fully enlightened being would be to be a fully enlightened being.

You can try to explain to a dog what being a human is like and the dog isn't

going to get it.

It might pay very careful attention,
might be gazing up at you in wrapped
attention, just loving the the attention
it's getting, but still it's not going
to understand anything.

So what would the Buddha say about
illegal immigrants?

Well, there is a vineyard rule where the
Buddha says, "I allow you monks to obey
kings."

And so,

I mean, from the Buddhist point of view,
you renounce society. If you're a
serious Buddhist, you become a monk or a
nun. You renounce society. You go off
and live in the forest and let

worldly-minded lay people figure out all this political stuff.

So, I mean, I I assume the Buddha would admit that it is the king's right to kick out illegal invaders who are not in the country legally.

I assume he would be okay with that.

It's not like like like you look at X you some of the hysterical posts put up by by Democrats about how you know ICE is the new Gestapo and all this and not really I mean it's they're just enforcing American laws and there is a law that I mean you're going to be in this country you have to be in this country legally

just coming just crashing the border without a visa or a passport or anything and then just going into hiding avoiding the authorities. I mean, that's illegal. And I don't think the Buddha would be opposed to law enforcement. I mean, he would admit that sometimes law enforcement involves unethical activity, especially punishing criminals. There were some really gruesome punishments for criminals in the Buddhist time. I mean, there's some really gruesome lists of some of the like the public execution methods like drill a hole into the top of a of a live criminal skull and pour in molten lead or cutting their skin off in strips. That was done in public back

in those days. I mean, it was well into modern times. Like in London, there'd be people publicly hanged.

People have gotten a lot softer and wimpier now, which is not entirely a bad thing, but it's not entirely a good thing either.

But the Buddha, first of all, it would be, you know, that is not my concern.

It's not the SA's concern. That's for the kings to work out in their worldly

lives, working out their worldly

problems. And I don't think that he

would be outspoken against law

enforcement. The Buddha would not want

to defund the police unless it was some

sort of really bad kind of police. Like the secret kind of police that's knocking on doors in the middle of the night and disappearing people. Maybe he would disapprove of that.

So

that's the end. And like I always always should say at the beginning and never do and I'm not even going to say it now because we're not even at the end. We're just starting 153 now. And this next question is from Trojasiz.

And Taskaziz says, "Is there any way to reconcile capital punishment with dhamma?" No, not really. There is the story of there was a monk who was advising the public executioner to keep

his axe sharpened,
really sharp, and try to just finish off
the criminal with one blow. And he was
he had committed a parajika offense as
in that he was helping someone to kill
other people.

So yeah, you you can't really reconcile
capital punishment with Dharma other
than pretty much like what I was saying
with regard to ex deporting illegal
aliens where I mean that is the king's
business and we are we are just
renouncing society going off living on
the outskirts of society and the
government can just work out their own

[_]

That's that's how you'd reconcile it.

But with regard to ethics, killing

another human being, even like

euthanasia

is not good from a Buddhist point of

view.

I mean, it might be the lesser of two

evils in some cases, but still it's it's

an evil. It is unh wholesome.

So, I'm just going to move on to

Treascus's second question,

which is from a purely materialistic

point of view, wouldn't killing a

9-year-old be much worse morally than a

90 years old. Former has entire life

ahead of him, and the latter has had one

already. Well, from a purely

materialistic point of view, I don't think there is such a thing as morals. I mean, a purely materialistic point of view would be just morally destitute. There'd be no moral code from a purely materialistic point of view, as far as far as I can tell.

So, I mean, from a purely materialistic point of view, ethics are just sort of a social tool, you know, just arbitrarily cooked up for the sake of maintaining society in a more or less stable manner, something like that.

But I mean there would be no universal ethical code from a purely materialistic point of view.

And then from like the Buddhist point of view like strangely the orthodox terraata point of view is is like killing a being becomes more unwholesome the more effort is required to kill that being. So like it it's like the implication is a bigger more conscious being would be harder to kill. You know, it'd be harder to kill an elephant than a mosquito. So that's why killing an elephant is worse. But I don't think it's really good logic. I mean, you could just kill an elephant. I'm not advising anyone kill elephants, by the way, but you could just shoot an elephant with a high power highowered rifle, which would be fairly easy.

Whereas killing that mosquito, you might be rushing through the house just swearing and swatting again and again, missing and missing and missing, just raging at this mosquito. In which case, it would be easier to kill the elephant than the mosquito.

But then again, all that raging and swearing and so forth would be adding to the unh wholesomeness of just going and you're done.

But yeah, from a purely materialistic point of view, I don't think there is any morals other than just like a an arbitrary social construct or a social construct designed to stabilize society,

something like that.

So I'm just going to move on to Trezas

as is his third question

which he says starts off with a quote in

Laos it is illegal for a foreign citizen

to engage in sexual activity with a Lao

national outside of marriage. This

restriction applies regardless of the

gender of the individuals involved.

Cohabitation even without sexual

activity is also prohibited for

unmarried foreign and Lao nationals.

vote. And then Troas is asks, "Are there

any restrictions in that matter in

Myanmar or Cambodia?" Well, I can't

really speak for Cambodia. I've never

been in Cambodia. I my knowledge of

Cambodia is rather limited, but with with regard to Myanmar, I don't think there's anything like this. Um, for example, there's like a a rising sex industry or there was before I left Myanmar. I left in 2018. What changes have happened since then? I really can't say firsthand. You know, I can hear rumors, secondhand news, that kind of thing. But before I I left Myanmar, there was starting to be like a sex industry, sex tourism trying to compete with Thailand to some degree. And I don't think the government really cared. Maybe they were getting kickbacks or making some kind of profit from it.

Uh, I never heard anything like this that it was illegal for um like a Burmese woman to have sex with uh like a a non Burmese man, you know, like a nonitizen in Burma. Um, I've never heard of it. I mean, maybe, for example, it's I've heard that it's legal polygamy. Polygamy is legal in Burma, but I never saw a case of it the whole time I was living in Burma. So, it could be just it's on the book somewhere, but not enforced.

So, let's see here. Did I answer that question? I think I did.

Yeah. I mean, like cohabitation of unmarried people is frowned upon in Burmese society. It may be that they

don't even need to make a law that it would it would just be done by stealth just because you know everyone would have like a low opinion of such of the Burmese person especially you know you got some unmarried you got some Burmese woman living in sin with like any any man and you know she'd be considered to be like a prostitute you know that she would her her uh reputation would just be ruined

regardless of whether the guy she was living with was Burmese or not.

I mean, it was like that in the West up until relatively recently, well into modern times. Then along came feminism.

So, let's see here. I guess I answered that question. I'm going to move on to the next question, which is from Austin.

And Austin is asking

a question about Majama. So, I I just happen to have the Majama fez here.

Let's see. Got this out of the way there. There we go.

So Austin says, "The moola Majama caraka rejects metaphysical absolutes.

This would necessitate an objection to par nirvana, a transcendent state beyond samsara. How do we square this circle?"

Well, the mulamjamaka caraka rejects metaphysical absolutes mainly in the sense of talking about them or trying to symbolize them. I mean I mean really

that's all you can do if you're like
writing or talking is using symbols and
they're just not going to apply to
reality. So all you can really do if
you're being logically rigorous is just
say it's all invalid because I mean you
can't even point I mean it's it's beyond
even pointing a finger at the moon. It's
you can't even point to to ultimate
reality. Ultimate reality is just
completely off the scale. You can't say
a word about it
and have it be valid really. And as my
understanding of Majamaka is along those
lines. It's like you can't even really
talk about metaphysical absolutes or a

metaphysical absolute like nirvana that as soon as you mention it, you just go off the sc you just go off the tracks really cuz it's not valid. You you've tried to symbolize what can't be symbolized.

So in a way I mean majamakica you can't really theorize enlightenment. I don't think that Majamaka Buddhists are declaring that there's no such thing as an enlightened being. There's no such thing as a as a Buddha, anything like that. It's just anything you say about it is going to be invalid. So, you just shut up. I mean, that's that's one of the main points of majamaka is is sort of like Zen or like the atawaga of the

sutin pata where you just shoot down all beliefs. The atakawaga says don't believe anything. Have no views.

no position

and that would include any position

regarding enlightenment. But that

doesn't mean that there is no

enlightenment. It's just that

enlightenment is so off the scale you

can't say anything about it.

And then one way of getting there is

just shutting down all your views

including your views about

enlightenment.

So my understanding of majamas is it

works along those lines. You know, it's

just you just shoot down all symbolic views, including symbolic views that would be considered right view in other schools and including any views about enlightenment or nirvana, anything like that. And all that's left behind is this unthinkable void. And that the reality is there.

You can't think about it. You can't symbolize it. You can't talk about it.

But it's I mean, you can't even say it's there because you're still talking about it.

So it's just radical. It's not even skepticism. It's radical mysticism in the guise of this logic that just destroys all views.

And that's good because mysticism or like direct knowledge of reality cannot be contained in a view. It cannot be contained in a belief, a concept. So you just shoot down all concepts including all concepts about nirvana and enlightenment

because it doesn't help. It just gets in the way. It's like a stumbling block.

So I I hope I answer that question.

Yeah. So I'm going to take the fez back off and move on to Austin's next question, which is Oops. I think I did something to the computer. I put the fez down on my sweetheart's computer. Okay.

So Austin says, "If you take mindonly

idealism as your starting point, don't you think you're closer to Vdanta than Buddhism?" I don't really take mind-only idealism. I mean I'm more inclined to go along with the Aika Waga and Majamaka than Vdanta because Vidanta still makes the mistake of positing this like mind only or positing that I mean positing anything to assert anything you're already off the tracks. You're off the path essentially unless it's like a very elementary level of that path.

So let's see.

Take mind only idealism as your starting point.

Yeah. I mean that's still just

conventional truth.

I mean I don't consider physical matter to be real but ultimately I mean no belief is going to contain reality.

But yeah, videnta I mean if if I weren't a Buddhist there's a good chance I'd be a videntist

but still vanta is reifying the absolute to a much greater degree than early Buddhism did.

Just reifying the absolute regardless of whether whatever you consider the absolute to be including infinite formless consciousness still you have just tried to symbolize that. You think that you're describing it in words and

you just can't. It's just like delusion.

But I would consider Vdanta to be my second choice after Buddhism.

So I'm just going to move on to Austin's third question. If science one day finds out that the mind is produced by material functions in the brain, will it be over for Buddhism? I don't think so.

I don't think that would be nearly as much of a blow to Buddhism as Jesus not coming soon was to early Christians.

So I mean science is never going to prove that

really. It's like Emanuel Kant said, you know, more than 200 years ago, pretty sure that science will never come, no matter how advanced science gets, it can

never come one iota closer to understanding the thing in itself, the highest truth, ultimate reality. Science can't touch it. It can't get close to it. Neither can any kind of belief system. Any kind of symbols are not going to be able to explain or describe what cannot be symbolized without just perverting it beyond all recognition.

So I mean science may have already found out somehow that the mind is produced by material function in the brain. Most scientists believe that. They don't know how it happens. They they already believe it.

But it's that doesn't mean that it's

over for Buddhism. I mean science even if I mean they come up with better evidence for it. That kind of thing still I mean I don't think it's going to undermine Buddhism in any way other than the Buddhists of weak faith who have more faith in scientism than in than in Dharma. And there's quite a few of those in the West.

So I guess I'm just better move on to the next question. I really do want to keep this under four hours if possible. This is from and says, "What do you do for your pond during a hurricane? Fish in the sky with diamonds." Well, I don't think the hurricane would would necessarily kill the fish. I mean, the

wind would just blow it might blow the fence down,

but I mean, it's not just going to scoop up 400 gallons of water and just blow it away. I mean, if it does, well, we'll just deal with that when it happens, I guess. I mean, maybe here is referring more to tornadoes, which might actually just suck all the water out. And of course, if it gets that close to the house, it's going to suck the house up, too. So, we probably aren't going to be around worrying about it after it happens.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Phils.

Again, this is now his fifth question because in all fairness to Phil atheists, he asked three plus maybe a rhetorical question in the previous Q&A which got answered but didn't get recorded properly. Better make sure.

Yes, like the little green bar is still going wiggling on the the OSB or OBS. I mean,

let's see. What was what was I saying?

Feel these. Okay, this is this is Phil

Lee's first question for 153. And he

says, "A Zen monk wrote, quote, there is no absolute reality outside of real things.

Though reality is more than the things that are real, this more

is in the very things. And though this more is beyond the part that can be known through the intellect, it can be known. One draws near this reality of realities when the mind has learned to discard all things superfluous. And he says Philo says don't well I mean yeah this is pretty much in agreement with like my simile of the block of marble. You know every all these statues are contained in the block of marble. The block of marble would be considered like the the essence the reality of the statues.

So yeah, I guess that's fairly good.

See, there is no absolute reality

outside of real things. I mean that's
I mean that's kind of total logical or
something. I mean why would he say
outside of real things? I mean from a
Buddhist from even a Zen point of view
real things is kind of problematic right
there. And then see the reality is more
than things that are real. This more is
in the very things. Yeah. sort of like
the rock the the stone is in the
imaginary statues.

I mean the imaginary statues made of
real rock that are just contained
potentially or conditionally virtually
in that rock.

So yeah, that's one way of putting it. I
didn't I don't really have any objection

to that. Although of course you can't really explain reality in words.

So it just in a way it's just kind of blind people talking about colors.

So let's see here. Let's just move on to Phil Lees again. His next question, how do we know that depth isn't enough to dispel all of Oh, death. I had the the little cursor thing covering the A.

Thought it said depth. How do we know that death isn't enough to dispel all of our comma that results in rebirth? Well, you you can't know that. How how are you going to How you going to know that it does or it doesn't? I mean just going with Buddhist philosophy assuming

certain Buddhist assumptions

then I mean there's going to be a

certain momentum of your mental states

and then if you if that momentum

suddenly gets cut off at death I mean

you die suddenly for example then

there's it's like a conservation of of

energy in a sense conservation of

momentum so that the momentum has to

continue somehow just even though it's

not in this particular form

But I mean, if you want to be like just

a skeptic, you can doubt everything.

So, how do we know that death isn't

enough to dispel all how do I mean, how

do you why even bother with going that

with that? Why not even just deny comma?

There you go. You can just be skeptical that there's any comma at all, that comma even means anything. I mean, most materialist types, they don't deal with karma unless it's like an instant karma video they're watching on YouTube or TikTok or something.

They certainly don't believe in rebirth.

But there have been some people like uh what was his name? Uh Nisarodata

Maharaj. He was he used to say that

there there really is no reincarnation.

There have been some guru types that have denied rebirth. But then again,

Nisarodata Maharaj agreed with the first noble truth of Buddhism that to exist is

to suffer. So why didn't he just result
in the why didn't he just come to the
conclusion that we should all just
autotermminate?

If that's if that's the truth, I mean if
you believe the first noble truth to
exist is to suffer and you think at
death it's just that's it. The suffering
just stops forever.

But Buddhism doesn't teach that, which
is good. I mean, you don't want just all
Buddhists to just autotermminate.

At least some Muslims are, you know,
some like radical atheist, intolerant
atheist or something might be fine with
that. But

I don't think it's I just I just don't

see it that way. I just intuitively based on my understanding of how things work, I really don't think that it's it's yolo. And when you're dead, you're dead.

Regardless of whether there's any comma or not.

So, take a sip of my now cold coffee and move on to the next question

because I really do have to be a little more concise even though I'm not doing a very good job of it. So, Phil's seventh question. If being a monk requires living off alms, then any monk community requires an even bigger lay community to support it. This means that if monkhood

is a requirement to reach enlightenment, then only a certain limited minority of people can ever achieve enlightenment at any given point in time. Is this true?

Well, I've I've already pointed out that even the overwhelming majority of sincere, diligently, wholeheartedly striving spiritual practitioners, monks and nuns that most of them still don't become enlightened. That it's just the way it is. It's like

I I don't know how to say it. It's it's just the way it is. Most beings in this world are not ripe for enlightenment regardless of whether monks have to be supported by lay people or not. That's just the way it is. So the system is

kind of set up based on the the
empirical fact that most people are just
kind of worldly minded normies and
they're not they don't even want
enlightenment.

Not now anyway. They might be praying
for it in some future future time. Sort
of like St. Augustine was, you know,
like praying to God to get rid of his
his sins, but not quite yet. That kind
of thing.

I remember there was this beggar woman
that used to like sweep the grounds at
Mahagande on the big school monastery
and some of the monks would be teasing
her saying, "Oh, you're making such

merit. You're going to attain Nibbana."

And she said, "I don't want to go to Nibbana. There's no tea shops in Nibbana."

And that's pretty much the attitude of most Buddhists, I think, except maybe it's they have like a higher priority than tea shops.

Well, yeah. I mean, it's just the the system isn't like limiting the number of enlightened beings or any such thing.

It's just that the the fact that most beings are not even ready for enlightenment. they don't even really want enlightenment is kind of the that was taken into account when the system was being set up.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Yugu.

And Yugu says, "Please tell us in detail how did you practice deconstruction of a person before having any interaction with it? How did that help you practice and how can that help us in life?"

Well, I I assume what Yugu is referring to when he says deconstruction of a person is that a monk who's being mindful like deeply mindful. You know, in the scene there's only the scene. In the herd there is only the herd. In the like the mentally sensed, there is only the mentally sensed. This kind of thing, the felt there's only the felt. Then

when you're confronted with another human being, then that's you're seeing them. The scene is only the scene. It's just this form that is being seen. If they're speaking to you in the herd, there is only the herd. It's just sounds. And then you're deconstructing the person through just your senses as visual, you know, visual stimuli, auditory stimuli. They touch you, it's tactile stimuli, that kind of thing.

Then I mean that's practicing like relatively advanced dharma. I think most people really couldn't do that at a very very high level for very long.

Um, I mean just naturally you've got just built into your human nature

there's like face recognition and just
you know voice recognition and you know
just understanding what words mean
rather than just hearing blah blah blah.

So

yeah that was I mean how did I practice
deconstruction before having any
interaction with it with the person you
mean? I I I don't fully understand this
question.

Um, but really I mean if you're just
practicing mindfulness in the scene
there is only the scene. In the herd
there is only the heard. In the felt
there is only the felt. In the mentally
sensed there is only the mentally

sensed. Then I mean that just

automatically

deconstructs a person into like sensory stimuli.

I it's just like the result of it of the practice.

So I guess that answers that question.

And how did that help you practice and

how can that help us in life? Well, I

mean you're you're like getting rid of

the the interpretation which is most of samsara.

It's like you are weakening samsara.

You're like diluting it down and then

it's more attenuated. It's easier to see through it or free yourself from it.

Because if you're just wallowing in the

the inner monologue and the interpretations of things, you know, you're just taking everything at face value. You see a person standing in front of you and that's that's George, you know, he's my buddy and he likes this and he doesn't like that and he tells funny jokes and and just on and on and on. I mean, that's you're just inshed in samsara at that point. Whereas you look upon George and it's just visual stimuli, auditory stimuli. Then you know George is is kind of disappeared in a sense and samsara is very much reduced and then it's easier to free yourself

from samsara if you're not just like
wallowing just over your head in it.

I mean helping you in life. I mean, it
just might help you to to not be as
unhappy. I mean, it's like women will
get pissed off at you if you if like
you're cohabiting with a woman and
you're just seeing her as sensory
stimuli,

you know, you're not acknowledging her
humanity, that kind of thing. Yeah, she
might get pissed off at you.

But uh so helping you in life in that
sense I mean you're better off if you're
if you're going to this level of
practice then you're better off living
out in the woods just avoiding other

people for the most part.

I mean this radical practice you're trying to like reduce samsara as much as you can to make it easier to transcend samsara.

And I'm just going to move on next question. This is Stellar Supreme again, etc., etc., etc.

And he says, "Can a monk sleep on his belly?" Well, I don't see why not. I personally cannot sleep on my belly. I mean, when I was a kid, sometimes I did, but I somehow outgrew it, and I just really can't sleep on my belly anymore. I'm kind of sway back as it is, and it makes me even more feel like like really

swaybacked if I'm lying on my belly.

Maybe if I put a a pillow under my belly or something. Maybe I think there's one a few times when I was really sick in Burma. And the beds in even hospital beds are just like a wooden pallet with like a little bamboo mat on the top of that. So I remember I had the first time I had malaria, I pretty much within two days of being on a hospital bed, a wooden hard hospital bed and being not barely able to even stand up that I just wore out all the comfortable positions. And so sometimes in desperation, I'd just roll over onto my belly or something just to be in a position that didn't hurt. That kind of thing. But

there's no rule against him sleeping on his belly.

So, I mean, that's not really a problem.

So, yeah, a monk can sleep on his belly.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Xenithoid.

And Xenithoid says, "Have you read

SunSu's The Art of War?" And yeah, I

actually have. In fact, one of the most

memorable things of me reading The Art

of War was I was traveling with a a guy

named Steve. Steve was had very

generously and kindly volunteered to

drive me from Bellingham, Washington all

the way to California.

And so we were on this road trip

together and he wanted to stop at this ski resort and do some snowboarding. And being a monk dressed in like a brown toga and flip flops, I was wearing flip flops. I usually went barefoot, but in this case I was wearing flip flops cuz it was well below freezing. That's the coldest weather I ever was exposed to as a monk was up on this this mountain at this ski resort. Snow on the ground, ice below freezing. And so I just stayed in the lodge and I remember I was just just this monk in the ski lodge reading the art of war by Sunsu.

Uh so I have read it. Yeah. So the answer to that is yep. So xenoid's next question. What do you think of using

militaristic language in the context of Buddhism? Primarily that which personifies the kacas as enemies to be fought. Well, there are sutas that use militaristic language in the context of Buddhism. Like there's the famous sutta in the sutinipata where before the Buddha becomes enlightened, Mara is trying to talk him out of striving for enlightenment. And the Buddha says, for example, it is better to die in battle than to live in defeat. which is like militaristic language. Also, there's the pasasutta of the atakavagga which has a lot of militaristic language in it. But in a way, it's kind of making fun of

this man named Pasura who's always
wanting to debate people.

So, in in this case, debate is seen as a
kind of like aggression. if you're
you're just trying to pin people down
and and like rub their nose in the their
own faulty reasoning and and like pick
faults, you know, you're sort of finding
flaws in in in their arguments and so
forth. That was seen as a kind of
aggression. So, I mean, that's
militaristic language in the context of
Buddhism, but in a kind of derogatory
sense,
but I mean, there is occasionally some
militaristic language that's in a
positive sense. You know, it's like, oh,

there's the the verse in the dhamapara,
better than, you know, defeating a
thousand times a thousand enemies in
battle is defeating your own sort of
like conquering your own self, that kind
of thing. But using militaristic
language, which personifies the calaces
as enemies before, that's that's really
not a good way of going about it. might
be okay like at an kind of elementary
level, but trying to use like Chimera
Rouge tactics against your own
defilements is I mean you're just
setting yourself up for just like
frustration and hysteria and misery
because it really doesn't work that way.

In a way you have to transcend the
chalias by making peace with them which
may sound like very unharmic
but still I mean it's just even just
being mindful of the calacus. I mean
that's the best way to to like overcome
your defilements is through like the
radical mindfulness. So like some kind
of like anger or hatred you know some
kind of defilement arises note it let it
go. choiceless awareness. You're not
struggling against it. You're not
fighting against it. You're not seeing
it as the enemy because that just
intensifies the struggle and just keeps
you enshed in some sorrow.
I mean, any kind of struggle

really is is going to be of limited value because you're making a big deal of it and you're just sort of intensifying the karma. You're reinforcing it by struggling against it.

Which reminds me of a saying of the multi-dimensional entity called Seth, allegedly channeled through a woman named Jane Roberts back in the 1970s where he said, "You're not going to, let's see, you're not going to end war by hating war. You're going to end war by loving peace."

And and it's kind of the same way.

You're not going to overcome your chases by hating your calas. You're not going

to overcome your defilements by hating
your defilements and struggling against
them as some kind of enemy trying to
eradicate them the way the Chimera Rouge
was eradicating like potential enemies
of the state.

I mean it's you have to make peace with
it and it's sort of like Gandhian
peaceful non-cooperation
but being against something is just
intensifying the problem is just
reinforcing the problem
and like Paulo used to say you know
don't be against anything and if
againstness arises don't even be against
your own againstness
so I guess I answered that one. Time to

move on to Xenithoid's next question.

And he says, "Assuming you have read the art of war, is there anything from that book that might aid a Buddhist in fighting their calacis or is it really only applicable to literal physical warfare?" No, it's not just applicable to literal physical warfare like a lot of cutthroat like economic sharks like like businessmen, you know, corporate businessmen, you know, they would use like Mousashi's The Book of Five Rings and Sunsu's The Art of War as a way of helping them in business, cutthroat business, you know, it's sort of economic warfare. But um I got a book on

the the bookshelf. It's it's an excellent book. It's um the strategy, the indirect approach by BF little Hart and he starts off like the frontest piece. He's quoting Sun Soo and some of the statements he's quoting from Suns Soo is with regard to the indirect approach that I mean the worst thing you want to do is just like for a general is just an allout frontal attack.

That's that's like the stupidest kind of warfare is just a like a a frontal assault. What you want to do is use your strength to attack weakness. You use your strength to attack where the places that are undefended or just like the weak points in the enemy or you you just

try to weaken the enemy and make them unready to fight before you attack. This kind of thing and that can be applied even in Buddhism towards your own defilements. you know, a front a full-on frontal attack against your defilements isn't going to work nearly as well as just sort of like starving your defilements. You know, cutting off your defilements supply lines, you know, demoralizing your defilements before you even really try to eradicate them, anything like that.

Also, in in BF Little Hart's introduction, he's talking about how strategy really does not apply only to

military uh and or even political things. is like even like a like a religious prophet, you know, it's the duty or it's like the job of the religious prophet to do just be flatout direct and then get martyred. And then you've got like a more diplomatic person afterwards who uses the teachings of that prophet in a more subtle indirect diplomatic way to actually spread the word

or just uh using an indirect approach like trying to get your way with somebody, you know, trying to get somebody to do what you want is you just sort of subtly indirectly feed them the idea and let them think that it's their

own idea and then it's more likely that you're going to get your way. That kind of thing.

So, let's see here. Did I answer the question yet? Is there anything from that book that might aid a Buddhist in fighting their chases?

Yeah, you don't want to fight the chases, though. You want to maybe overcome them or transcend them, but again, it's more like peaceful non-cooperation

rather than just like allout attack.

Also, it just reminds me one of the things about

um Sunsu's The Art of War. He's got a

chapter on spies and he says the best spies are people that that look way dumber than they are. You know, a person who looks dumb but is really clever makes the best spy. You know, someone who doesn't stand out, they just kind of look like a potato, but really they're brilliant. Those are the best spies. Not like James Bond types that are going to stand out in a crowd cuz they're so ruggedly handsome or whatever. You want someone who looks like a like a truck driver or like a mill worker or something who nevertheless is brilliant. Those are the best spies. And of course, they have to be like fearless and all that, too. But I only mention that

because it's one of the few specific things I remember from reading The Art of War over 10 years ago.

So, I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from PSA. Again, unlike most Q&As's, I've got the same person like answered twice because the first time was in the previous Q&A and then the second time is in this particular Q&A. We're up to 153 now, which is not prime. Remember that.

Important. You ought to be writing this down.

So, PSA says, "Can you talk more about your romance with fake TIG?"

And there's really not much to say. It's

not exactly a romance as far at least
not at my end. It's just that there was
this person claiming to be Ethiopian who
spoke perfect English with like an
American accent and he was he sort of
joined the Discord server right after
this person named Tig who was like this
chronic like trolling smartass got
kicked off off the server.

And so some a lot of people just thought
that this this person was really TIG in
disguise trolling us again by
infiltrating the server as an Ethiopian
who just happens to speak perfect
English with no hint of any any
Ethiopian accent whatsoever.

And so we had a vote and more people

were inclined to believe that it was TIG
than that he wasn't. And so he get
kicked off the server. But he uh he
obviously wants to come back. But
there's there was like two things that
really were strikes against him. One was
he was meowing a lot. You know, he he
keeps writing typing meow meow. And I
mean that's I mean it's just kind of
something that
that like an adult male is it's it's
sort of like making bird calls. It's
even worse than making bird calls. It it
just sort of demeans a man's dignity to
do that. And it also it kind of it's
kind of like furryish. I don't know if

they have furies in Ethiopia,
but that's just kind of like furry
adjacent when a guy is meowing a lot.
And also it's he's talking about like
loving me and this kind of stuff which
is kind of homoadjacent also. And so
those are like two main strikes against
him. He's stopped meowing. He hasn't
meowed recently, but still he seems to
be burning the torch for me or
something. And I don't know, it's just
it just does not seem entirely
appropriate.

So, our romance, such as it ever was,
is pretty much non-existent, at least in
my end.

So, I'm moving on to PSA's next

question, which is, "What do you think of the reliable and trustworthy DOJ and FBI stating that there was no Epstein list and that he actually selfdeed?

Don't you just love the government? I feel so happy and safe living under their management." Well, there's actually two points here. There's the client list and the selfdeletion.

Let's just say for the sake of argument that Epstein really did selfdelete, but I mean it could be that he was persuaded to fall on his sword, so to speak. You know, it's like they they turn off or like they got rid of the cellmates and everything just to allow him to do that

because, you know, it's like if you don't,

you're going to regret it. That kind of thing. So, I'm willing to be open-minded. Maybe

maybe he wasn't offed. Maybe he was just pressured into selfdeion.

So I mean he may have done it under duress or something but you know that particular situation is you know I'm willing to be open-minded.

So like Dan Bonino and so forth just saying yeah we yeah he did it. So, I mean, Dan Bonino, he's seems to be a straight shooter as a general rule, but then getting to the the ep the client list. I mean, obviously, I mean, I

remember when this whole thing first came down, there was mention, repeated mention of like a video library being seized from one of his properties in New York. And whatever happened to that? It just poofed out of existence, didn't it? So Epstein with regard to client lists and so forth and the and the government saying no there there wasn't a client list even after like Pam Bondi was saying it was on her desk that she'd seen the seen so many videos that were totally disgusting and everything that I mean I don't think there's any intelligent sane person out there who

doubts that there were like very rich people going hanging out with Epstein and messing around with underage girls. You know, it's like P. Diddy, you know, these freakouts, that kind of stuff that I mean, it happened.

So, with regard to the government denying it, it seems like there's two options, two possibilities that for me seem plausible. One is that you have so many of the most powerful people in America were involved that it would just be like nuking the the whole power structure of I mean it it would be seen as just way too much trouble than it's worth. I mean let's just say that there's nothing to it even though

nobody's going to believe us.

So I mean it could be that there were so many people involved that that were at the top that is just we just gotta we just got to not just not say anything you know just nope.

So that's one possibility. Another possibility is that Epstein really was working for certain intelligence agencies. you know, he was sort of helping them with regard to potential blackmail, including the intelligence agency of a our greatest ally, which is a small country in Western Asia.

And it could be that that small country

in Western Asia has made it clear that, you know, if if you make us look this bad, potentially destroying like the relationship with America that I mean, we're going to we're going to retaliate. And it's the custom of this West Asian small country that if somebody hits them, they hit back 10 times as hard. It's just like national policy for them. And so that one also is like, well, best thing to do to avoid just a complete [__] hitting the fan scenario on a biblical scale that we're just going to have to obviously lie and say nothing to see here, folks. Let's just move on and and kick out illegal aliens or something.

And of course our own intelligence agencies may have been involved. It's I mean it seems to be there there is evidence that Epstein was communicating with the CIA.

And so the two scenarios that I mentioned that seem plausible to me um I mean they could overlap. I mean both could be applicable here that a lot of people are saying well Trump had to be involved otherwise he would just expose everything. But even if Trump wasn't involved, I mean, if Trump was involved, you'd think that over the years the Democrats would have said something

would have like the Democrats who are like in control would have at least released that amount of Epstein files, but they didn't. But I mean, even if Trump isn't involved, I'd like to think that he wasn't. I don't know. I mean, he used to be friends with Epstein.

I mean the ep the friendship ended pretty quickly but still he was friends with him for a while

that I mean so many of Trump's friends so many like really powerful important people would be involved that it's just it's just opening a gigantic can of worms and so it's just no we just we're just going to have to you know let's just open the files in 2080 you know

sort of like the the Kennedy the Kennedy
assassination

like information was was like postponed
until everyone involved was dead.

So it could be another Kennedy
assassination sort of thing.

So yeah, government has always been this
way.

I mean, you read ancient history and
ancient governments in many in many
cases were much worse. You know, when
you've got like a sociopathic autocrat
who can do anything he wants, then
things are much worse than they are in
America.

But it is fairly clear that Epstein did

have a lot of rich, powerful associates,
acquaintances

who uh essentially committed statutory
word you can't say on YouTube that they
were messing around with what used to be
called jailbait.

No jail for them though cuz they're
above the law essentially as elites
generally are.

So, I think I'm just going to move on to
the next question. This is kind of an
interesting one from PSA.

What do you think about tardigrades?

They appear to be extraterrestrial
organisms that can be boiled, frozen,
even left in the vacuum of space and
they survive. Where do you think they

could be categorized under Buddhist cosmology? Well, tardigrade is also called a water bear. It's a small invertebrate with six legs, I think. But they're not an insect. They don't have I mean, they look like this roly pololy little animal, kind of like a bear. They're kind of bear-shaped except with six legs and tiny and they're an invertebrate.

So, I've always wanted to see one that I did a a study on myofa as as a college student hoping to see tardigrades. Never saw tardigrades. saw gastroses and kind of reranks, didn't see any tardigrades. And the tardigrade has its own film.

This is something that maybe people who aren't familiar with taxonomy wouldn't understand, but it's like the film is one of the biggest groups of organisms. At the top, you've got the kingdom. So, you've got the animal kingdom, the plant kingdom, the the fungus kingdom. Then you've got like the uh like the protozoan, the protist kingdom. You've got the bacterial kingdom and the archibacterial kingdom. Those are the main kingdoms of life. At least when I was in college.

So below that is the film. Like for example, we humans are chordates. We belong to the film chordata. In for botanist or plants, it's called a

division. In zoology, it's it's a
phylum. So you got mollusks are a
phylum, annelids are a phylum, arthropods
are a phylum, chordates which includes
all vertebrates are a phylum and then
you've got some obscure little phyla or
you got like poriferans sponges this kind
of thing. There's lots of phyla
and then there's some obscure ones like
gastropods kind of rhyssoids and
tardigrades. Tardigrades have their own
phylum and they're kind of unusual
animals. Um, not only are they
interstitial, which means that they
they're so small they live in between
grains of coarse sand in the substrate

of the ocean or fresh water too, I suppose. They also live on moss that tardigrades have like a a symbiosis going with moss, some species, and so they can completely dehydrate. Like when the moss dries out, the tardigrade completely dries out and then they just be go into a state of suspended animation until they rehydrate, it rains or whatever, they come back to life.

So that's pretty much what I think about them. I think they're really interesting and I'd love to see a tardigrade face to face, but it's unlikely that I will because I don't own a microscope now. They're very tiny.

So with regard to where do I think they

could be categorized under the Buddhist
cosmology animals they're animals
they're tirana
or as the Burmese would call them tan
and I mean genetically they're related
to other terrestrial life. You know
probably genetically they're 25%
identical to a human. I mean, probably
more than 25% because we're like
something like 20 20% identical to
bacteria. Just the genetic code, just
like the the the biochemistry
of life on Earth is pretty similar
throughout all living things. You know,
it's just the way it evolved on this
planet, the genetic code, you know, the

the like the the proteins and everything, just the way respiration works, you know, just the biochemistry of life is very similar throughout the the whole living world on this planet. And if they really did come from outer space and just evolve separately from us, you'd think there'd be a way bigger difference between us. Like some of the biochemistry would be radically different.

So, what do I think about tardigrades? They're fascinating little animals. And where do I think they would be categorized under Buddhist cosmology? Animals. So, I'm moving on to the next question. This is from Romeo. And Romeo

says, "What is your knowledge and opinion of the type of deism that many of the US founding fathers favored?" And I'm just making sure we are recording and that my microphone is still. Is this working? Is it work? I should really be doing that this time after last time. So, I'm not really an expert on disism. My understanding of disism as opposed to theism is that deists believe God created the world. God created the cosmos including like the laws of physics and just kind of set it going as like a clock. You just sort of uh it's sort of self-maintaining afterwards. and then he just steps back and he doesn't

intervene. That's I think that is what Romeo here is referring to as deism.

That God created the world miraculously and then just kind of step back and and no longer intervenes or does so very rarely. You know, he's not controlling the weather, anything like that.

Possibly not even answering prayers. He just created this world as a kind of machine or this this this universe and then he just kind of sitting back and watching things happen.

So what is my that's my knowledge of it. I'm I could be completely wrong. I could be confusing that with something else but that's my educated guess I suppose. And what is my opinion of that type of

dism? It was kind of a modern approach to an attempt to reconcile the existence of God with science that, you know, both can be true if you just admit that, you know, God created the cosmos and then just kind of let it run itself and just step back and is no longer intimately involved with the goings on on this planet. you know, he's he's aware of what's going on, but he's not intervening much, if at all.

So, my opinion of it, I mean, I don't really follow that approach.

Um, I mean it's kind of a step towards the kind of theism that you would find like in videnta where there's where there

is like a capital G god but the capital G god doesn't have any like favorites or desires you know any any intentions really you know just all is permitted but I do think that that dismodern or mid modern deism like 18th century deism was I mean it had a bad rep there a lot of people would just be like like it would be like a slur calling someone a deist you know you're trying to denounce them by calling them that but I think it was an attempt to reconcile this growing body of scientific knowledge with like traditional Christian belief in God that okay look everything seems to be following rules that are increasingly being understood

by scientists or at least observed and turned into mathematical models and so forth.

And so, well, all right. So, maybe there's no miracles now, you know, it's just science is describing what God set up for this universe, that kind of thing. So, it's understandable. I don't I don't really I'm not a deist but I can kind of understand how people would come to that conclusion especially after science was gaining ground and standard Christian explanations for the world were losing ground you know starting with Galileo or before Galileo.

So I think I'm just going to move on to

the next question. This is from Yosh
Buouie. Is that how you say the name?
Yosh Buouie. and he says, "What is the
nature of your dot dot dot thoughts with
regards to game theory?" And I know very
little about game theory. I've never
studied up on game theory. I was never
particularly interested in game theory.
I wasn't interested enough to actually
study it enough to know what game theory
is all about. It's some way of working
out odds or likelihoods
um sometimes or presumably based on
human motives. and so forth. But really,
I am no authority at all on game theory.
I'm not fully persuaded of what it is.
And I wasn't even inspired to look up

the meaning of game theory like I was with regard to the no true Scotsman fallacy.

So, sorry Yosh Buoie, no idea on that one. And I'm just moving on to the next question.

And this is from Sedarta Lohachita.

And Sedar loachita says don't you think that the rise of Indian philosophies in the west such as Buddhism or advite vanta could lead to a sort of

Indianization of the west or third worldification of the west and then he continues for example ever since the time of the British Empire it was British it was Indian laborers brought

by the British as nearslave immigrants who built the railway from Egypt to South Africa.

up to the present day with Elon Musk calling for more and more immigrants from India. Every year around 2 million Indians immigrate mainly to Europe or North America. So that's just a little bit of commentary there at the end. The question is here at the top. Don't you think that the rise of Indian philosophies in the west such as Buddhism or Advite Vidanta could lead to a sort of Indianization of the West or third worldification of the West? Well, one thing you got to bear in mind was that India at the time that Buddhism

arose and Vdanta arose was not really a third world country. I mean, India and in the Buddhist time was kind of was pretty much the zenith of of civilization in my opinion. I really to in some respects world civilization has been going downhill since the time of the Buddha in certain respects not in all respects. We don't have grizzly public executions anymore for example. We do not have the rise of sociopathic autocrats at least not yet.

So I mean India in the Buddhist time or at the time of Shankara was very different from India now partly because you had the the Indo-Arians the

invaders who set up the cast system and
they were the upper casts and you know
the the dark skinned smaller

what um the dosus

you know they were like the the sudras
and the and the outcasts.

at the time, you know, it was almost,
you know, sort of European in a sense
and some of the some of the aspects like
in the Buddhist time, you know, you had
like oligarchic republics and so forth
pretty much like was going on in Greece
around the same time and the religion
was similar to Greece. And the culture
was similar to Greece. And like when for
example

um like Alexander the Great, I mean he

had a hard time defeating Indians like King Porus at the Indis River. It took some doing to defeat Porus and Alexander treated him with great respect even after he lost just because he respected what a good general he was and like the level of civilization and so forth. Then after Alexander's time you had like the uh the tomic empire of which extended from western Asia to the borders of India at first and I mean they the the Indians were able to defeat the Greeks in battle at the time. So I mean they were a world power pretty much. The Morian Empire didn't last very long, but it was a powerful nation.

It could defeat the Greeks at least sometimes.

So I mean it was sort of like a
a rising flowering kind of vibrant
civilization at the time and then
gradually after being like conquered
over and over again by various invaders
that is and then just sort of the
interbreeding of the the Indo-Arians
with the the Aboriginal peoples there
and just producing just sort of like
this brownskinne d uni almost uniform
population that
not not as much diversity I suppose
that India has declined
but I mean you read something like
there's a book by a man named Basham the

the the wonder that was India I mean

India in ancient times

it was really an advanced civilization

relatively speaking

So

the rise of Indian philosophies in the

west such as Buddhism or Advaita Vedanta

I mean those were products of India at

its peak.

So yeah I don't think that it's that

Buddhism or Advaita Vedanta being

introduced into western

philosophies into western culture is

going to have a bad effect necessarily.

In fact, it seems to be positive like

Buddhism coming into the west. I mean,

the people of the West are just like
distorting it, watering it down, kind of
perverting it to some degree.

But still, I mean, it's the West that's
[—] up Buddhism, not Buddhism that's
[—] up the West.

So, yeah, I don't think that that's
that's likely to happen. certain other
aspects of modern Indian culture you
know like the nepotism that you hear so
much about that kind of thing could have
a adverse effect on western culture but
yeah I don't think that Buddhism or
adviteto vidanta are going to have an
adverse effect on western culture so I'm
just going to move on to Sedarta loha's
next question

why do you think the average Indian worker it's so I think it's supposed to be is is so submissive and without any desire to struggle for rights and dignity or freedom like the Mexicans or South Americans in general. They don't comply, just obey. Or is it says they don't complain? So does that mean they don't complain? Maybe that means they don't complain, just obey for that many companies from tech firms to construction ones are fighting over them. I've never heard of an Indian like immigrant working in a construction company.

In fact, I mean I've been working like

in sheet metal shops and trucking and now a trucking company. I mean you just almost never see Asians then even as customers

whether it's West Asians, South Asians, East Asians, they're just not really that involved is pretty rare. like to have like a an East Asian customer at a sheet metal shop. I mean, that's remarkable. The guys in the shop would be like mentioning it to each other.

Well, you see that guy, you look Japanese or something.

But let's see here. Why do I think the average Indian worker is so submissive and without any desire to struggle for rights and dignity or freedom? really

not that acquainted with Indian workers
other than occasional telemarketers or
you call for assistance with regard to
something and you're talking to somebody
in Mumbai

that kind of thing but I don't really
have a lot of experience with Indian
workers. I've heard that I mean one
thing about Indian workers is that you
get one Indian in charge he'll just fire
all the non-Indians and just hire
Indians. I've heard that rumor before
more than once.

So I mean that was not entirely
submissive. Yeah. It may be that Indian
culture is sort of like Burmese culture

where you just kiss the ass of
superiors. You you can be aughty and
tyrannical towards inferiors but the
people above you, you're just obsequious
as hell. You just kiss their ass.

So, I mean that could be a certain kind
of Asian traditional thing,
but once once you have an Indian in
charge, he's not going to be that meek
and and mild anymore necessarily.

So, let's see here.

Yeah, I that would be like my my
explanation.

I guess that's that's like my guess at
an answer on that one. And I have to be
concise because we're already two and a
half hours into this and so I'm just

going to move on. Next question. This is from Gnostic Rucker or Ganostic Rucker and he says, "Do you think the process of gaining wisdom is a kind of instantaneous process, a flash of wisdom if you like, or is it a slow incremental process, a kind of piecing together in a jigsaw like fashion, a testing of theory to see how it stands up to the light of day-to-day life? Perhaps it's a mix of both. What is your experience in that process?" the gaining of wisdom. It seems mainly gradual. I mean, if you become enlightened, then that would be a quantum leap. You know, it' just be an infinite jump from unenlightened to

enlightened. But you can still have I mean, the veil gets like thinner and thinner, but still ultimately from unenlightened to enlightened would seem to be a quantum leap.

But with regard to gaining wisdom in general, I mean going with Buddhism or Hinduism, any system that believes in rebirth and a kind of spiritual evolution,

then it's going to be gradual over many many many many lifetimes like Rahm Das who's speaks mainly from a Hindu perspective talks about how um like the the evolution of wisdom in in an individual or like you a a reborn stream of individuals

start. It's like a clock. You start at midnight, you know, and just one minute past midnight. That's like the beginning of a new karmic stream. And it's getting farther and farther away from the absolute at 12. You know, it's it's it's getting farther and farther away, just deeper and deeper into samsara as consciousness develops. But wisdom, you know, it's the wisdom really isn't keeping up with the cognitive development. So that like getting into into animal realms and so forth that they're just getting deeper and deeper in meshed in some saric quasi reality or pseudo reality until you get to six. And

then once you get to six and start going back up towards 12, then gradually the wisdom is catching up again and you're getting actually getting closer and closer to realization of the absolute again. So I mean in that sense obviously it's extremely gradual possibly lasting millennia and so it's not going to happen all at once. I mean sometimes you do have a flash of insight you know it's just all of a sudden something clicks you know you have this aha moment sort of thing that happens sometimes that that can be triggered through meditative insight you know just meditation can help that along but sometimes it's just sort of a

gradual thing you have to learn
like uh there's a a wise monk in Burma I
don't know if he's still alive Muhammad
who says I mean there's some things you
can only learn when you're old that kind
of thing. So that would be a kind of
wisdom that's gradual and it's you know
it's it's more of the second kind that
agnostic rocker is talking about here
like the slow incremental process
but it could be a slow incremental
process of little like flashes that that
still are you know it's like an
instantaneous increment kind of a thing.
It can happen that way too but gradually
I mean it's like the veil the samsara

just kind of gets weaker and weaker
which is a gradual process.

So I mean that can happen too. So yeah
it's uh let's see it's a mix of both I
would say.

And so I'm just going to move on to the
Nostic Rocker's second question which is
which Hindu texts move you although the
philosophical terminology on the surface
of things is utterly at odds for example
the infinite unique self merging with
the godhead of Hinduism in contrast with
the eternal no self of Buddhism
disappearing or vanishing into nibbana.

I was or am profoundly affected and
moved by Ashtavakra Gita

Chundamani and the Aaduta Gita. What are

about your own experience with a variety of Hindu texts? Well, I've never read the Ashtavakra Gita, never heard of the Vivea Chundamani and uh never heard of the Aaduta Gita to my so I mean I'm completely unfamiliar with any of these texts that Gnostic Rucker has mentioned partly just because my my exposure to to Hindu scriptures is limited to the main most popular ones like I've read the Bavada Gita more than once and I've read all of the the main upanishads I've read like excer excerpts from the rig va for example and those would be pretty much the only like scriptures that that move me um bavada gita is

profound

the principal upanishads for the most part have a lot of profundity in them um and besides aside from that then it would be like modern stuff like miracle of love stories about nim karoli baba that kind of thing those I mean That's probably the most moving that book edited compiled by Rahm Doss about Nim Kuroli Baba. That's the one Hindu text not scripture. It's like a mass market paperback, but that one I have found the most moving from a a Hindu point of view. a lot of Ram DS's stuff that he wrote way back in the day back in the 1970s.

I mean, that's moving cuz it's it's like

he I mean, he's talking about his first
firstrand experiences and he was moved by
it and you just you can't help but he's
like a good teacher who's really um
enthusiastic about what he's teaching
and so you can't help but catch some of
that enthusiasm if you're in tune with
what he's saying.

But with regard to like scripture, I
guess it would just be the bavagita and
and some of the principal uponadots.

So let's see here. And with regard,
yeah, the surface of things, the
terminology on the surface, yeah, it's
it's at odds, but the highest truth, I
mean, the name that can be named is not

the eternal name. So, you're going to have to come up with some way of explaining what can't be explained just as almost like a unnecessary evil or something.

So it shouldn't be too surprising that different spiritual movements, different spiritual systems may disagree with each other even though the the highest attainments are pretty much you can tell that they're trying to describe the same essential attainments.

Like the upanishads are trying to explain the same thing as some of the Buddhist metaphysical texts or mystical texts. And it's just the starting samsaric assumptions differ and so they

have to use different language or St. John of the cross from a 16th century Roman Catholic perspective is describing a lot of the same very exalted meditative states as a Buddhist text is describing. But of course he has to use 16th century Spanish cultural assumptions which are of course going to wind up with very different ways of explaining things. Even though the experience itself may be identical or close to identical still it's just the cultural the cultural environment is going to cause different ways of explaining things.

So, I'm just going to move on to Gnostic
Rocker's third question.

And it's he says, "It occurs to me more
and more as time passes and as I meet
more and more people that the vast
majority of people just do not like or
have no interest in philosophical
questions, nor are they overly
interested in other poetic literary
approaches to wisdom. and being in this
body and mind in time within this
experience. They'd rather be discussing
movies, the life of the stars, a
clichéed political fake figure, or some
TV or sporting sensation. Have you found
that to be true as well? Yeah, I've
found that to be true. I mean, most

people, they're not into philosophy.

Philosophy is essentially involves tearing down common sense realism. Most people are living in a state of common sense realism. a chicken, a dog, they're living a sense of common sense realism. You just take everything at face value. It's all real.

And most people are are operating at that level. They might have a deep intuitive feeling that that's not enough. That that's not the whole story. But still, the average person are just enshined in samsara. It might be that most of them haven't reached all the way to six o'clock yet.

So yeah, it's it's like philosophy threatens your view of reality if you're not philosophical. If you're just a common sense realist and just take everything at face value that your car is ultimately real, money is ultimately real, you this, you know, houses, people all ultimately real. Then philosophy which starts to question that is like sort of undermining your world. It's like threatening your existence in this subtle scary way.

And I remember when I came back to America, I think it's from from Burma the first time, this is back around 1997.

Um it was like people that I'd be

talking to it they almost never asked me what it was like living in Burma. They instead, have you seen this movie? this is a really good movie or this is a great TV show that's on and they'd just be wanting to go on and on about this movie that they really liked and you know I just I was a monk in robes just come back from living in tropical Asia for x number of years and it's like they they weren't really interested but then again it's it's just sort of like alien to their to their world you know they don't can't really relate to it it's just something that they you know they don't wouldn't even know what questions

to ask maybe in some cases.

So yeah, but I did find that to be true as well. And I'm moving on to the next question. This is from Ruie. And Ruie says, "Did you ever hear of a Burmese lady renunciant called Ajan Nabe?"

I think she lived sometime between the late 19th century and maybe the mid 20th century. Ajan Nabe was a specialist in Abid Dhamma and the teacher of my own Abidama teacher in Bangkok, a most venerable Thai lady known as Ajan Sujin. Saturday sessions with the Ajan served to cover a lot of ground and I am truly grateful to her for providing a no holdsbored environment for Dhamma discussion. At the time I was still

learning leaning more towards Vajraana
and interestingly Abidama helped me turn
more to the sutas.

So it's kind of weird. It's she's a
Burmese

nun I suppose or maybe a Burmese like
eight precept yogi.

Um but Ajan is not a Burmese word and
nabe is not a Burmese name. So if there
was a Burmese woman who moved to
Thailands in those days, she changed her
name and I've never heard of her in in
Burma. I mean, she's not a thing in
Burma. She may have been born in Burma,
but apparently she adopted a Thai name
and was like a Thai citizen or subject,

you know, an inhabitant of Thailand and had was not a thing at all in Burma.

So yeah, I've never never heard of her before, but it is true that the Burmese are like the Abid Abidama scholars par excellence.

So that part rings true. I'm I'm not doubting that there was a Burmese woman who renounced the world. Maybe she was even ordained or became a um like a eight precept or 10 precept nun in Thailand and nobody had ever heard of her in Burma.

I don't know. I never heard of her. I've never heard her mentioned. Probably most Burmese people have never heard of her.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next

question. And I think we actually are kind of getting somewhere near the the bottom of this scroll, this immense scroll of more than 60 questions.

So, this is from Dama River. And Dama River says, "Have you ever gone on a pilgrimage to the four holy sites, Lumbini, Bodgaya, Sarnat, and Kushinagar? How was it? If you haven't been to all four, have you visited any of them? How was that experience?" And I seem to see that there are four question marks here.

So, let's see. First question, first sub question. Have you ever gone on a pilgrimage to the four holy sites? Um,

yeah. Before I went to before I went to
Burma,

um I was a monk ordained at a Burmese
monastery in California, Tomulu Kaba
Monastery in Boulder Creek, California.

And then um I was really like
disillusioned and dissatisfied with the
the Dhamma scene there.

And so when one of the senior seats in
the Tom Pulu tradition, his name is he
was called Pakoku Seattle, although he
also went by the name of Tom Pulu

Chelton Doya Seattle. He came to

America. I wanted to go back to Burma
with him. Some of the senior monks at
the monastery in California, advised me
that the [_] was hitting the fan at in

California, which is often the way it is in Western Dharma scenes, especially maybe California ones. You know, it was like the board of directors were located in San Francisco.

And it was just all kinds of chaos erupting at that monastery. the like the Burmese supporters were in open revolt against the board of directors and trying to take over the monastery without realizing that you can't just take over property from like the legal deed owner of the property, that kind of thing. It was like the uh classic textbook case of schizophrenia in in a German nun that was there who was making

trouble and just all kinds of problems there. And so I went back to Burma with Pakogus.

And on the way to Burma, before we got to Burma, we spent a week or two in in Japan. And then we spent like 10 days in Thailand. And then we spent like three weeks in India and we went on the the pilgrimage there. Then went back to Thailand for another 10 days and then finally went to Burma. And we went to three of the four holy sites because Pakoku

didn't want to go to Lumbini which is in Nepal because he tried to go there before and for some reason they would not grant him entry into Nepal that it

was some kind of visa hassle he was having and so he was anticipating that that might happen again and so we went to Bodgaya Sarnat and Kushinagar plus we went to a bunch of other places you know we went to the ruins of Nanda university and Wesi and we went to uh uh Sabat, you know, and went to the some the famous monasteries that the Buddha stayed at, you know, the Jeta Grove, we went there. We went to the Bamboo Grove. We went to Vulture Peak. I looked for the Black Rock where Venerable God um became enlightened through self-termination, but I couldn't find it. that was right next to um Raj Gear which

used to be Raja Gaha near near Vulture Peak that sort of thing. So we went to a bunch of places but we never went to Lumbini in Nepal because the the Seattle who was leading the expedition um wanted to avoid any potential like visa hassles that he had had in the past.

So how was it? It was fine. I mean, it was like Bodga Gaya was one of the first places we went to and it was like it's either going to be like this sacred place that's just glowing with with spirituality or it's just going to be like this old temple made of rocks and it kind of was both at the same time. I mean, the beggars there are just I mean, they're really it's it's sort of

like gad flies or something. They just hound you relentlessly. A lot of places in Burma it's or in India on the I mean there's just you just get like harassed by beggars or just people wanting to get money out of you somehow or another.

That was one reason why I couldn't find the black rock. I didn't want to ask anyone to help because if they help they're good there's a good chance they're going to stick their hand out for payment after they help you. And being a monk I didn't have any money. being a like a strictly practicing monk, I didn't have any money.

So, um, Bodga Gaya was it was

interesting.

I mean, I went around to not just the Burmese place and the Bodhi Gaya itself, you know, the the Bodhi tree, went around to some of the other monasteries. the the Bhutanese monastery really was one of the most impressive just like with regard to the architecture and the the decorations and so forth. Um let's see I went to uh well before we went to Sarnat we stopped in Varanasi or I went to the burning ghat and that was that was impressive um just seeing corpses burned. I mean, I'm not going to go into details. We just don't have time. But that was impressive. Um, see what else? There was

another one.

One place we went to, now I can't think of it,

but

okay. So, let's see. If I haven't been to all four, have you visited any of them? Yeah. And how was that experience?

Yeah, that's you get the condensed version, but yeah, I have been to three of them, the ones in India.

Um, I mean, there was one experience, I'll just throw it in as a total digression, even though we don't have time for it, that one time the all the other members of the expedition went to a restaurant. And being this like

hard-nosed monk, I didn't want to go into a restaurant. So, I ate in this matador mini bus where we were traveling in this matador mini bus. And there was a big fly this like inside the inside the mini bus with me. I'm by myself eating my meal. Everyone else is at the restaurant

and I'm worried a little bit that this fly is just going to land right in my tea. You know, you had like this milky special tea stuff or maybe it was coffee. I don't remember now. It was good and I wanted to drink it. And of course, the fly just landed right in it. And this was like in I mean this was like

a place where that fly could have been
anywhere. I could have been like licking
the sores of a lepous beggar right
before landing in my coffee, but I
wanted to drink that coffee so bad. I
was willing to risk it. So, I just got
rid of the fly, you know, flicked the
fly out of the out of the coffee and
drank it anyway. It was my greed
overcame any kind of common sense cuz
that fly could have been anywhere. Just
feeding on diseased dung or something
right outside the mini bus for all I
knew. I think that was some vasy visily.
So I'm just going to move on. Next
question after that totally totally

uncalled for digression. And this is from Moambo. And Moambo says, "What are your thoughts on human biases?"

But that's not that's not the whole question because he's got there's an essay here. Every person has their own beliefs and ideologies and it infiltrates into their dharma. like you have a right-wing bend so you would think Buddhism of of the left is not the right one and vice versa someone on the left would think your Buddhism is not the right one I personally believe there is no right view but only rejection of all views right and wrong views are subjective and a person cannot detach themselves from their culture and

personal biases yeah including an enlightened being to some degree while talking about Abidama with Brian you told you don't believe Abidama doctrine is not the right one but according

According to Burmese, it is so at the end of the day, a person believes what he wants to according to their biases.

If a woke person reads Buddhism, he will think Buddha is leftwing. If a redpilled person reads it, he will think Buddha was a right-winger. How can one detach themselves from their innate nature and biases?

Okay. Well, first of all, I'm I'm really not particularly right-wing. I mean to

to a like the far left, anyone to the right of Karl Marx is just like a a fascist Nazi right-winger. So I've been accused of it many times. But if I take those political compass tests, I I generally wind up pretty close to the middle.

So I mean I'm like a classical libertarian, something like that. But that's that's fascism from the from the point of view of a lot of people nowadays.

So let's see human biases. It's uh yeah I mean right and wrong views are subjective and a person cannot detach themselves from their culture and personal yet to some degree even

enlightened beings are just going to adopt for the sake of convenience if nothing else the assumptions of their culture at least to a a profound degree. So let's see.

I guess the main question here is how can one detach themselves from their innate nature and biases?

Well, you do it mainly through through mindfulness.

I mean it's to some degree it's always going to be there.

I mean you just you're a product of your culture. Even if you detach from that, you detach from your personality, the personality is still going to be there

culturally conditioned.

So I mean one thing you do is you leave society which is where like the cultural conditioning took place. You leave society, go off alone into a cell or a forest or whatever. I mean, that helps to separate you from a lot of it, and you just don't get embroiled in politics and so forth. If you're a monk living in a forest, you know, you just leave that behind. That gets rid of a lot of biases. You're still going to have biases, though. I like certain foods you're going to like, certain foods you're going to dislike. You're going to dislike noise. You're going to not like the loudspeaker blasting in the distance

at the the local village. this kind of
thing. You're still going to think like
I mean if you're American, you're still
going to think like an American. I mean
I was trying to be like an ancient
Indian monk but still I mean ancient
Indian monks had no knowledge of Led
Zeppelin or Gilligan's Island which is
stuff that's going on in my mind a lot.
I mean, I don't obsess on Gilligans
Island, but still, you can use Gilligans
Island as a teaching tool, you know, or
you can just have in the background of
your mind Led Zeppelin. I remember one
time I woke up in a cave in Burma with
four sticks by Led Zeppelin just

pounding away. And it was like when I woke up, it was still it was pounding so that it I got the distinct impression that it had been going since before I woke up. It was just there. four sticks has really pounding drums in it.

So let's see here.

How can one detach themselves from their innate nature and blast? You have to do it through mindfulness. It's like in the scene there's only the scene. In the heard there's only the heard. In the felt there's only the felt. In the mentally sensed there is only the mentally sensed. So you just see it as I mean you don't identify with it. It's just mental states are arising.

You know, you get some food that you don't like in your bowl or some lady pours soup right all over the cake that was already in your bowl. He's great lady, you just poured soup all over my cake. But still, it's like if you're being mindful, you just watch that that thought arise and it's not you. It's just the thought is arising.

And if you master that, then it's like there's this person who's just going through the motions, just nature taking its course while your mindfulness is just detached from that. It's still there. It's just you're detached from it. Like pain, for example, you can feel

pain. You can detach from it. It's just a sensation that is arising.

So the easy answer is mindfulness.

And I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from Red Snapper.

And Red Snapper says, "Do you believe the Sea Peoples existed?" And the sea peoples, for those of you who are not into ancient history, were uh a group of pretty much like seafaring pirates in the eastern Mediterranean that helped to bring about the Bronze Age collapse, which was a massive collapse of civilization around the year 1,200 BC. So like the Trojan War was probably an event in the in the Bronze Age collapse. That was the collapse of Troy was like,

well, I guess the Iliad doesn't get to the end, but the Trojan War was like the process of Troy collapsing during the Bronze Age collapse. Greece collapsed. Most of the most of the the the kingdoms and empires in the area collapsed. Egypt remained, but it shrank way down. The Hittites were I mean, their their empire died. A bunch of them, a bunch of them just were wiped off the map and and you just had dark ages for centuries until finally Greece, for example, it started the the archaic age, you know, a few hundred years after the collapse.

But do I believe the sea peoples existed? To the extent that I accept that people exist, then historically, yeah, I would believe that the sea peoples existed. I think the Greeks were some of the sea peoples. I think they were called the Aiawa which was at least by the Egyptians in their inscription in their inscriptions.

The in Egyptian inscriptions referred to the Greeks the Mesian Greeks as the Aiawa which is like a corruption of Aans.

And then you had the Peliset who were like the Philistines before they settled in what later became Felistia. They apparently came from Greece or from from

Cree.

So I mean there were there were a number of these sea peoples that sometimes they would group together form like a coalition to attack some place like Egypt and uh sometimes they acted alone I guess and I guess what allowed the sea peoples to arise was the fall of the manean civilization. I have read that the Manowans had like a navy that protected the seelanes and kind of kept law and order. You know, they would, you know, fight against pirates and so forth. And then when the the Manean civilization collapsed around like 1,400 BC, then it just sort of left this power

vacuum that allowed piracy to just run a
muk. And it wasn't just the sea peoples
that caused the Bronze Age collapse.

There was like long droughts causing
just migrations of people desperate
because the crops were failing in their
own homeland and then you know the sea
peoples were just resorting to just
pillaging preying upon um other other
people to some degree. But yeah, I do
think the sea peoples did exist. And I'm
going to move on to Red Snapper's next
question. And this one was under a a
video I did with Brian. He said, "Do you
believe in the mantids?"

And

um like the mantids would be like an

alien race that are very advanced.

According to my friend Brian, I think the grays are like servants or minions of the mantids. The mantids are just very way more advanced than the grays are. you know, they're just pretty much um advanced beyond human emotion and so forth, which is maybe one reason why they're seen as insectoid, but I am skeptical of the whole existence of mantids and grays and so forth, except as a paranormal phenomenon.

So, um I can accept that it's like this world is being generated by human consciousness. at least the human

experience of it is being generated by human consciousness. And

um I do think that like UFOs, which are now called something else, um and grays and and reptilians and so forth, are just sort of paranormal phenomena that are kind of filtering through into our version of reality, but they're not something that can be like quantified and verified by science, like empirical science. It's just sort of they're getting in through the cracks in the laws of laws of physics and not really following completely the laws of physics that science has to use to verify things so to speak.

So yeah, I mean the universe is infinite

I assume. So that in an infinite universe, anything that's possible is I mean anything that can be imagined is possible. At least in a metaphysical sense. That's David. I got that from David Hume. That's almost an exact quote of David Hume. So if it's possible for there to be mantids, then somehow out there somewhere there's going to be mantids.

But I think the ones involved in close encounters of the third kind and so forth are primarily a kind of paranormal event. rather than space beings from other planets coming here to prepare us for membership in the Galactic

Federation or whatever the hell that like the ufologists many of them are persuaded of.

So I'm just going to move on to red snapper. Third question is why did nana vera terra born herald Edward Muson musen masen I don't know how to pronounce that name. Why did nyan vera unal alive himself and I pretty personally think red snapper already knows the answer to this question. He's just asking this question just so I'll say it publicly. I mean assuming I mean just going with the idea he knows the the lay name of Nyanava. He knows who Nanavira was and he knows that Nyan Vera selfdeleted. He unalived himself. So in

all likelihood red snapper here already knows the answer to this question but it's kind of a like a a spicy gossip kind of reason. So he wants me to talk about it.

Red snapper.

So Nyan Veritaterra was an eccentric existentialist philosopher turned monk. Um he was friends with the first famous Nyanamoli. In fact they were ordained together back around 1950 in what was then called son. And then Nyanaviraa assumed or he came to the conclusion that he had become an Arya while he was he was doing a walking meditation just like philosophizing and

then something clicked. He thought that he had become a sodapana and so he just sort of cut off nyanamole. You know they were no longer in a position of parody as he put it. you know, he was just too far above Nyanamoli to want to for it to be worth his while to continue associating with him. And I mean, his his interpretation of Dharma is just hyper intellectual. It's like you wonder how a frog could possibly be unenlightened when the mechanics of unenlightenment are like even the subjective mechanics of it are so complicated that you'd have to be an intellectual to even understand the explanation.

But anyways, around 1965
after he'd been a a monk for 15 years
and a sodapana for I don't remember how
many years he developed priapism. In
other words, his uh his ingazat remained
in a kam state. Kamanam is poly for uh
an ingazat in this state and it just
means ready for action.

So he he had priapism and he thought
that it was a side effect of a
medication that he took for dysentery.

He had really bad dysentery. So much so
that his intestines were scarred and he
was in a state of chronic pain because
of it. And so he thought that it was pro
that this was a side effect of this

dysentery medicine that he took. But in all likelihood it was like a hysterical conversion reaction that it was probably psychosomatic. And he found it so bothersome, so distracting that he eventually euthanized himself with ether that he somehow got a hold of.

Although probably the chronic pain from the the dysentery scarring was also a factor, but he he considered it to be uh mainly because of this this this common ingazat problem that he was having.

the angata I guess would be poly ingazat is the Burmese equivalent of angata where it's like the uh the you see it would be like the appendage of

generation

might be a good translation of that.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Mr. Pronov

and I'm just gonna just allow me a

minute here. I want to scroll a little

bit here and yeah we're getting close to

the bottom. We're getting close to the

bottom, you guys.

Okay, Mr. Pronov.

Yeah, we we might be this might not even

set any records. It's gonna It's gonna

be close. We're gonna be like three and

a half hours for this one, but this is

one and a half videos. Mr. Pronov says,

"Up until 19th century, child marriages

were the norm all over the world. What were the reasons it stopped? Is it because of industrial revolution that a shift in general consciousness happened?" I don't think so. I think child marriages were the norm all over the world. Um mainly and I mean that was just sort of the natural way of things. I mean it was like that since ancient times and then it stopped in modern times not because of the industrial revolution in my opinion but because of feminism. You had like jealous women not liking that men were attracted to teenage girls. So it's I assume it's mainly due to like resentment and like bitter complaint

from more or less feminist females in modern western society that have caused a certain like approprium. Is that is that the correct pronunciation?

Approprium.

you know, it's just sort of it became like no longer politically correct to do that sort of thing

despite like Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis and

numerous other people well up into the 20th century.

So, let's see here.

I guess the main reason why it stopped would be feminism and just women complaining about that sort of thing

because they just didn't like that men
their age were attracted to women much
younger than them or girls much younger
than them.

So let's see here.

Um

next question. Siobakipad Zidana says
you have said you differentiate
philosophy from religion via worship.

However, in the Zen tradition there is a
saying where they say to kill the Buddha
on the road which means that you
shouldn't rely on any external
authorities to save you including the
Buddha himself. Would you say there is
any anything analogous to this in the
terravada tradition or is worship

entrenched in the terravada tradition?

Well, mainly I said the difference between philosophy and religion is that religion involves worship whereas philosophy doesn't. If you add worship to philosophy, you get religion.

So I did say that.

So let's see here in in the Zen tradition there is saying that when they kill they say to kill the Buddha on the road which means that you shouldn't rely on any external authorities to save you including Buddha himself. Would you say there's anything analogous to this in the terab tradition? Well, I mean, Siobakian sepatra seems to be assuming

that Buddhism is necessarily religion
and not philosophy. But some schools of
Buddhism would be more accurately
described as philosophy than religion.
The worshipy aspects of Buddhism would
be more religious. But the I mean
obviously the more philosophical
iconoclastic
non-devotional
schools of Buddhism like Majamaka at
least as represented in the moola
majamaka caraka that would be more
philosophy.

So would would I say there's anything
analogous to this in the terab
tradition? Well the ataka wagas don't
believe anything have no view no

position.

I mean, that's that's pretty good. I mean, that's kind of zen-like. Some there have been some scholars who called um the atawaga proto majamaka just because majamaka seems to be like a a logical justification for the position of the atikawaga.

So, I means I'm not particularly religious. I'm more philosophical than religious. So for me, Buddhism is more a philosophy than a religion. I mean, there's obviously devotionalistic Buddhists who who worship the Buddha as though he were God or make up cosmic

space Buddhas that they they literally worship.

So I mean Buddhism can be a philosophy or a religion or a combination of both.

So yeah, I mean the Aika would be a good example of that

or I mean there's like the the famous statement of the Buddha gives some kind of discourse and he asks Sar Puta, do you believe what I just said? And Sar Puta says, "Not yet." And then the Buddha praises him. Yeah, that's good.

You don't just take whatever I'm saying and just just believe it.

So I mean there are statements along those lines you can find in the sutas but I mean the atikawaga is pretty

radical in that regard. It doesn't say
kill the Buddha but is it does you know
say you know don't hold any position
which is not particularly religious.

So I'm just going to move on to

Siobanad's

see okay

second question says when you say you
define religion through worship what do
you mean exactly for example does it
mean looking up to someone does it mean
emulating them as that can be seen as
the highest form of worship or do you
mean treating them like a monarch where
you prostrate to the person Because
since the Buddha attained party nibbana,

he isn't going to listen to any person's prayers and he isn't going to save you or help you in any way. As even when the Buddha was alive, he said that the datagatas can only show the way. So I'm curious what worship means in the Buddhist context, especially in Terra. Um, well, I mean, I haven't Let's see. Maybe I should just look up the word worship in the dictionary.

Worship. No, I spelled it wrong. worship and then okay noun the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity or adoration or devotion comparable to religious homage shown towards a person or principle. That would be kind of

that would kind of explain the worship of some Buddhists where they they revere dharma um the way that some theists would revere a god. And then uh the other ones are archaic honor given to someone in recognition of their merit. We don't need to deal with that one. Okay. So worship is sort of like the belief in some superior being or a superior principle in some cases and just sort of like a a reaction to that I guess some sort of reaction to like a superior being or the belief in a superior being. And I mean, if you consider the Buddha to be a superior being and you rever him, that could be

considered worship. You know, just bowing in front of an altar to the Buddha would be worship.

So, let's see.

But still, not all Buddhists would be religious. And I'm not even referring to like the materialistic Buddhists of of the West. Not that all western Buddhists are materialists, but I mean obviously a lot of Western Buddhists are like secular humanists with some Buddhist flavoring at it.

So for them who don't bow to statues, that kind of thing, they might not be particularly religious either. But that's not the only non-religious Buddhists out there.

So let's see.

reverence for what is considered to be a superior being. Although maybe like a someone who hates God, you know, so long as they still believe in God, then maybe that could be considered religious, but it's still the belief in a superior being.

Uh let's see.

Let's see. He isn't going to save you.

Yeah, I'm see where is it? the since the Buddha attained parting nibbana, he isn't going to listen to any person's prayers. I I've already mentioned in a previous Q&A, it was some time ago that I used to know a village doctor near the

monastery where I was staying in Burma and he said that he prays to the Buddha and I I asked him like the Buddha is has attained part in Ibana. He's no longer in samsara according to Terravada. So how are you going to how can you pray to him? and he's not going to hear what you're, you know, he's not going to hear your prayers. And then this doctor explained to me that the Buddha could see into the future. And so in the past, he would look into, he could look into the future and see this doctor praying to him. So that's just a little bit of an aside there. But let's see.

Define religion through worship. Yeah.

Yeah, I mean it' be reverence to some

being considered to be superior, which
for would apply to most Buddhists to
some degree. I mean, if you consider the
Buddha to be a man and you respect him,
that's not necessarily religious.

But when you're causing the Buddha to be
like superhuman, you know, he's Manusa,
he's beyond mere human,
then I mean that would be a definitely
you got your foot in the door to
religion. And then if you're like
revering him in that context,
bowing to his statues, praying to making
offerings, that kind of thing, then that
would definitely be like full-blown
religion.

See, so I mean that's that's close enough, I guess, to an answer. And really, we're we're well over three hours at this point. So I'm just going to move on to sea of Action Cadena's third question which is um I've already pretty much answered this se of action sepsis thoughts on Trump and his entire administration lying about the Epstein files. Well, I don't think his entire administration is lying.

And to what extent they're lying, we can't really know because we don't even know the truth. I do think that Epstein I mean he had clients. It may be that there they destroyed the list and say there is no list which wouldn't

technically be lying because it no longer exists but still I mean Epstein did have people coming to his place and fornicating with underage girls. I mean that's almost certain. I mean Prince Andrew has pretty much admitted to that. And there's there's pictures out there of, you know, these people like Prince Andrew, you know, consorting with underage girls, at least, you know, arms around them and this kind of thing.

So,

yeah. And I mean, it's I've already answered the question in that in all likelihood the truth would just cause

like this huge explosion
of some sort or another.

So I guess just refer to the answer that
I already gave on this this particular
issue and uh

and see of action cad is just
blackpilled in general

you know he's

next question this is from liberating
insights

and liberating insights says

just a hypothetical question on the

nature of consciousness does it still

continue after the death of an arahant

or does it cease to exist. And again,

this this the standard question of like

what is it like to be fully enlightened?

What are the mental states of a fully enlightened being? This kind of thing.

What would the Buddha think about this?

What would he say about that?

So,

I mean, the Buddha himself refused to answer questions like this. Like, does the datagata exist after death? The Buddha refused to answer

So

let's just say you've got infinite formless consciousness, but anything that's infinite and formless transcends duality. Has no way. You got no way of perceiving it. And so from a samsuric point of view, it just doesn't

doesn't exist. Anything you say about is going to be invalid. And if it's it exists in some nonsamsaric way, some ultimate absolute way, you can't talk about it.

I mean, you could say that it just transcends the duality of existence and non-existence and that any individual person is partaking of like an infinitely small fraction of this infinite consciousness, infinite formless consciousness which has to be everywhere including inside us.

So the human mind is just sort of taking that infinite consciousness and like like complexifying and organizing it and

and and utilizing it, but it is sort of like the quantum field in in like theoretical physics.

So yeah, I mean consciousness doesn't isn't created or destroyed going with that point of view unless except for like winaconda

which is consciousness that's being like complexified

u organized and utilized you know that kind of consciousness but terra Buddhism is not really good at explaining consciousness as consciousness mental states are one thing but consciousness as consciousness I'm it seems to me that terra

really can't explain it very well which is kind of understandable because consciousness as consciousness is like the the quantum field.

So yeah, consciousness in that sense, I mean it just persists. It just it might stop being complexified in a certain way, turned into mental states, but still it's like the quantum field, so to speak. At least that's one way of looking at it.

And so I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Jeffrey. And Jeffrey is the last questioner of this this particular Q&A.

And Jeffrey says, "I have heard there is a sect of Hindus that believe the spirit

does not take possession of the body until 100 days after birth. What are your thoughts on this?" And I would be skeptical of an exact number of 100 days because I mean, if it's a spirit, I mean, it's not even really going to be like bound to the same way of measuring time as we are. that time might if it exists at all might be very different for some karmic stream entering into a human body. The orthodox explanation of terravada is that the karmic stream rebirth linking consciousness occurs at the moment of conception. So from a terabat point of view that abortion would necessarily be murder,

but I'm I don't think it necessarily works that way. I mean, I allow myself the the liberty of being skeptical with regard to that. And I am reminded of something Rahm Da said in one of his early books about how um some babies um they become like the the karmic stream enters into them early on in the embryonic development so that when they're born they're just already completely like assimilated to being a baby. And so they're the babies that are crying and acting acting like babies. the stereotypical baby. But then uh Ramdas also says that sometimes the karmic stream won't enter into the into the

fetus until shortly before birth. And he says those babies are the ones that just seem like stoned out. They're just like staring in in incomprehension because they haven't fully assimilated into being a baby yet. And so there might be some truth to that. I think it's possible that the the karmic stream so to speak can enter at different times. I mean it can enter very early on or it could enter late. And it may be that like some cases of sudden infant death syndrome are caused by I mean the baby was born but there was no karmic stream that entered the baby at all. There was just nobody there and so the the body

just stopped working and died because
there was no consciousness animating it.
So I think it is possible that
um the karmic stream doesn't necessarily
enter
um a human being at the moment of
conception of the sperm fertilizing the
egg. There has to be the karmic stream,
the gandaba that enters right then. And
then somehow you've got this complex
human karma inhabiting a fertilized
cell. A single fertilized cell
that I mean that's kind of hard hard for
me to wrap my head around.
I mean, it might be that the karmic
stream just has like this little tendril
attached to this fertilized egg, but

still, I mean, it seems like that fertilized egg would be way too small to hold the complexity of of an of a human being's karma.

So, yeah, I think that it can vary.

That's just my own guess. And it's certainly not what orthodox terravada teaches. But I don't think that 100 days would be more plausible than at the moment of conception. Especially I mean what? It couldn't be 99. It couldn't be 102 every once in a while.

So

yeah, those are my thoughts on that. And I'm just going to move on to sec to Jeffrey's second question which is do

you face a certain direction while meditating such as facing north. Um when I was a monk I would just sit in whatever was the most convenient place and so it could be facing in different directions. Um I think the Buddha was mainly wasn't he face facing east? I think facing east is considered to be the most auspicious direction or maybe his followers would face east and he'd be facing west facing the sa I can't remember now not that I don't think it's extremely important but I do think that facing east is the most auspicious you know it's the direction of the rising sun and all that and in poly you know it's like east is the first direction

mentioned and it's like in fact it's
it's even sometimes I can't remember if
this is poly or yeah I think it's poly
where east is is like forwards west is
backwards north is left and and south is
right that's how they measure it so it
was sort of like east like on a on a map
made in western civilization north is
always up but in India it would be like
east is always up in ancient India if
they made maps

But with regard to meditating,
um I don't do formal sitting practice
anymore, but when I did, it was just I
would just sit in the whatever was the
convenient direction. Like for example,

if if um when I was si living at a certain monastery where I was living in a little room off the side of the congregation hall, then I'd either sit on my sit on my bed and meditate, in which case I was facing one direction, or I'd come out and sit in front of the altar, which would be in a in a different direction. So I mean if there's an altar and you're going to be sitting facing the altar, you just generally just whatever direction the altar is facing, you're going to be sitting in the opposite direction. So yeah, I really wasn't it really was not important to me what direction I would sleep. Although they do have in

Burma um there's like the auspicious side for I mentioned like you got that little niche sticking out of a house where the altar is. I think that would generally be on the eastern wall.

So you'd be facing east when you're meditating too.

And uh I think with regard to sleeping, the Burmese have like traditional ideas. It's better to sleep with your head in in a certain direction, but I don't remember which direction it is.

So I'm just going to move on to Jeffrey's third question, which is the very last question of this extremely long Q&A.

And he says, "As I have heard, there has been 20 21 trillion dollar spent on the war on poverty and 70% has been spent on administration.

Does this make bureaucratic social work wrong profession?" Well, I assume by wrong profession he means wrong livelihood. And technically it would not be wrong livelihood. I mean it's being a like a somewhat corrupt somewhat incompetent bureaucrat but wrong livelihood is mainly livelihood that is like selling weapons selling animals for slaughter selling slaves selling poisons you know that kind of thing is wrong livelihood. there's a standardized list and being a bureaucrat that is working

very inefficiently

is not on that list. So technically um being like a a borderline incompetent bureaucrat or just a bureaucrat just inched in this system that is just designed to be inefficient and squander money which is I mean that's largely what the whole US usid thing was going on with with Doge and all that um a few months ago. I mean it's still going on just Elon Musk has separated himself from it.

Yeah, it it would not technically be wrong livelihood. Um, but I mean it depends on the mental state of the person doing it to determine whether or

not it is like wholesome or or unh
wholesome.

I mean a lot of the people involved in
like corrupt bureaucracies, they have
good intentions. It's just that their
good intentions don't really manifest as
good results very clearly.

So

yeah, I mean this is just the way large
big government tends to be this way.

And uh so it technically it's not wrong
lihood, but it it depends on the
individual's motives and their feelings
and their their mental states in general
that determines whether what they're
doing is bad or good or indifferent. And
that's it. That's the end of this Q&A.

And it's well after midnight. It's like
1 in the morning now. So if you got
questions you think I can answer, no
more than three per episode, please.

Then uh go ahead and ask those
questions. Ask them their questions.

And uh like and subscribe if you haven't
already. And and I'm out of here. I'm
just You guys be happy or something. And
I'm I'm I'm done.

Alrighty then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 154.

I am your host Po Basa. And of course 154 is not prime. It is in fact $2 * 7 * 11$.

This is my beverage.

Not coffee this time. It's just unadulterated bovine glandular secretions.

Take a sip of it now.

H, and I'm feeling somewhat out of sorts. Usually, I got to keep this thing bending the right way. Usually, uh, if I'm feeling somewhat out of sorts at the beginning of a Q&A, by the time

I've been answering questions for 15 minutes or so, I just kind of get into the groove and everything's fine. So, maybe it'll happen this time, too. But it's like today for lunch, I ate these two cheeseburgers that I mean the the patty was of meat on each one was like more than an inch thick and they just formed like this cannonball in my stomach which has has continued throughout the rest of the day.

But I will survive. I have every time thus far and I'm just going to have to keep pulling on this. It's like I need to when my woman is braiding my beard, I need to keep my head tilted like this so that it'll come out straight. But

it didn't happen this time.

And we have like the average like moderate middle path number of questions this time. It comes out to like mid30s I think. So we should be well under three hours on this one.

And so I should just commence to answering questions. I'm fixing to start commencing at any rate. And the first question is from Romeo. And Romeo says, "How deep of an influence did Buddhism have on the beatnics and eventually the hippie movement if it did influence these counterculture movements in which ways?" Well, let's see. How deep of an influence?

Let's see what what's the next question here. I think the next question is is similar. So I might be able to just lump this into a sort of a a compound answer.

Did any of the influential figures in these movements have any influence on you as as you Okay. No. Well then the next question were Jack Carowak and other influential figures in these movements actual Buddhists.

Okay. So I guess I'll just kind of answer all these in sort of an essay answer. I guess let's just see how it goes. So the first question, how deep of an influence did Buddhism have on the beatnick and eventually the hippie movement? Um,

how deep of an influence? Well, I mean some of the at least one of the early beatnics, Gary Snyder was a serious student of Zen Buddhism. In fact, he did the Dharmabum thing and would like get jobs on like some what some kind of cargo ships I guess or tankers to to Japan and do sichins like Zen retreats at monasteries in Japan um just because he was really into it. So probably of the beatnics that were the most serious Buddhists that most serious students and practitioners of of Buddhism, Gary Snyder would probably be the main one. I think he's

JF Jaffy writer in uh Jack Carowak's you know autobiographical novels.

So let's see that's uh getting kind of skipping to the third question though.

How deep of an influence did Buddhism have on the beat? There was definitely an influence of Zen Buddhism on the beat movement. Um, I assume that might have something have some influence on like some of the like Ellen Ginsburgg's weird poetry or like the stereotypical beastro where you've got people just doing offthe-wall kind of music or poetry readings or whatever just sort of like haikus and this kind of thing. um just sort of the monochromatic element of the beat

movement. You know, they just wear like black mostly, which is pretty zen-like. You know, Zen is fairly monochromatic. Zen art tends to be just pen and ink. I think it was partly influenced by DT Suzuki coming to America and giving lectures on Zen Buddhism. And to the the early beatnics, I mean, it was sort of you know, it kind of filled a niche that Christianity wasn't filling and western philosophy. Maybe some existentialism was embraced by the beatnics, but really they were kind of existentialist sort of zen in their approach. At least the early like intellectual founders of the beat movement, not so much the people

that were just following along because it came to be in fashion more or less, at least in some circles.

So yeah, there was definitely a Zen influence on the beat movement like back in the 50s and early 60s and then Romeo continues event and eventually the hippie movement. But the hippies, they seem to have largely abandoned Buddhism in favor of Hinduism. Hinduism was more kind of colorful and garish and less stringent in its morals. You know, it's like Krishna was a rascal, you know, it's it's kind of it just Hinduism suited the hippies better than it than Buddhism did.

So, at some point, the uh the hippie

movement kind of converted to Hinduism
and left Zen Buddhism behind.

But the the influence on on the the
hippie movement, um it's harder to say.

I mean there there was more of a belief
in like karma and aïmsa, you know,
universal love and compassion, that sort
of thing. Um, and just cultivating
altered states of consciousness, which
for a lot of hippies, it started off
with psychedelic drugs and then it was
like people got introduced to like
expanded states of consciousness that
they then wanted to cultivate without
having to rely on the chemicals. And so
a lot of the the hippies went to went to

India. A lot of a lot of Nim Kuroli

Baba's western devotees back when he was alive were western hippies.

So

yeah, there was definitely an influence.

Although I mean most hippies really

didn't care that much about Hinduism. I

mean, they might like um you know, M if

they're they're getting too high like in

the Chichin Chong movie or you know,

just like the the Jimmyi Hendris album.

I can't remember the name of the album.

It wasn't Are You Experienced? It was it

was one of Jimmyi Hendricks's albums

where it was just like this Indian

motif, you know, like East Indian, not

not American Indian. So, it was kind of

seen as cool, you know? It's like that generation, they they just kind of wanted to get away from just the like conservative Christianity, you know, they wanted to rebel against their parents, rebel against just sort of normie American culture. And so they were looking into alternate forms of philosophy and spirituality and just this something that would give a meaning to life.

So there was there was definitely an influence although with some it was much more profound of an influence than others. I mean most beatnicks really they you know they were just following

along with the look you know or most
hippies you know they're just following
along with this counterculture
and you know they really weren't
thinking about it all that much but some
of them did. I mean it's like some of
the early beatniks were serious
practitioners of Zen. Some of the early
hippies, some I mean some of the hippies
in general, they just they became like
practicing Hindus. They're still old
hippies at ashrams in places like
Arizona or New Mexico. Dallas, New
Mexico, I guess, is used to be sort of
like a mecca for for like old hippie
Hindus.

So

yeah, I I hope I answered that question because I'm moving on to Romeo's second question and these are all interconnected. So I probably answered some of it already. See, did any of the influential figures in these movements have any influence on you as a youth? If so, which ones? And how? I did read Gary Snider's Earth Household when I was like in college, I guess. So it made an influence. was something that was memorable. Um, you know, he was he had a lot of the same interests in me. He was interested in in Buddhism and like primarily Zen and I was interested in Zen too before I got converted to

Terravada. Also, he did a lot of like hiking in the Pacific Northwest stuff that I did. Presumably, he he experimented with psychedelics, that kind of thing. Um, let's see. He he was like he I remember him in one of his memoirs talking about how he was hiking, you know, and they were dressed like beatniks, I suppose, and they come across some rustic person out in the woods and they explain to him we're forest beatnik.

Um but I mean see in the movement I guess like the hippies that became devotees of Nim Curly Baba which kind of included Ram Das. I mean Nim Curly Baba was like a guru to western hippies at

least some of them. And then Ram Das after he stopped being Dr. Richard Albert and became Baba Ram Das came back to America he also became uh a guru to hippies you know he just his talks were just teeming with people with long hair and bare feet and bell bottoms and love beads and all this kind of stuff. A lot of peace signs.

So, in a way, I mean, that sort of thing was definitely an influence on me. I used to wish that I was a hippie. I would have made an excellent hippie. I probably would have made an even better beatnick, but I was born too late for that sort of thing. I remember one time

my father, he told me this more than once. He says, "David, one of these days you're going to wake up and look around and realize you're the only hippie left."

And I did have like long wild hair when I was like in high school and college that sort of thing.

Let's see here.

So yeah, I mean the most influential figures in the hippie movement. The beat movement was way before my time and so it didn't really have an influence on me when I was young. I kind of studied up on it a little bit later. didn't read Carowax the Dharma Bums until

just like probably less than 10 years ago.

So yeah, it would be like the whole like Hindu Hindu spirituality coming into the west through like Nim Karoli Baba and I really wasn't into Maharishi Mahash Yogi although the Beatles were you know the Beatles went to his ashram the Beatles I mean in music you had the introduction of like sitar and tabla into like painted black by by the rolling stones And I mean the Beatles I mean the beat from the Beatles probably came from the beat movement you know it's it's they weren't naming themselves after insects not really.

So there was that kind of influence also
you know within me without you. Is that
the name of the song? That's I mean
that's that's like a a Hinduistic kind
of song. It's got some uh sitar in it
even.

So yeah, I think the the biggest
influence on me from like the hippie
movement um aside from just
ideas growing my hair long, you know,
sort of imitating like a latter day
ecohippie, that kind of thing when I was
young. Oh, I got a dog underneath me.
um was stuff like Rahm Doss who himself
was kind of a hippie. I mean he had long
hair and the beard and that the beads
and everything although for him that was

more of a Hindu thing but he fit right in with the hippies and he had hippies just flocking to his talks. So that would probably be the the biggest influence of the hippie movement on me when I was young especially would be through through that sort of thing just sort of Rahm Doss as a kind of conduit to to like Hinduistic ideas through sort of like a a hippie interest in in Hinduism

and so let's see here the third question were Jack Carowak and other influential figures in these movements actual Buddhist well I Gary Snyder was definitely a Buddhist. I don't think he

even I think he even didn't drink
alcohol when all the people around him
were just getting blitzed out of their
mind. He'd be like sitting at the at the
beatenick party just like like in the
full lotus like meditating serenely
while everyone else is just going crazy
all around him. Jack Carowak, he was
interested in Buddhism. He studied
Buddhism. wrote a kind of like long
mahay like quasi mahayana sutra
although um I don't think he was really
practicing Buddhism he was just kind of
interested in it and the whole sort of
existentialist
u you know kind of life is meaningless
kind of approach which is pretty much in

harmony with zen um you know that
appealed to some of them um but I really
don't know a whole heck of a lot about
you know the the early like the founders
of the beat movement and so forth to
know, you know, which ones were serious
Buddhists, which ones were just
interested students of Buddhism and
which ones just didn't give a damn. But
Jack Carowak was definitely interested,
you know, he was like a fellow traveler
and Gary Snyder was definitely he was
into Buddhism. Um, like someone like
Alan Ginsburgg, I'm not sure what his
approach would be.

So, I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from Phil's. And Phil Leys, I think this is like the second time in a row he has asked the transgressive fourth question. And so, his name is going on a list twice.

Really, you should you should take upon yourself the responsibility of not asking more than three questions.

So anyways, Phil Leys says, "Barkclay's philosophy is so obviously a trivial artifact of grammar exclamation point.

I'm starting to think the modern west sucks at philosophy compared to ancient India and China. Probably why it's so good at natural science." Thoughts?

Well, I don't think that Barkclay's philosophy really is a trivial artifact

of grammar. I mean the main point of
Barklay's philosophy is that you cannot
prove that matter exists. That is
profound. It just shook the the
foundations of western philosophy
which I mean that led to like David Hume
which then led to Emanuel Kant which
then led to like German idealism and so
forth. So it's not I mean it might
appear obviously a trivial artifact of
grammar to Philes but I mean he did
bring up one profound point and that is
you cannot prove that matter exists
regardless of grammar.

You just cannot prove that matter exist.

Physical matter that there's physical

matter out there even if no one is
perceiving it which is pretty much of an
assumption made by materialistic
scientists

but you can't prove it. It's just an
assumption. It's just considered to be
an axiom.

So let's see. Starting to think the
modern west sucks at philosophy compared
to ancient India. Well, it depends on
the philosopher. David Hume,

I mean, he's he's a heavy hitter.

Emanuel Kant, he's damned hard to read,
but he's also a heavy hitter.

I mean, even Berkeley, I mean, that one
thing. I mean, he he shot his wad on
just this one philosophical point. He

really didn't make much of an impression in western philosophy other than that one point which I mean people have tried to prove him wrong for hundreds of years now and have failed. There is just no way to prove to objectively conclusively prove that physical matter distinct from mind exists.

And that is profound. And I mean it took Mahayana Buddhists to get to that point after the early Buddhism, the early Buddhist schools just started accepting physical matter as an ultimate reality. They considered mind to be another ultimate reality. They they weren't materialistic to the point of thinking

that that consciousness is just some sort of side effect of biochemical processes in the brain, anything like that.

But

I do think that idealism

uh or at least skepticism with regard to the existence of physical matter really is it it is a wise attitude to have.

So I mean and I think Phil Leys may be overestimating

like Indian and Chinese philosophy that a lot of Indian philosophy really is not all that profound. A lot of Chinese philosophy really isn't all that profound. Just the stuff that makes it to the west is like the best of the

best.

So considering that there are four questions from Phils I'm just going to move on to the next here. What are the best one to three pieces of advice you can give after 50 plus years on earth?

Well, number one, I mean, if if you don't learn anything from me other than one thing, and if you haven't learned it already, it's whenever you are unhappy, it is because you desire something.

every single time whenever you are unhappy whenever you are upset whenever you are miserable it's because you want something and so just knowing that knowing the second noble truth of

Buddhism is uh invaluable
and then sometimes you can just even
like what is it that I want why am I
like I am unhappy now therefore
I want something so what is that and
sometimes if you examine that you
realize it's something completely
stupid. You wanted to go outside and do
something and it's raining. Well, you're
unhappy because you want it not to be
raining, which is a stupid thing to want
because all the wanting in the world
isn't going to make it stop raining.
Unless maybe you've got some kind of
psychic powers.

So, that's a good one. You can just sort
of examine your own mental processes and

sort of in a way almost deconstruct your unhappiness.

You know, it's like I'm in a hurry. I got to get to work. I'm I'm I could be late for work. I keep hitting every red light on the way to work and you're just like fuming and grumbling. Why is that? Why are you unhappy? Cuz you want to get to work on time. You want to get from point A to point B without having to keep stopping.

Easy enough. That's a kind of mindfulness.

So, that'd be one. The second thing, if you learn only two things from me about Buddhism, if you haven't learned them

already,

regret, remorse,

a guilty conscience is always bad karma.

It is always unskillful, unh wholesome.

It always makes things worse.

Which doesn't mean that you do something

wrong. You should say well oh well

doesn't matter I mean if you do

something wrong let's say that causes

some kind of harm to somebody then you

should acknowledge that you did

something wrong you should then you can

say I'll try to do better next time you

know you can try to rectify any harm you

know try to you know sort of make amends

for that but just like kicking yourself

over and over sometimes years later

over something that happen that in all
likelihood you didn't even I mean
sometimes it's just like something that
was a complete accident
you know it's there there's some people
I remember one person was contacting me
I can't remember the the exact story now
it was like somebody
they wanted to borrow his car or his
bicycle or something so he let them and
then they they got in a fatal accident
and it's like he feels guilty because if
I hadn't lent them my vehicle they they
wouldn't have died and it's How could
you possibly have known that? And then
you're just like just it's it's like

you're just kicking yourself for years afterwards. You you considering yourself to be a murderer and a horrible person because of something that I mean it's it's pointless and you couldn't even even known that that was going to happen.

So yeah, that would be one and two.

Second noble truth of Buddhism and regret, remorse, guilty conscience are always

bad karma that are just adding more badness to an already bad situation. And then the third piece of advice that I can give after 50 plus years, actually 60 plus years on earth, just

investigate dharma. I suppose take
dharma seriously.

And uh those would be like the three
best pieces of advice I could give to
the the casual random stranger.

Um just off the top of my head. The
first two pretty obvious. The third one
just take dharma seriously. You know
it's not just this interesting
philosophy, you know. It's it's
something that it's it's a really a good
alternative to one just being the the
normie who is just you has following the
salmon like instinct to swim upstream
spawn and die or you can rebel against
that rebel against norminess

normmyhood

like I did when I was like 16 just rebel
get into lots of trouble I mean that
that's not not a really good answer
either So taking like looking at the
world through a spiritual lens is
actually something that is extremely
valuable.

But you can't just decide to do that.

It's something that pretty much has to
happen to you spontaneously or
intuitively or something like that.

So I'm going to move on to Phil Lee's
third question. How was your faith in
Buddhism so strong all those years? And
did it ever waver? Well, my faith in the
SA wavered

big time. You you see monks behaving
horribly. It's like, oh, the SA is just
so corrupt. You know, it's more than 90%
rotten.

At least that's the that's the
impression I got um many times when I
was living in Burma, especially,
sometimes living in America, too.
um my faith in like orthodox phil
orthodox like scriptural Buddhism. Yeah.
I mean I've always been very skeptical
of that. So I've been relatively
skeptical of the song since I was a
junior monk. I've been relatively
skeptical of like spiritual dogmatism,
scriptural dogmatism, you know, like the

Buddhist equivalent of Bible
fundamentalism.

I've been I've been skeptical of that
for all since I was a junior monk in
some respects even before then.

So,

um, but like the the main points of
Buddhism, I never really had doubts
about that. It just seemed to be fairly
obvious. I mean, once you understand it,
it does seem to be pretty pretty
self-evident. And of course, the
atikawaga is it says don't believe
anything. have no view, no perception,
which I mean, how can you argue with
that? Unless you just insist that I want
to believe in something, but it's it's

obvious. I mean, if you get into a state where you're not thinking anything, you have no view, no perception. I mean just experientially you've been there you know that it is a much more conscious more enlightened state than firmly believing in this group of sentences accompanied by certain emotional feelings you know it's all perceptual it's all symbols

so yeah the atakawaga kept me in robes for 30 years um I mean at least after the first 10, the atkawaga was definitely I mean it was sort of like the gold standard as far as I was concerned. I couldn't really argue. I

mean there's there's some sutas that are kind of going off in tangents that aren't really hammering away at the main themes but like the main themes of the atawaga I couldn't really argue with that. I just deep down have accepted that regardless of, you know, Buddha ghostism and corrupt monks just out making money, this kind of stuff.

So yeah, a lot of it is just experiential, too. I mean, once you get to a certain level, then you just I mean, there's no turning back really. I mean even once you get to a certain point in dharma then even if at the surface level you just get sick and tired of it and you turn your back turn

your back on dharma still you feel it
back there you know it's back there all
the time

it's just once you get to a certain
point I guess

that I mean there there's no turning
back really

so I can have doubts about certain
aspects of the scriptures or a songar or
whatever but the main essence of dharma
I really could not doubt

so I think I'm just going to move on
next question and this is a difficult
one this is Phil Ley's transgressive
fourth question and he should try to do
better in future although he shouldn't

feel guilty but he should determine all
right I I asked the transgressive fourth
question and I'm just going to not do
that anymore
to the test of filthy's ability.

So, Phily's fourth question is what does
nagarina mean by samsara is nirvana?

Nirvana is samsara and this is a nagar
question. I'll put on the put on the the
majamica fez.

I don't get a lot of opportunities to
wear this fez much especially with the
braided beard. Now, I need a calf tan or
something to wear with this to wear with
this whole motif. Now maybe I'll work on
getting a calf tan.

So what does naruna mean by samsara's

nirvana? Nirvana is samsara. I mean it's a difficult question because it's been years since I've read the mula majamaka karaka which is where most of my knowledge of nagarjuna's philosophy comes from. I've also read a book called um nagarjinist philosophy by k venata ramanan.

I might even have it on the bookshelf back there, but I kind of doubt it.

Which is uh it's it's sort of like a commentary on a book attributed to Nagarjuna, but it probably wasn't like the original historical Nagarjuna. It might have been like a disciple of Nagarjuna, who also happened to have

been named Nagarjuna, something like that.

And I've read other books about Majamaka and so forth, but still it all gets jumbled together in my mind with like my own understanding of samsara is nirvana. Nirvana is samsara.

So like for example in the mulama karaka it says what is dependent co-ordination that we call emptiness. It is making known with regard to it is just the middle way. So there it's like emptiness is dependent core rising but then nirvana also is empty and so it's like in a way they're sort of telescoping it down into the same emptiness in that sense it's all empty nirvana especially

if it's in quotes especially if it's an
idea a concept

it's just part of samsara in that regard
so also there's another statement

I'm not sure if this is from the mulama
caraka. I think maybe it is

but if not it's from that other
commentary to a text

which was like the uh praa paramita
shastra or something like that. It goes
everything is true nothing is true.

Everything is both true and not true.

Everything is neither true nor not true.

This is the teaching of Buddha, which is
kind of Zen-like. You know, it's obvious
that Zen has its roots in in this sort

of well, let's see, you start off with archaic Buddhism, which teaches stuff like the Atakawaga, which is called proto majamaka by some scholars, and then uh Terravada or like early Buddhism started getting away from that, getting more and more philosophical and analytical. You know, vibbaja is like a synonym for terravada, which means like the doctrine of analysis, dividing stuff into parts, that kind of thing. And so you had one of the the Mahayana movements is sort of a reform movement trying to get back to the original spirit.

And and then it's like majamaka was sort of like a logical framework to justify

the like the pragny parame. And so,
uh, I don't know where I was even going
with that, but you know, it's it's and
then Zen Zen became they took the baton
and continued on their way.

So, I mean,

statements like that, it's really
um, in a way it's it's it's difficult to
explain is what it is.

But I mean anything you talk about is
going to be samsaric. You talk about
nirvana, nirvana becomes samsaric. So
that's one way of looking at it. I mean
you've got like the the heart sutra
saying form is emptiness. The very
emptiness is form. So I mean again it's

sort of it's it's like my explanation
coffee cup made out of ceramic
right. So which is it? Is it a cup or is
it ceramic? Well, it's both. But cup
does not mean ceramic. Ceramic does not
mean cup. I mean, you could say this is
ceramic. You can also say this is a cup,
but they're not synonyms, but they're
both at the same time. And so my best
understanding of samsara equals nirvana
is samsara would be cup. Nirvana would
be ceramic. Although when you get to
infinite formlessness,
no beginning, no end in any dimension.
Then I mean you can't really say that it
exists or not. It just transcends the
duality of existence or non-existence.

You know, sort of like the beginning of Hegel's dialectic. Pure being and pure non-being are indistinguishable.

So like the Tibetan book of the great liberation attributed to Padma Sambaba says nirvana is just a concept of mind especially if it's in quotes especially if it's a if it's a concept thinking about nirvana that's that's just samsara any idea you have about nirvana is going to be samsaric so that's those would be the two main ways of explaining it and I'm not exactly sure exactly how the Mulam Majamaka Caraka explains it because I read it years ago and it's just been

jumbled up in the same junk drawer with other info about the same kind of stuff including my just my own best interpretations of things.

So let's see here. What does Nagarja mean by Samsara is Nirvana? Nirvana is Samsara. You'd have to ask Nagarjuna I guess or read the mulumakamaka karaka for yourself. Um but when what do I mean by samsara is nirvana? Nirvana is samsara it would be essentially ceramic and cup don't mean the same but they are exactly the same which violates the aricetilian laws of thought but there's no way of getting around it. Ceramic and cup are not synonyms, but this is both at the same

time. This is a and not a simultaneously violating arisetilian laws of thought.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. If Philes is unsatisfied with that answer, it serves him right for asking a fourth transgressive question.

So next question is from superlump and superlump says how far back can you trace your own ordination lineage just back to Tom Puluciato I was ordained in the Tom Pulu tradition which was founded by Tom Puluciato I was ordained by one of Tom Puluciato's disciples

so

I'm not sure who Tom Puliato's um preceptor was gosh. I mean, they're

going crazy on the Discord server.

They're just

okay.

So, yeah, I can only go as far back as the beginning of the ordination lineage, which is Tom Pulu Seattle, founder of the Tom Pulu tradition, but again, I forget who Tom Pulu's um preceptor was, you know, what tradition he was ordained in, that sort of thing.

So,

I just realized my emergency backup beverage is on my desk over there, which I will be getting up and retrieving soon. So, anyways, super long. Second question,

did you vote when you were a monk? I voted twice when I was a monk, both for US presidents. And I have to admit, I the first time I voted as a monk, I actually voted for Barack Obama, who if I knew then what I know now, I would have voted for neither Obama nor Mitt Romney. But the thing is, I was just new to YouTube, you know, I'd come back to America and I was looking at YouTube and they had this prompt saying, you know, the presidential debates on, you can watch Obama and Romney debating. So I just out of curiosity watched the presidential debate between Obama and Romney and it was clear that Obama was

operating at a higher level of consciousness than Romney was. Romney was like a a like some kind of shark with like a plastic smile stuck to its face.

But just because you're more intelligent or some such I mean not even necessarily more intelligent. to say you got more depth to you or at least you appear to have more depth to you. That doesn't mean you're going to be a better president.

And I mean now stuff is coming to light just recently that Obama was allegedly guilty of treasonous conspiracy because of the whole Russian like the

Russia gate hoax that he was helping to orchestrate knowing full well that it was [__] but still trying to damage first of all trying to prevent Trump from becoming president and then trying to damage Trump's presidency. and thus damage the United States by damaging the president and his authority and what he's trying to get done and that sort of thing.

So anyways, and then after that I did vote for for Donald Trump back in 2015 or 16.

So yeah, those are the two times I voted. And you could say, well, you're not monks probably shouldn't vote. But

then again, I used to know an Australian monk in in Burma, and it's the law in Australia. You have to vote. It is a crime not to vote in Australia. Or at least that's what he was explaining to me. And so, even if he was living in Burma for years, he would have to apply to the Australian embassy for an absentee ballot in order to avoid breaking the law. and he was kind of a socialist so he always voted leftwards I'm sure so yeah I answered that question and then this next question is even easier lump asks was Jesus a Buddhist monk and I would say that is extremely likely

that he was not a Buddhist monk in fact
I consider it extremely likely that g
that Jesus never left like the Levant
like like Galilee and Judea, that
general area, you know, Sir Phoenicia,
I I think he he spent his entire youth
there. All this talk about Jesus going
to India and learning profound spiritual
truths and then coming back, highly
unlikely. He was a carpenter's son, the
son of a carpenter in like a small town
Galilee.

So I mean he was the disciple of John
the Baptist for a while and John the
Baptist was kind of monastic
sort of you know he was kind of monastic

and so Jesus he may have been a kind of Jewish quasi monk that may at some point have had some indirect influence from Buddhism

but not the idea that Jesus actually went to India or Tibet and became a

Buddhist monk is extremely unlikely in my opinion. I read this one a friend of mine in Burma, a Burmese monk in Burma uh actually was impressed by this article that he read about how Jesus came to India or Tibet, I don't remember which and he was called Jivvakarita.

That was that was like his poly name jiva karita which obviously is like sort of a polyization of Jesus Christ and Jesus was not calling himself and that

Christ was not his last name
and jiva karita just means like you know
life is accomplished or something life
is done
but yeah it's it it was just bogus
there there's no real evidence other
than some
very questionable texts that maybe were
found in a cave in in Tibet, you know,
in modern times.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Gnostic Rucker.
And Gnostic Rucker, I think he also
asked a transgressive fourth question,
although he asked one question and then
he unasked it. So, he didn't really

transgress. His name's not going on the list. So you don't have to worry about that. Oh, I guess I'm done with done with Majamaka and Nagarja. So I'll take that back off. Put it over here. No, maybe I'll put it over here. Okay, then. So, um, Nostic Rocker asked a question that he thought was answered in the previous Q&A, so he he unassed that one and asked a different one. But there are some points here that I could comment on. So, he's not transgressive, but I'm still going to comment on it. His first question that he retracted is as follows. Did you spend most of your time in one temple when you were a biku with one abbot or meditation master

or were you free to move around as you pleased? I believe in Thailand there's a five-year rule that demands the new monastic should remain under the tutelage of one's teacher or one teacher for the duration of that period before having the freedom to be paraprotetic.

And I it is true I did answer the first part of this question like

um I did not spend most of my time in one temple when I was a beo. I didn't move around especially after I'd been a monk for five years like I came to Burma and I started staying at Cheltz Doya in central Burma and I was I mean nobody spoke English there. I didn't speak

Burmese yet. I was just sort of all of a sudden living in this tiny cave like an oven in just blazing heat in almost total isolation. And the abbott there, venerable Pakoku, he was worried about me. So he sent me to a school monastery near Mandalay for for over a year so that I could learn like Burmese mainly, study some poly, that kind of stuff. And so then I came back to Cheltz Doya and I started I was looking around for other places. I started going to I went on a trip to southern Burma. Stayed at the baita for a while. Looked at some other places. Stayed at um Alando Kathapa a combined total of about three years. Um Chelson

Doya I stayed a combined total of maybe three years. Um the one place I lived at longer than anywhere else was onebo met do or onebo wildlife refuge monastery. I spent gosh maybe 10 years there or something like that but I did move around and it is true this the main thing I wanted to comment on was this part here where he says I believe in Thailand there's a five-year rule that demands the new monastic should remain under the tutelage of one teacher for the duration of that period before having the freedom to be parabolic. Yeah, that's that's built into vineia. There's a rule that you have to live in

dependence called Nissia on your
preceptor or on some other teacher who
is a senior monk in good standing who's
qualified to be a teacher for at least
five years or five reigns retreats
before you can just go off and become
a free agent. Just go off and live
alone, that sort of thing.

Although there's kind of a loophole
where if you get permission to live
alone in a forest before you've been
independence for five years, before the
five years are complete, then so long as
you get permission from your
preceptor or your acharia, your ajon
to go off and live in solitude in the
forest, you can do that except not

during the rains retreat. you have to come back and stay with your preceptor or teacher during the rains retreat. So that's that's built right into Vinaya.

It's not just uh uh like a rule in Thailand. It's just a rule in Theravada Buddhism.

So I'm just going to move on to Gnostic Rucker's first legitimate question that he didn't ask. What are some of your favorite verses from the Bible?

Well, I guess one of the first things that came to mind was the very first line of Ecclesiastes in the Old Testament. Futility of futilities. All is futile.

Or let's see what it says in I've got this Catholic Bible just happens to be sitting right here. This is really a good Bible. I I'm really impressed by this Bible. See here.

Um it says, let's see, it is useless. useless says the said the philosopher life is useless all useless.

So, it's usually um let's see, it's not futility of futilities. Vanity of vanities. I guess the saint the King James version is vanity of vanities. All is vanity. And then this one has it um useless. It's all useless. And then there was another version, the revised Barkley version, I think, was futility of futilities. All is futile. And then I

had a German uh Catholic priest. No, he was Austrian. Hope I didn't just insult him. An Austrian Catholic priest told me that um in Germany it's translated as puff of smoke. It's all a puff of smoke.

And I think that is a more literal translation than vanity or futility or or uselessness or that kind of thing.

But I I I do like that verse. And then another one of my favorite Bible passages is also from Ecclesiastes. And this this translation is it just really it's really a kicker. Let's see. It's Ecclesiastes chapter 8 7-10.

So let's see here.

No,

it's chapter nine. Chapter 9:es 7-10.

It is as follows. Go ahead, eat your food and be happy. Drink your wine and be cheerful. It's all right with God.

Always look happy and cheerful. Enjoy life with the woman you love as long as

you live the useless life that God has given you in this world. Enjoy every

useless day of it because that is all

you will get for all your trouble. Work

hard at whatever you do because there

will be no action, no thought, no

knowledge, no wisdom in the world of the

dead. And that is where you are going.

So that's kind of a black pill, isn't

it?

At least he says, "Be cheerful. It's all

right with God,

man." But I I do have a soft spot in my heart for Ecclesiastes.

Let's see. With regard to the New

Testament, of the four gospels, I like

the Gospel according to Mark. It has

less like mythology added to it. And

that Matthew and Luke are largely based

on Mark. Anyway,

and see here. I like the scene in Luke

of the Pharisee and the tax collector in

the temple where you've got this

Pharisee and a tax collector go to the

temple in Jerusalem and the Pharisee

just goes right up front and he's, you

know, he's like, "Thank you, God, for

not making me like other men, especially not like that tax collector back there." You know, it's like, "I follow all your commandments. I give a tenth of all I own to the church for the upkeep of the temple and the priests."

And then the tax collector is standing in the back. He's he doesn't dare to approach the altar. He doesn't even dare to look up at it. He just stands in the back his head down just beating himself in the chest saying, "Dear God, please have mercy upon me, a sinner." And then Jesus says it's the tax collector who goes who finds more favor in the eyes of God. Although from a Buddhist point of view, you'd be better off just kind of

sitting right in the middle and and
you're not boasting and you're not
beating yourself up either. You're just
sitting there serenely meditating.

Also, a few uh a few teachings of the
New Testament that I really like and
that I would like to see more emphasized
in Buddhism. First of all is Jesus
telling his followers, when you do good
deeds, do it secretly. You know, don't
advertise it. You know, don't brag about
it. Don't do it in front of everybody so
everyone will think, whoa, he's doing
that good deed. You know, you should do
it secretly. Then God will know and
that's really all that matters.

I mean, from a Buddhist point of view, that's not really God. But still the idea of doing good deeds secretly appeals to me.

And also there's one one saying where Jesus is is advising people don't say that you're going to go and do such and such. You're going to travel to such and such city and make such and such amount of money and then come back and be be rich and all this.

You shouldn't talk like that. You should say, "God willing, if I don't die first, that's going to happen.

And that kind of reminds me of Ajan Cha. You know, it's uncertain. You know, you don't know for sure what's going to

happen even tomorrow. You can't be 100% sure the sun's going to come up tomorrow. So, you should always have a certain amount of skepticism, a certain amount of uncertainty with regard to the future because you really don't know. You can't see a minute in front of your nose.

So, I think that's profound also. And there is some of that in Terabha Buddhism especially in the teachings of Ajaan Cha uncertain not sure.

So anyways I'm just going to move on to Gnostic Rucker's third question or I guess second question after the

retracted one. It may sound like a strange question, but what was it like to live in the same ochre robes with little to no variation on style or hue of those robes for year after year? I remember reading the memoirs of a westerner ordained in Thailand in the 1960s. He said he went through an intense period of lucid dreaming in which he envisaged himself wearing psychedelic robes with an alms bowl adorned with bright flowers. He would wake up in a fervid state realizing that his cosmic hallucinatory dreams were a direct result of the narrow psycho physical constraints affecting him because of his limited clothing. Well, I

mean, I've never really been into
like gody clothing.

I I like gray is one of my favorite god.

So, I mean maybe maybe he was a little
bit gay or something. Maybe he was like
a worked for a fashion designer or
something before he became a monk. I
don't know. I mean, for me, it wasn't
that big of a deal. Although, it's true.
I've never liked wearing brown.

Just brown is just not one of my
favorite colors. I mean, brown food is
good, you know, like chocolate and, you
know, whole wheat bread and that kind of
thing. But just brown clothing or brown
just as a color I never liked very much.

And you do have a certain variation of choices. Maybe in the for the Thai forest tradition, you got to wear it like that cat [—] green color that's from the the heartwood of the the jackfruit tree. But in Burma, you there's a range from like sort of yellowish and reddish and purplish. It's it's there's all sort of a brown element to it, you know, yellowish brown or reddish brown or purplish brown, but still there is some variation. Like the the inner bark of the ironwood tree has this really nice kind of a purplish brown sort of like a um almost like a burgundy color. That's really nice.

But it's true. There is a list of

forbidden colors for robes in the vignia and gray is not on that list.

Technically, it's allowable for a monk to wear gray robes, although I never attempted it because I'm sure the conservative Burmese would be complaining big time and continually offering me brown ones or red ones so I wouldn't be wearing this wrong color of gray when actually gray is just not on the list of forbidden colors.

So

yeah, that was that would be about it. I mean, I didn't like I haven't like didn't like wearing brown very much, but I mean, it's just what you do. It was

just no big deal, you know? It's just sort of like you don't like the color of your own skin. I mean, there's not a whole lot heck you can do about it. You just sort of make peace with the situation. So, I just made peace with the fact that I was wearing brown every single day.

So, let's see here. I'm just going to move on to the next question also from Gnostic Rucker.

He says,

"In your decades, I'm going to make sure make sure I'm not skipping one." Okay.

He says, "In your decades of experience, is there a different kind of psychological or ideological type of

westerner that chooses to ordain in Burma rather than another westerner that chooses Sri Lanka or one that chooses Laos or Thailand? Or is it more likely to be explained by a mundane matter of availability or due to socioeconomic reasons? For example, possibly Thailand is a more popular place to ordain because of related reasons such as the decades of the tourist industry there or even because of the availability of good alms food which may not be the case in a Bangladeshi Buddhist area for example. So is there a different kind of psychological or ideological type of westerner that chooses to be ordained in

Burma? I really don't think so. I mean, your karma is going to land you somewhere or somewhere else. And your karma is a mental state that would be psychological to some degree at like a deep level.

But no, it didn't even work that time.

Okay. Well, it's still not working.

Let's see. I mean, partly I mean, the main psychological differences I think that would could influence such a thing as this would be if you're really conservative in your your like doctrinal Buddhism, like you're you have like a scholarly interest in terra Buddhism or like you're just drawn to a kind of meditation like the Mahasi method or the

Palk method, then well, if you if you're attracted to to the Mahasi method and you know just sort of like the general attitude of the mahasi method then there's more mahasi places in Burma than anywhere else or if you're attracted to the paw out method then of course paw out is in Burma so something like that um that could influence where a person is going to be ordained you just just intuitively or just as a matter of just your personality type or whatever you're just more attracted to like a more Spartan stoic kind of terravada then there's some a lot of that in the Thai forest tradition too but it's like the

difference between Burmese Theravada and Thai Theravada places more emphasis on Vinaya and also more emphasis on Dhamma or the optional extra aesthetic practices so Thai Buddhism is sort of more like bodily discipline oriented whereas Burma Burma has more emphasis on meditation and also scholarship and like especially Abhidhamma. So I mean if you're really into Abhidhamma, Burma is the place to go.

Burma has the foremost Abhidhamma scholars on the planet.

And if you're really into certain kinds of meditation that is mainly within the the Burmese influence like the Mahasi method, then you'll choose choose Burma

or at least a Burmese place outside of Burma. You know, there's like mahasi places. I'm pretty sure there's at least mahasi affiliated places in Malaysia, for example. There's some in Thailand even.

So,

um yeah, that would be a factor. Uh also I'm reminded that like Ajan Sumedo, one of the senior western monks in the terra sa he chose Thailand because he was in the peace corps in Thailand and that's how he got introduced to Terravada Buddhism. And so after he was finished with the Peace Corps, he became a monk in Thailand. So things like that, you

might go to you might go to Thailand as just a tourist even and then you get exposed to it and so that could also be a factor.

Also, it's just easier to get into Thailand and then get into Burma.

So yeah, I mean ultimately it's it's more of a

um

a karmic thing. Like I was fortunate.

And I think my karma served me well that

I was ordained in a Burmese tradition

because the ties are much more

conformity oriented. They make a rule of

conformity. You know, you all have to

dress the same. You all have to pretty

much act the same. Whereas in Burma, it

may be the Burmese are just I mean you don't have to make a rule. They just do it automatically. You know, they just conform. They just follow along with what everybody else is doing. Which gave me more leeway because when I chose not to follow the rule, they didn't know what to do about it.

And I would choose not to just follow along with what everybody was doing.

They were okay with that. And I mean, in a way, it just they they couldn't wrap their head around it really. You know, he's just like the the weird barbarian, you know, we're just not going to interfere. That kind of thing.

So, I mean, if if you're really into
Abidama, you're really into scholarship,
then Burma is the place. espec
meditation even Burma is the place um
you're more into strict monastic
discipline and ironically I was really
into strict vineia but when you're just
doing your own thing living alone you
can be as strict as you please
Burmese monks who try to be strict at a
lax monastery and most monasteries are
lax in Burma in Thailand too it's my
understanding then they can get
antagonized and really messed with and
even driven out of the monastery
There's there's statements in the in the
text where um the SA is like the ocean

and the ocean will discard a corpse. You know, it's like the the corpse will just get washed up onto the beach and the song is like that. Like a rotten monk just gets expelled. But now it's pretty much the obvious the opposite where it's the the conscientious monk gets expelled because it's that the ocean is largely composed of corpses at least in certain areas.

I don't want to just completely badmouth the song. There are very wise, very saintly, very advanced monks out there, but the majority going with statistics are somewhat otherwise.

It was sort of like medieval Europe. You

read about like Christianity in Western Europe like in the 14th century then it was pretty rotten. There was there was a pope actually passed that had this decree I think papal bull it's called I think that um allowed women not to make confession because so many women were being assaulted in the confessionals by priests. It was it was becoming just like pandemic.

So it was like all right just women are absolved of responsibility of making confession. I mean that was going on in the middle ages. There's stories like if you read um Burton Russell's history of western philosophy he he talks about this a little bit how you know you've

got some notoriously rotten monastery where the monks kill the abbot because the abbot is trying to instill some kind of discipline. And so the monks just revolt and just off him. So then the pope or bishop or whoever sends another like strict abbot to come and take charge of the monster and he doesn't last very long either. They just kill him off. That kind of thing. So Burmese terra isn't as bad as medieval European Catholicism. But it's kind of a similar deal. Just the whole attitude. You know the the lay people have absolute stainless steel unshakable faith. You do have some genuine saints,

but for the most part, the clergy is corrupt.

And that's a little bit of a rant because I've kind of lost track of the question here. Oh, different reasons why people might be ordained in Burma rather than Thailand or Sri Lanka or some such. Excuse me.

So, I guess I answered that question. I'm just going to move on. Next question.

This is from Austin and Austin says, "All the young people are on Tik Tok nowadays. Have you ever thought about uploading videos on there for bigger exposure?" Um, I'm I'm sure the idea has arisen and passed away a few times, but

yeah, I'm not really interested in Tik Tok. Um, I've never like gone to Tik Tok as a site. Never once have I have I gone to Tik Tok and it was just completely accidentally. You just accidentally click on a link or something and it takes you there.

Um, to some degree I agree with Gerchef and Gchef had this idea that I mean you shouldn't hear dama too easily. you shouldn't get exposed to it too easily and you should have to work for it a little bit because the cheaper something is, the easier it is to get something, the less it is worth.

So, I'm completely fine with having a

limited um limited presence on the internet. And if that means I have way fewer followers, then that's just the way it's the way it is.

So

yeah, I'm not I don't think that I'm going to be uploading videos onto Tik Tok unless somebody just volunteers to do it, but Tik Tok videos are supposed to be short, and I don't do very many short ones. Like this one is going to be way too long to to upload onto Tik Tok. Unless somebody were to just edit out like individual answers to individual questions, maybe something like that would work. So anyways, I'm just moving on to Austin's next question.

Buddhists meditate on emptiness and arrive at the realization of emptiness while Hindus meditate on the self and attain the insight of I am that.

Meditation can lead to different even seemingly opposite realizations. Does this mean that meditation confirms pre-existent beliefs making it a form of confirmation bias? Well, I mean if you're getting into deep meditative states, you go beyond language really. And so when you come out of that state and interpret that state that you're in, you're going to use the the pre-existing like culture that surrounds you to explain it. So

like like

a Buddhist attains fourth Janna, he'll explain it in in Buddhist terms. I mean, you can't just explain exactly what it's like to be in fourth Janna. It's beyond language. You stop thinking long before you got to fourth Janna. and a Hindu attains forth Janna when he comes out of it he'll explain it along Hindu lines a like a a Catholic 16th century Spanish Catholic contemplative attains fourth Janna then he's going to explain it along Catholic lines he might have to make up new jargon and new ideas just because attaining fourth Jon and Christianity is not really part of the like the main teachings that's just

something that happened and like someone like St. John of the Cross, he's like forging new ground and trying to explain this stuff. Not that he was the first person to attain fourth Janna probably in in cath in Catholicism. It may be like his mentor St. Teresa of Avula also attained Jonah and people before her probably attained Janna in within Catholicism like within the Carmelite contemplative order, but they're just going to explain it differently. And like I was saying earlier and I've said many times before like St. like um I almost said St. John of the Cross Hegel like he begins his

dialectic with the very first thesis of his dialectic in his logic pure being. Then the antithesis to pure being is pure non-being. And then according to Hegel they just merge. You can't tell them apart. And so then you have to have the synthesis of like distinction. You have to somehow distinguish like you have to have like a contrast of being and not being which is creates like figuring ground and then it's off to the races. Then it's you know from from the Dao see from the Dao came the one from the one came the two from the two came the 10,000 things. It's similar to that. So when you're getting into like the absolute which can't be put

into words. I mean whatever you say about it is going to be invalid. You can say that it's empty or you can say that it's full. I mean empty would be like non-being. Pure non-being and Hegel saying that it's full would be like pure being in Hegel. But I mean there are attempts to explain the same thing.

So the the meditative experiences you get into like a deep meditative state you know just beyond language where you've pretty much escaped from cultural conditioning then like a Buddhist a Hindu a 16th century Spanish Catholic can all have essentially the same experience. It's just that when they

come out of that experience they have to use the dogma of their spiritual system to try to explain it.

But when you're not at the really super deep levels of meditation, then certainly there's going to be um meditation confirming pre-existing beliefs. You can have visions of the Buddha or if you're a Christian, you might have visions of the Virgin Mary, that kind of thing. But when you get just beyond symbols, just into relatively pure consciousness, you know, the mental states are so subtle that I mean, they might as well not be there. Then I mean you you've transcended cultural conditioning and it's the

experiences would be universal.

But when you come out of those states,
you've got to rely on cultural
conditioning to try to explain them and
the cultural conditioning will have
various explanations.

So I'm just going to move on to Austin's
next question

which is as follows. When I'm debating
ontology, I mean that might be his first
mistake.

I just interrupted myself. Just a
second. I'll start over. When I'm
debating ontology, I'm encountering some
trouble substantiating the belief in
nibbana. Most people cannot understand

something that is not a thing, not no thing, not both, and not either. It's not an ontological state. It's beyond existence and non-existence. It's unconditioned and indescribable, which contradicts what I affirm early in debates, which is everything is dependent and conditioned. Well, every condition thing is dependent and conditioned. When it gets to this point, I'm accused of breaking the laws of logic and trying to substantiate something that cannot be substantiated, something that doesn't exist.

Basically, what they describe as an attempted philosophical, illogical, indescribable mumbo jumbo that isn't

logically coherent with conventional reality, which is conditioned, which also brings a whole host of relation problems, yada yada yada. Please help.

How can I substantiate Nabana better?

Well, I mean, if you're debating ontology at at this kind of intellectual level, you're probably there's a good chance you're dealing with people who are acquainted with philosophy.

So, one thing I do to try to kind of get a foot in the door with western people who are philosophically literate is just bring up Emanuel Kant. Emanuel Kant had two levels of truth pretty much like Buddhism does. You've got the thing as

it seems and the thing in itself. The thing as it seems is like mental symbols conjured up by human psychology which according to Kant is all we can know.

And that's kind of goes back to Barkley saying that you can't even you cannot prove the existence of physical matter.

So all you know is your own mental states. And according to according to Kant, we are just stuck in our mental states with with no escape.

But according to Kant, there's also the thing in itself, the thing as it really is, which is beyond conception.

Um, and I would go so far as to say Kant was not much of a mystic and so he

probably never re fully realized that there is one ultimate reality, one highest truth that we can know directly and that is the contean thing in itself of consciousness of our own consciousness.

Not like perceptually symbolized.

You don't give any meaning to it, any symbolic meaning, but still you get rid of all of this perceptual rubbish, all these symbols like you get into Johnic states where you're not thinking anymore.

Then you can penetrate through this mindmade symbolism and get to the contean thing in itself of your own

consciousness

and that would be what you could call
nibbana.

Some people would call it nibbana.

Some Buddhists would call it nibbana.

Some Hindus would call it nibbana or
nirvana.

So I mean that's that would be one way
of kind of getting the point across to
like some western intellectual type.

Just go with western philosophy instead
of eastern philosophy because it's
something that they can get more of a
handle on. It's more in accordance with
their cultural conditioning. and just
point out like like Kant there's the
thing in itself which is the ultimate

reality and the thing as it seems and
according to Kant everybody is just
wallowing in things as they seem with no
access to the thing in itself even
though the thing in itself is right
there the thing in itself of us is what
we're made of. It's our essence,
but we're just so lost in these symbols
and distracted by the symbols and so we
can't penetrate through that to the
ultimate reality that lies beneath it.
You know, everyone's stuck at the level
of cup. They don't get ceramic.
And there's
one last sip in there. And I'm going to
get the emergency backup beverage. Just

a second.

There it is.

Okay. So, yeah, that would be one way of getting your foot in the door anyway. I mean, you're never going to fully understand Nirvana. Nobody, like I I keep saying, any idea you have about Nirvana is just going to be samsaric and delusional.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Xenithoid.

And Zenithoid says, "Are horses seen as noble animals in Buddhist countries similar to how elephants are?" Well, it goes all the way back to the poly texts. Like in Vineia, there's a list of 10 kinds of meat that a monk is not allowed

to eat, which pretty much kicks in the head the whole idea that the Buddha was requiring monks to be vegetarian. Unless I mean, you can just say, "Well, this will just add later." But there is a list in Vineia probably not just terravenia. It might not be in Sarvostatada because the Sarvostadans were just vegetarians but it could still be in there and they just most of the scholars just weren't that interested in vineia and didn't bother to have it edited out or something.

But of the the lists of 10 kinds of meat that you're not allowed to eat, I

probably can still remember it too. You got human flesh. Of course, you're not allowed to practice cannibalism if you're a monk.

Let's see. Lion meat, tiger meat, leopard meat, bear meat, hyena meat, uh horse meat, elephant meat, snake meat, and dog meat. And horses and elephants are forbidden not because they're considered to be like unclean, like dogs and snakes were considered to be unclean. That's why monks are not allowed to eat dog meat or snake meat because it would just make the song look bad. You know, they're eating this gross stuff, at least from the ancient Asian point of view. But horse horses and

elephants were considered to be noble emblems of the king. You know, they were like royal animals. So it would be sort of like sacrilege or disrespect to the king, disrespect to the ruling class or some such for a monk to eat horse meat or elephant meat.

So yeah, it's it's right there in the the poly texts that a horse is seen as a kind of noble animal. Um, but with regard to seeing that in Burma, I like the Burmese maybe the ties also, they're just most of them really aren't in animals. Like Asians, um, they tend not to like animals very much, just in general, less so than

Westerners do. You know, they're less likely to just pamper their dog and treat it like it's one of their children, that kind of thing.

It's I think it was um Theorough said it seems to be a law that a man cannot have a deep affinity for both man and nature. You're either a people person or a nature person. And East Asian, Southeast Asians

predominantly are people people and not nature people. Westerners, you got more nature people in the mix.

And so horses are just kind of seen as things. You know, a horse isn't it for the most part from a Buddhist from a from like a Burmese point of view. Some

people are just afraid of horses.

So

yeah, the the ancient Buddhist perspective is there in the texts, but it doesn't really carry over into mainstream Burmese culture.

I can't really speak for other Buddhist cultures like um Thai culture or Sri Lankan culture, Cambodian culture, that sort of thing because I don't have enough firsthand firsthand experience with it.

So, I'm just going to move on to Xenithoid's next horse question here.

When a horse's leg is broken, it is usually euthanized. Is this still true

in Buddhist cultures? Um I there they got horses in Burma. I've seen plenty of horses in Burma, but I never saw a horse with a broken leg in Burma. And I assume they'd probably euthanize it. I mean, the main reason why they're euthanized is because there's just no way for the horse's leg to heal unless maybe you had it like in a kind of halter um for however long it took for its leg to heal, you know, where its weight is not on its leg. And yeah, I don't think that happens in Burma. So, probably they get euthanized. they get sent to a butcher or something. I don't know. I never really heard of it happening in Burma.

So, I'm just going to move on to Xenithoid's next horse question.

Is horseback riding still a common mode of transportation in Buddhist countries?

And again, I can only speak for Burma.

And the only people that I saw in Burma riding horses were police officers.

You've got mounted police officers in Burma, especially like in rural areas.

they'll ride the horses, you know, from village to village where maybe you don't have good roads, that kind of thing. So, a police base will have horses there.

Um, but aside from that, there are certain areas of Burma like the the town of Mayo. Now, it's they changed the name

to Pinuluin. The military government changed the name of Mayo, which is kind of a nice sounding nice sounding uh name for a town to Pinuluin.

And they've got carriages there, horsedrawn carriages. And you can find them throughout like central Burma, probably other places in Burma. There are like horse carts. And the horses are like these scabby looking little ponies. Just beat up bony looking ponies. Not they're not nice looking horses like you're more likely to see in the West. They're just like cart horses, nags, that kind of thing.

I got bitten by a horse in Burma once. I just made the mistake. We We rode in a

horse cart, which is against the rules for me. I did it anyway.

And I was just going to pet the horse, you know, kind of pat it on the nose and it bit me. They really clamped down, too.

[Music]

So, yeah. I mean, it's mainly for tourist purposes and just um some areas in Burma. I mean there's the main vehicle of transportation in Burma probably to this day. I mean for most of the time I was in Burma it was that way anyhow is the bullock cart. You know you've got a cart pulled by a pair of bullocks which are like oxen with humps.

Um, so horse carts is just sort of a localized thing, I think, where the bullock cart, I mean, the horse cart goes a little faster. Um, it may be that cheap Chinese scooters have replaced bullock carts as the primary vehicle. I I seriously doubt that it would be cars.

So,

yeah. about actual horseback riding.

Getting to the actual question here.

I've the only people I've seen riding

horses that I can remember would be

police officers. And I'm moving on to

the next question. This is from Sedarta

Lohachita. And Sedarta Lohita says,

let's see, I'm making sure that we're

still recording here. Okay. Sedarta
lohachittita says in the chakawati
sihanada suta of the dean nikaya the
Buddha said that corruption and adama in
society begin when the king fails to
give alms and charity to the poor. Could
this be interpreted as a form of
primitive socialism? Yeah, I suppose it
could be interpreted as a form of
primitive socialism that um
yeah, I mean it's kind of theoretical in
the Suta, although the emperor Ashoka
actually did uh he set up like free
hospitals, even free veterinary
hospitals, you know, free rest houses
for weary travelers, you know, he did

kind of socialize his empire to some degree, take care of the poor mainly. So yeah, I mean you could call that a kind of protoocialism.

Although the actual suta itself of D and A, I think it's one of the later ones.

And the later you go in Suda collections, the more likely it is that it's going to be sort of apocryphal, shall we say, not necessarily authentic teachings of the Buddha. But that might be the same suta where the Buddha is saying that you know the king should subsidize farmers by giving them you know seed grain and whatever else they need to get set up as farmers. Um and he was saying that uh that poverty is the

primary cause of crime which I'm kind of skeptical of personally.

So, I mean, especially like murderers.

I don't think that your average murderer is unemployed.

I mean, based on what I've seen, they tend to be truck drivers, especially the serial killers killing like lot lizards throughout the country. It's truck drivers.

So, let's see here.

Uh, I'm just going to move on. Next question also from Sedarta Loha.

What is the Buddhist view on the concept of duty or dharma as presented in the Bavad Gita? Especially regarding the

idea of fighting even one's own family and kin in order to restore dharma.

Many advaitans, practitioners of advaita say that Buddhism is morally relativistic because it does not recognize the idea of the good or dharma nor a true sense of duty. And that's that's kind of strange that a Hindu because advaitists would technically qualify as Hindus or Sonata Dharma Dharma people. I don't know. They'd be vulgarly known as Hindus. Um yeah, it just seems kind of ironic because from the Buddhist point of view, they really don't have this concept of doing your duty. Like if you're a like you're a soldier, it's

your duty to kill. That's that's just part of your your religious your dharma. Whereas from a Buddhist point of view, killing is always wrong. War is always wrong. Even if killing someone to protect your own family technically is wrong from from like an ancient Indian Buddhist point of view. But to call that relativistic, it seems to me that the Hindus would be more relativistic because they're saying killing is okay sometimes and it's not okay sometimes depending on the circumstance. It's relative. So that would be more way more relativistic than just the hardline early Buddhist point of view. It's

always wrong to kill. Period.

You know, it's always wrong to tell lies. Period. It's always wrong to steal. Period. You know, it's it's uncompromising, which doesn't strike me as being particularly relativistic.

What is relativistic is when you say it's okay sometimes and it's not okay sometimes depending on the circumstances.

That's relativistic.

Seems to me.

Yeah. So, so the Buddhist concept of duty is your it's your duty to be as moral, as virtuous as you can be.

that that's a higher duty than protecting your own children. As you can

see in early texts,
which is one reason why Buddhism
encourages people to renounce the world
and just cut ties with family, that sort
of thing, because then you might have
this sort of
uh struggling priorities. What's the
what's the word? There's a certain word
for that. It's like, no, I mean, you
shouldn't you shouldn't kill, you
shouldn't harm anybody even to protect
your own children. Therefore, you're
better off not having children from the
early Buddhist point of view.
So, it's it's really not relativistic at
all. It seems the opposite. It's just

like this is the way it is. This is like the universal law.

Whereas this idea of dharma, sometimes it's okay to kill, sometimes it's not okay to kill.

That's more relativistic seems to me.

So

I guess I'm just going to move on to Sedart Loha's third question which is does Buddhism align with the idea of a homeland loyalty to a people or a flag since it can be interpreted that everything is samsaric and not worth dying for even for that hill. Does is nationalism

more than is nationalism adama? Well, I mean worldliness is largely adama.

It's like if you want to be perfectly moral, perfectly virtuous, you pretty much have to renounce the world.

If you've got kids, I mean, it's your duty to take care of those kids. might be your duty to like pick the the lice out of their hair and kill the lice.

I mean, it's it just seems weird or perverse to me that you'd have a devout Buddhist parent who would let his kids be eaten up by lice just because they consider it wrong to kill lice.

There I'm sure there are parents out there. I've uh I remember reading I think it was one of the early books by Richard Gomer about how he spent some

time in Sri Lanka and he was at this monastery and they had paintings on the walls like some of the punishments of hell were on these paintings on the walls and it had people just being crushed by boulders and that was their karmic retribution for killing lice like like squishing lice between their finger between their their fingernails you know squishing them between their fingers that as a punishment for that in hell they're being smashed between boulders. But I think that's rather extreme. And if you are a lay person, I mean, you shouldn't have kids if if you think it's wrong to protect your kids to the extent of like harming somebody else, even even

if it's like lice or intestinal worms or something,

then I mean, no man is worthy of the name man. If he's just going to let his wife be assaulted, then just stand there not wanting to harm the person assaulting her.

I mean, I I used to know this. He this this guy he he was a monk for more than 10 years and after he dropped out of the monkhood he was still really a hardliner with regard to Buddhist morals and he had a wife at this point you know he'd been out of the monkhood for a while he had a daughter and I was like what would you do I mean

he was so completely into keeping the precepts you know it's just always wrong he would never do it it's like what happens if somebody is like assaulting your wife or your daughter and and he he actually answered it'd be their karma.

And like what kind of a man would be that way? I mean, he should be in in robes. He should be living under a tree. He shouldn't have a family.

So, getting back to the actual question, does Buddhism align with the idea of a homeland loyalty to a people or a flag? Since No, really, it doesn't. You're supposed to renounce the world. If you want, if you are really serious about becoming enlightened according to early

Indian Buddhism, you renounce society.

You renounce country, family, flag, all of it. It's all just distractions. It's all samsaric. Wallowing in samsara, keeping you from becoming enlightened.

You renounce all that [—] and you go out into a forest and live under a tree. Amen.

So is nationalism adama from an early Indian point of view? Yeah, it would be even I mean just family ties would be adama.

It is true the Buddha did toss a bone to the lay people
you know just keep the five precepts you know but still if you want perfect

morality from a Buddhist point of view
an ancient Indian Buddhist point of view
you got to renounce the world you got to
get away from all these worldly
attachments and distractions
go off wander alone like the horn of the
rhinoceros live under a tree wear rags
and beg silently for your food in the
streets and have no money.

I mean, it's just if you're going to be
a saint, that's that's what you have to
do. Otherwise, you're going to be in a
you're going to be in the shade of gray
zone. You're going to be you're going to
be a sort of morally gray,

I guess. I mean, just like putting salt
and pepper on your food to make it taste

better from a Buddhist point of view is immoral.

you're wallowing in sensuality, you're trying to increase your sensual pleasure.

So, I mean, if you really take that seriously, if you think that is the truth, best thing for you to do is renounce the world.

But you might to some degree be willing to entertain the possibility that a lot of this emphasis on absolute saintliness is like an artifact of ancient Indian culture.

In which case you have more options.

You might be wrong

but that's that's your choice to make.

And I'm going to move on to the next question. is from RP AD Arpad and Arpad says, "Can music be used beneficially in meditation or is it wallowing in sense data?" Well, from the Buddhist point of view, I mean that's it's wallowing in sensory

wallowing in pleasures of the senses. I mean, Buddhism is one of the few religions that considers music to be immoral. Any kind of sensual pleasure is something to be avoided if at all possible. Like a a monk, a Buddhist monk is allowed three sensual pleasures: eating, sleeping, and bathing. And even those should be kept to a minimum.

Like originally, a monk was only allowed to bathe twice a month except for under certain circumstances, like he's sick or it's like the hottest time of year, that sort of thing.

But I mean just

I mean I really do not consider ancient Indian Buddhism to be necessarily objective factual spiritual truth. To some degree it is ancient Indian cultural conditioning to some degree.

So, personally, I think some kinds of music, like I mean, if you're going to be meditating and you want to put some music on in the background, I mean, it could be a kind of white noise for

starters. Let's say there's all this noise outside the house, outside the apartment or whatever, and just having just sort of like this soothing drone masking it to some degree. I mean, that that's doable, I suppose. You'd want music that doesn't have any lyrics, you know, you don't want somebody singing when you're trying to meditate. And you'd want something that is very mellow, very subtle, like some new age kind of music or some like Indian kind of music, that kind of thing. Just very subtle, just like this droning, you know, just not much going on in the music. the more complicated it is and especially if there's lyrics, then it's

going to distract you from getting very deep in your meditation unless you can somehow just tune it out, in which case there's no point in having it in the first place.

Personally, I never really could relate to listening to music to calm myself. If I wanted to be calm, silence works best if at all possible. So I've traditionally throughout my life I've listened to music as a stimulant. That's one reason why I like rock and roll.

So just listening to music that's just like this new age kind of soothing drone.

I I never really I could never really

relate to it. I never really liked it.

But for some people it might work.

I remember uh a few Iaska ceremonies I went to where you'd have somebody like playing guitar just kind of gently strumming in the background that kind of had a soothing effect. You know, it would cause emotionally turning inside out to be not quite so horrible.

So I I can accept the possibility that under some circumstances certain kinds of music as a kind of background noise might help you to meditate. I mean there could be some kinds of music that is like specifically developed to raise your level of conscious. I think Gerchef experimented with this that he had uh he

was experimenting with music that could actually put you into a more meditative state. So something like that might work at least for beginners, but eventually you're going to have to go beyond that. You're going to have to go beyond sense data.

So anyways, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from sea of action sepa

and sea of action cipadina says

it's hard to understand how karma can work with how we understand the world works

biologically

any mutation that happens at the DNA

levels is equally as valid as any other but its consequences only become apparent at the final level of when the body and mind are fully built through development. Meanwhile, it seems karma is able to look at this final product and then determine which life you will end up living. But it seems to make more sense that karma would target something more fundamental like certain gene mutations based on certain karma or even deeper with certain quantum wave functions being linked to certain karma. How is it possible that karma which is supposed to be an objective law is targeting rebirth based on something that is many orders down from the source

code of the body like the DNA atoms etc and instead based on something from a much less fundamental level like social status ugliness and other such things that are downstream values of the living being. It doesn't seem to make any sense because Seovakian Cadena is just being like a wanting materialist at this point.

Prove to me that DNA atoms etc are ultimately real. Prove to me that it's not a mental construction that you start off I mean you could say that just first and foremost is the immediacy of experience. That's numero uno.

And then DNA and atoms are downstream from that. Can you prove that that's not the case?

I dare say you cannot.

So this is just like wallowing in materialism and then trying to somehow combine like karma with like scientific materialism.

This let's combine spirituality with spiritual bankruptcy.

It's not going to work very well.

Personally,

I'm of the opinion that atoms didn't exist until they were hypothesized. That DNA didn't exist until it was hypothesized.

Then it's retroactively true. I mean,

you can you can find DNA in like the remains of extinct animals that have been dead since before humans existed.

But still the way I interpret how the phenomenal universe works, it's our minds are creating this and scientific materialism

is a very powerful stabilizing force that I mean it's it goes deeper than most mythologies do. It's more comprehensive.

And so I'm still of the opinion Adams and DNA did not exist at all until there was some human being to hypothesize them. At least in in this world.

If you can prove that isn't the case,

then yeah, that's fine.

I'm going to pull my beard braid
sideways.

Well, that one almost worked.

So let's see here.

But another way of looking at it, let's
just say that there is a kind there
there are atoms, there is DNA, but but
it's like an infinite array of
possibilities in like a multiverse, the
many worlds hypothesis. And that your
karma is just choosing a path like a ver
virtual path through an an infinite
array of multi-dimensional
possibilities.

That's another way of looking at it, but
it's extremely difficult to to wrap your

head around it.

H anyways, I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Trasaziz.

And Tzasidiz says, "What would happen if a biku committed sadisa offenses and just didn't confess that?" Well, that happens a lot. And let's say a monk, let's say he talks dirty to a woman.

That's again, that's a song offense. So, if you're going to um

do the p the required

let's see what's the word. Gosh, I'm I'm forgetting words.

Oh, there's a certain word for like you're absolving your offense, absolving your guilt.

H

gosh, it's it's usually the translation
for the word pacitia.

But I can sit here racking my brains
trying to remember this word that I have
like a a mental block against and it
doesn't make for very entertaining
viewing I guess. So absolution no that's
not the word

is uh god forget it. So what would
happen if a biku committed sada offense
and just didn't confess that? Well, for
starters,

if you're he's not in in good standing,
if he's got a soda offense that is
unconfessed.

Um, and every day that he doesn't

confess it when he could confess it. If
if he's all by himself, there's no monks
to make confession to, that's one thing.
But if he's living in a monastery
surrounded by monks that he could make
confession to, he still doesn't confess
that offense. Then every day he doesn't
confess it is one more day of penance he
would have to take. if he were going to
be absolved of this offense.

Expedate, that's the word, expeation.

So, let's say he he commits this
offense, you know, he talks dirty to a
woman and

then he doesn't confess it for a year.

Then finally, he decides, well, I should

come clean. I I should be a
conscientious monk, and so I'm going to
confess it. He's got to do penance for
over a year now. And that's a pain in
the ass doing doing like confession for
that long because you've got to be
making confession to all the monks at
the monastery on a regular basis. You
got to follow all these penences and
it's really it becomes so so difficult
that uh a monk could just disrobe
because of it. I I heard this story
about this one monk who he somehow
realized that he had committed a
sanodicisa offense like two years
previously and so he decided well I'm
going to have to do penance for two

years and he started doing it and it was such a pain in the ass he just eventually disroed.

So that's one problem. But another problem is at the beginning of um the uposata ceremony when the the biku pad moa is recited and in the introduction like before you actually start reciting the pimoka rules in like the preamble it is stated any monk here who sits through this in silence if he's got unconfessed offenses that is lying. You are guilty of lying if you do not confess your offenses and you sit here when when the monks are asked is everybody completely pure. Is everybody completely pure? If

you sit there I mean if you're completely pure remain silent. If you are not speak out it this continually happens during the theosta recit recitation. So a monk that has committed an offense and knows he has committed an offense who sits there in silence through the pyoka recitation when he's asked over and over again you know is the song completely pure is everyone completely pure he's lying technically according to the poly text itself he is guilty of deception so I mean that's digging him even deeper and deeper into a hole also So, I mean, there are monks that that just regularly, let's say they

masturbate or something on a regular basis and don't confess it. And so, I mean, they're just they're kind of in a way kind of ruined monks, you know, in in a sense. I mean, they can still participate in when they participate in ceremonies, they're being dishonest, you know, it's it's a kind of tacit lying, just tacit deception. But um I mean there there quite a few monks that do that. Lots of them. I mean it was probably the the percentage would be in double digits of monks who actually do that sort of thing.

So

yeah that would that's what would

happen. And I'm just going to move on to Taskis is a second question. If karma is only his own mental state and he doesn't feel any guilt after the action and he was I assume happy doing that like talking dirty to a woman why not confess why why not confession confessing would be bad karmically so yeah well one of the things I've already I've already mentioned I mean you're being you're being dishonest like if you're participating in formal acts of the song and you are not saying anything when you when you should be confessing then there is that um let's see and being happy I mean a monk

who is committing a sanodisa offense I mean he might be experiencing pleasure but at the same time he knows he's breaking a rule and so I mean it's not going to be pure happiness there's there's going to be some some bad karma mixed in but most of this I've already answered in the to my answer to the previous question.

So I mean there are complications if you're a monk who commits sadesa and doesn't confess it and the longer you don't confess it just the deeper into a hole you dig yourself.

So

I think I'm just going to move on. Next question.

I mean this getting back to this one though. I mean, it's like just because you you're happy, you experience happiness while doing something wrong.

Or I mean, it doesn't necessarily even have to be like ethically bad. Like for a monk to participate in a wedding would be a song of say offense. for a monk to build a a meditation cabin for himself that is larger than the prescribed size which is tiny. You know it's like 7 and a half like maybe 8 ft by 5t would be the maximum size of a cabin or a meditation hut that a monk can build for himself. And so if he builds it too big

or he builds it in a place that hasn't been approved by the SA then that's dead also.

So, I mean, you could be happy doing that, I guess, but if you're doing something like talking dirty to a woman, then there's going to be impure mental states. You know, you're going to be inflamed by lust, your mind perverted by desire and all that. So, you might experience some kind of happiness, but still at the same time, it's not going to be pure.

But let's say he just has a meditation cabin that's too large. It's 9 by 5 instead of 8 by 5. then

um I mean still not confessing it. If he knows that he broke the rule then you know he's being dishonest every time there's you know twice a month at least and uh yeah just digging himself deeper and deeper into a hole by not confessing it. So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from PSA and PSA says, "Your answer to the tardigrade question raises another question from a biological perspective. What is death?" And the tardigrade question was I I answered that in the previous Q&A about tardigrades kind of an kind of tiny animal. Let's see. He continues here. Let's just let's just continue because if an animal can go into a lifeless

suspended state for decades, according to some sources, tardigrades can remain in that state for centuries and even millennia and come back to life. How do we know the tardigrade didn't die and then another one took rebirth in the same body? It reminds me of the realm of existence where all bodies are unconscious like statues and nobody is moving. Well, I mean, the consciousness, the mind of a tardigrade, um, I'm not sure what kind of a nervous system a tardigrade would even have. So, I mean, they might just be just like this tiny tiny little spark of consciousness that I'm not sure how rebirth would happen

with a tardigrade. But let's let's let's just step this up here. Let's talk about like cryogenically frozen people. You know there are people they've got like some terminal illness that modern science like modern med medicine cannot cure. So they just have themselves frozen in like liquid nitrogen in the hopes that they'll be thawed out in some future age when that illness has been like the cure for it has been developed. So how about that? How about a corpse sickle? Like you've got a person, you know, they're alive, they get frozen, and then let's say 100 years from now, they get thawed out again. Is I mean, what happens to the like the

karmic stream during that hundred years?
Is it going to be a different person? We
don't know yet. I don't I'm not sure
that that's ever happened.

There are some animals that can freeze
solid. I've heard that some goldfish can
survive being frozen solid.

A goldfish would have much more of a
kind of consciousness than a tardigrade,
I assume.

And like a human frozen solid and then
revived. I They might have done this
with animals, you know, experimentally
lab rats or something.

Just freeze them in like liquid nitrogen
and then somehow thaw them back out.

So yeah, I'm not exactly sure what would happen whether your con your karmic stream would be doing something else when this this body is frozen solid or otherwise just metabolism has ceased or would it be really like another being reborn into that person? sort of like um a case I I read about in a book by Ian Stevenson about in India some boy like he's about seven n years old somewhere thereabouts you know just a relatively small boy dies of smallox this is back before smallpox had been universally eradicated more or less so his father goes out to make arrangements for the funeral comes back and the kid has revived but he's

claiming to be somebody else. So I do think that it's possible that you could have like some like one conscious stream, you know, one karmic stream kind of leaves a body and then another one enters it. That's possible and it might differ from from individual case to individual case.

So I guess we're just going to have to wait and see because I don't have any empirical evidence of actually how that works. If you've got somebody cryogenically frozen and then they get revived 100 years from now, whether they're going to have the same personality, I mean, it could be like

some other karmic stream just took took over the body. I don't know.

Well, with tardigrades, I mean, they might be so simple that one tardigrade stream of consciousness is pretty much the same as any other tardigrade stream of consciousness, assuming they even have a stream of consciousness.

So, let's see here.

Oh, I guess I didn't even answer the question, though. The question here is from a biological perspective, what is death? And I mean, you could say that death is just the ceasing of metabolic processes

um or respiration is the main metabolic process I think of life. not respiration

in the sense of breathing, but respiration in the sense of taking up a molecule, usually glucose and breaking it down and and like generating energy through turning ADP into ATP, which can then be used as a way of like fueling the processes of life.

you know, in a way it's sort of like chemical reactions simulating fire, but the heat is given off in little increments that can then be captured and used in biochemical processes.

So, I mean, that could be death where just respiration has stopped by something freezing solid. But I mean, if there's still the potential of it still

going, then it could be that death is just where it's just broken and can't possibly like be revived, that kind of thing. But yeah, I think it would depend. I assume there'd be more than one way of defining death, even from a biological perspective. I mean, one would just be that metabolic processes have ceased or I mean still I mean after a person dies it's like their bone marrow stays alive for for days afterwards. So it wouldn't just be that. It would be like death in that case would be where the the I mean the body is no longer functional. It's like some parts of it might still work but it just won't run anymore. sort

of like a car, you know, it's like the headlights might still work, but the the engine won't start, that kind of thing. So, that's it's kind of an interesting question. I never really thought about it much. Like, what would qualify for a biologist saying that animal is dead? I mean, they might not say that uh an animal that's frozen solid is dead if it was alive and it was frozen solid in a certain way where it had the potential of remaining alive after it was thought out. A biologist might not go so far as to say that a a dehydrated tardigrade in suspended animation is dead or like a resurrection plant. There's certain

plants. It's a primitive kind of a mosselike plant. I used to have one when I was a kid where it'll just curl up into this brown ball and it can just stay that way just this husk for years and then you put it in water and it just opens up and turns green and becomes alive again.

But would a biologist call that dead or would it just be in suspended animation? It still has the potential for being alive. So that would be a different kind of death anyway then. It'd be certainly a different kind of death than just tossing that dried up husk into a fire and just burning it up. That would be like real dead. That's graveyard dead.

So yeah, I mean maybe you could ask
Grock or something exactly what the
biological

criteria would be for something being
really and truly dead. But it could be
biologists would not entirely, you know,
they wouldn't all be unanimous in the
opinion

whether I mean revive the possibility of
revival. So long as that's still on the
table, then it might not be completely
dead.

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to
PSA's next question,

which is as follows. Could death and
rebirth occur as long as the body of the

tardigrade isn't too damaged while suspended? So, yeah, this is pretty much just a uh like a spin-off from the previous question. Could death and rebirth occur as long as the body of the tardigrade is Yeah, I I pretty much already covered this and you can take it up to a much higher level with cryogenically frozen human beings.

It could be like in a some future age of space travel that you know passengers on a spaceship they're going to some distant star that's going to be you know 80 years to get there that I mean some of the like the crew might be reproducing having their kids and training their children to run the

spaceship while most of the passengers
the the the the settlers who are going
to be settling this new this new colony
they'd just be like frozen or whatever.
There's been science fiction movies
about this kind of thing.

So yeah, I mean I guess your average
biologist wouldn't consider to be dead,
but whether it would be a different
person as a different karmic stream like
upon revival, a different person from
the one that was frozen. I don't know
because I don't I don't have any real
evidence to refer to and the the theory
behind it is is pretty much theoretical.
So, I mean it would just be guessing.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Nermitt and Nemmitt says, "What's the most dangerous snake you encountered in Burma?" And it depends on what you mean by most dangerous. like it can be the most venomous. In which case, the most venomous snake I encounter in Burma is probably a banded crate, but the banded crate is not a particularly aggressive kind of snake. I almost stepped on a banded crate and it didn't bite me. But the most dangerous snake in Burma with regard to the kind of snake that kills the most people, that would be a Russell's viper. I'm pretty sure. Because a Russell's viper,

vipers in general, abandoned crates kind of related to the cobras and the coral snakes and they're generally pretty chill. You know, they don't go looking for trouble, but uh a Russell's viper is just mean. I remember once I was walking home from going for alms and walking down this dirt road and there was a baby Russell's viper, maybe this long, you know, like a foot and a half, and it was chasing after me. It's like chasing after me going like this. and it was just trying to scare me away, you know, but if it had caught up with me, there's a good chance it would have bit me. So, the most dangerous snake in Burma is

the Russell's viper, I'm pretty sure, cuz they're just mean. They're more likely to bite than more venomous snakes where your chances of dying if you get bitten are higher, but you're just the chances of being bitten are lower.

So, let's see here. I guess I answered that one. So, Neur's next snake question. I got a phobia of snakes, so I must ask, how did you sleep at night in caves and forests knowing there might be a dangerous snake roaming around you?

Well, first of all, I like snakes. I mean, I would be happy when I see a snake. The first time I saw a cobra in Burma, I was just in rapture. I was just tickled to death. It was great seeing a

a cobra just raising up like on its hind legs, you know, spreading its hood. Man, I was just it was like a heaven realm for me. I was just delighted. It's possible that in some previous life in like northwestern prehistoric northwestern India that I was like some kind of shaman that worshiped cobras or something. I don't know.

But I do know enough about animals in the forest. As a general rule, if you leave them alone, they leave you alone. Like if you're lying there asleep, a snake can crawl right over the top of you. It's not just going to bite you. I mean, you roll over on it or

something, maybe.

But yeah, I mean, I didn't really

bother. I didn't that didn't bother me.

Sometimes I'd have to go outside at

night to pee

and you step on a like a little piece of

tree branch or a twig or something that

had fallen down from a tree and you step

on one side of it and the other one

flips up and it might like a dry leaf or

something brushes against your leg or

something. I'd literally get airborne

because you definitely do not want to

step on a Russell's Viper.

So yeah, I mean you'd be cautious. You

have to be cautious. But I do know

enough that if you're not moving around

that no snake is just going to come up and attack you. You can sit there meditating and a snake will just crawl right over you. You can lie there asleep. Snake can just crawl right over you. It's not going to bite you. It has no reason to bite you. Why would it do that?

I mean the things that there were a few things that

if they were in the cave with me, I could not sleep. Like there's a kind of giant uh centipede, the the the bright orangey red ones. They get like this. They get as big around as your finger and they they're over a foot long. And

when they're running across the concrete floor, there's like this audible clicking sound. And I've been told that if they bite you, I mean, it hurts so bad you cannot you you you can't meditate. You can't you can't sleep. You can't do anything really. I I knew this one monk who was bitten by one of those and he said all he could do was just chant. You know, it hurt so bad he couldn't meditate. He couldn't sleep. He would just sit there chanting and chanting and chanting just as a way of passing the time. I knew this other monk who got bitten by one of those giant centipedes. And he said the first day wasn't bad. The second day he started

throwing up and having diarrhea and getting really sick.

But forest monks, they kind of brag about that sort of thing. They brag about how messed up they've been, how how bad how many times they've been stung by scorpions and that kind of thing. I got stung by scorpions about six times.

Let's see.

Yeah, I mean the dangerous snakes. I mean, it really didn't bother me. It's the only time I'd be like alarmed about snakes. It was it was like I said before if I have to go outside at night and you step on something that might be a snake

but never was and you know it's you
could literally just get airborne just
trying to get away from it which is just
a natural reaction. It makes sense you
want to get away from it. But there have
been times like Russell's vipers they
can be really mean but you know they're
kind of like a rattlesnake
but I mean I've walked right by one
before. You know they're hard to see.
They're the color of dead leaves, you
know, they're very well camouflaged. And
so I walked right past one, came within
my foot came within about this far of
it. And it just made this little tick
sound, just kind of let me know it was
there. And that was it. I was I was past

it. Um, another uh an Australian monk that I knew, I mentioned him in this in this very Q&A before, he was doing walking meditation and finally realized that the whole time he was doing walking meditation, there was a a coiled up Russell's Viper just like right by the side where he's walking. So, if you don't alarm them, they're not going to they're not going to mess with you. So, I mean, there is that. And just if you have meta, you know, it's like the kondas suta. I like that was one of my favorite parasitas or protection chants was the kandas suta where you're you're like radiating love to all the snakes

among other things. It's mainly about snakes. In fact, it says in the sutra or in the vineia that if you chant the kandasuta, snakes won't bite you or even if they do bite you, you won't die from it.

So, I think someone who loves snakes is probably less likely to be bitten by someone who hates or fears snakes.

All right. So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Ruie.

And Ruie says, "Do you mean to say that the stages of decomposition are directly accessible to experience like in a sort of slow-mo unfolding?" And I asked him, I what does he mean by this question?

And he didn't he didn't res he didn't

answer. He didn't respond. So then I'm thinking I was asked in the previous Q&A about constant flux versus mere impermanence. So I assume it's within the context of my answering that question. He's asking if the stages of decomposition are like in a state of constant flux. But the state of stages of decomposition of what? of a of a corpse or of a human person who's still alive who nevertheless is getting older. I I mean I'm not exactly sure what the meaning of the question is. So I mean with regard to someone who's getting older, yeah, I don't think that you are

in a state of constant continuous
decomposition or like de increasing
decrepitude. I mean sometimes it can go
the other way. You know, you're you're
not there's a time when you're not
healthy and then then you get better.
for example. I mean, you're still like
chronologically, not temporally getting
closer to the moment of your death. I
mean, calendar-wise, you're always
getting closer to your own death, but
still your decomposition isn't
necessarily just in this steady decline.
I mean, just like your vitality and
health and so forth isn't necessarily in
this constant decline.
But I'm not exactly sure what Ruie is

asking here.

Let's see.

Yeah, I mean with a decomposing corpse,

I suppose it would be

I I suppose you could say that moment by

moment that it is becoming more

more decomposed simply because of

entropy. You know, entropy is moving in

one direction and you don't have life

that is sort of working against entropy

to some degree. I mean, you really can't

defeat entropy, but still life is able

to like heal and so forth, which a

decomposing corpse does not do.

So, I suppose the decomposing corpse you

could say is I mean

the see the stages of decomposition are directly accessible to experience. I really do not fully understand this question. I mean there is there are 10 meditation techniques in just the standard list of 40 meditation techniques in terra Buddhism. These 10 are based on the contemplation of a decomposing corpse.

Um

and the stages of decomposition are directly accessible to experience.

I'm I do not fully understand the question. I shouldn't even venture trying to answer this. So I'm just going to move on to the next question. is from Yugauoo.

Yugauoo says, "What would the Buddha think about us trying to presume what he would think?" Good question.

Next question is from Myat.

And uh yeah, we're getting we're getting close to the bottom. Mom is the last questioner of the evening. And Momy says, "I've been enjoying my sin ordination." So he's ordained as a as a novice right now. Good for him. Sadu sadu sadu. I'll start over. Momat says, "I've been enjoying my somara ordination, but unfortunately my concerns about the tradition have been mostly vindicated. There's not much focus on vineia, and I'm obliged to

admit that I've accepted donations on behalf of the SA in little safe envelopes. Of course, I don't plan to use any of the money for myself, rather donating it to a respectable SA or using it to help someone in need. Although I've liked my taste of monasticism, I've been practicing eight precepts except maybe a small amount of content consumption, I'm concerned about the effect it will have on my practice to be around these sort of monastics. There's also part of me that still wants to get ordained at this temple when I come of age and go off on my own when possible. Alternatively, take a trip to Thailand or some other country with an

established SA. If you were in my position, what would be your course of action? Well, I would not ordain permanently at a monastery that I knew had unconscientious monks who are not serious practitioners.

Definitely, you need to find a place where there people are there are people monks there that you would want to emulate. you would you'd want to be like them that they'd be wiser than you and be able to help you to become enlightened and a lax monastery like most monasteries are most Asian ones I should say

I mean it's like um with I mean mainly I'm familiar with Burmese monks and western monks a little bit of Thai monks little bit of Sri Lankan monks but I have more experience with Burmese monks and western monks And Burmese monks, maybe 2% of them are really trying to follow the rules conscientiously. With regard to Western monks, it might be half. So it's way better than, you know, 2% 50% of conscientious monks is way better than 2% of conscientious monks. So you really have to be careful. I mean, you can just wind up in a kind of snake pit. You wind up in a just this unconscious

place where the monks are sort of like a cross between like a lay person and a neutered house cat. To the extent that they don't resemble one, they resemble the other.

So

let's see what's the actual question here.

Wants to get ordained at this temple.

Yeah, I

if if you know that it's they're not practicing correctly, then you're probably better off un undergoing a certain amount of inconvenience, finding some place farther away, possibly even in another country where

the monks are conscientiously practicing, trying to follow the rules and cultivate their mind and and get as wise as possible.

So yeah, this the thing about the little envelopes that's yeah, I can relate to that. In Burma, I mean they know that handling monks handling money is not entirely kosher. Even though like the the the number one monk in the country, the Sa Maha Nayaka Seattle handles money that at least he did at one point. I mean, they might have a different one by now. I don't know.

But I mean some of the most famous monks in the country are handling money even demanding money you know charging you

know exorbitant fees to give dhamma talks
and so forth but even and so a lot of
people don't even know that it's against
the rules for a monk to handle money
some some Burmese people don't even know
it's against the rules for monk to
handle women

but still they have euphemisms for money
handled by monks it's called navakama
which it means like new works. So it's
like this this money is is navakama.

It's new works for you to like you know
build a new meditation cabin or or
something like that.

But it's it's kind of euphemism. And
when people are using euphemisms,

you know, like

um gender affirming care

instead of just flat out saying what it is, then you know that they know deep down there's something not entirely legit about it.

So,

see if you were in my position, what would be your course of action? I'd be looking around for a stricter monastery. just try to find a strict one, one with a good reputation, you know, a reputable place

and then kind of look into whatever reputable places you can find that are within your range of travel, so to speak.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is the very last question.

He says, "The Seattle mentioned that they could facilitate a trip for me to Yangon to study Buddhism. I've heard you talk about Manderlay monks, stating they're notoriously unscrupulous. Is it much the same in Yangon? I've considered against it. I'd rather be a Biku who knows the Dhamma from direct experience rather than a scholar Biku who's a walking encyclopedia on the Polycan."

Yeah, it's it's not so much yangon, it's school monks in general. Scholar monks in Burma have a reputation for just

emphasizing theory and just neglecting practice which mean which includes following rules.

So, like I said before, I lived at Mahagandon, which is a big school monastery near Mandandalay. And there was 600 monks and 900 novices spending the range retreat there the the the year that I spent the Ranger retreat there. And it was considered to be a strict monk. It or a strict monastery. It was had a reputation for being very strict. And so the the amount of monks who didn't handle money there was about 10%. Instead of two, which would be like the nationwide average at that monastery, it was 10% of the monks actually were

trying to follow the rules correctly, which I mean they had a reputation for being very strict largely because of this. Although they were in decline, the original the first Abbott, it was it was really strict and then it just kind of went downhill from there.

But school monasteries as a general rule tend to be snake pits. I knew this one Australian monk, different Australian one from the one that I've been talking about where he he was at the verge of disroing. He he went to it was like some poly university. I think it was in Yangon and he was just a mess. I mean, he was so disillusioned, so just pissed

off and depressed. He was just trying to unwind by watching like YouTube videos and and finally a German monk who was a friend of his stopped by and just advised him, "Man, you guys just got to get out of here. This place is just killing you. It's destroying you. At least it's destroying your your monkhood."

So that's what he did. He left. He lasted a little bit longer, but I do think that you eventually disrupt.

Um, yeah, school monasteries, as a general rule,

you you're going to have monks that don't practice vineia teaching vineyia and who don't practice dharma teaching

dharma. And so, you'll get the words down, but for the most part, it's just going to be like a hollow shell of a beu that is produced by this kind of education. So, I mean, I knew this one guy. He was a western, he was an American man who was ordained as a monk and then dropped out. And then he's he's sending me letters saying that he is before he wanted to ordain again, but first he wanted to get a degree in Buddhist studies from Oxford.

And I'm telling him, you want you want to learn Dharma? learn dharma from a meditation master in a forest somewhere, not from some western

scholar who isn't even a Buddhist coming up with academic theories.

So I think he eventually did uh kind of forego Oxford. I think it was just because it was too expensive and became a monk again. I think he's he might be in robes right now. That's that's good. But seriously, I think that you got the right idea when you say that if you want to learn dhamma, you learn it from a meditation master in a forest somewhere pref. I mean, not necessarily in a forest. It could be like outskirts of a small town or something.

But still, you want to learn dhamma, you learn dhamma from someone who practices dhamma, from someone who lives dhhamma,

from someone who eats and breathes
dharma. Not someone who is just like a
dogmatist who's just spouting these
dogmas that I mean, he doesn't even know
it from his own experience. It's just
dogmatism. It's just words.

So, let's see what's the actual question
here.

Is it much the same in Yangon? It's
Yangon is not as bad as Manderlay.

I mean, in Mandandalay, you got monks
that are like murdering each other. This
kind of stuff, which means that after
they commit the first murder, they're
not really a monk anymore. They're
parajika. But still, I mean, the reason

I say that is I used to go I went and saw two autopsies at Mandalay City Morg and the coroner was telling me that just recently they had found a dead monk and it was their their opinion that it was other monks who had killed him.

Yeah. I mean,

Manderlay is notorious. I think I mentioned when I was talking about notorious Mandalay monks how back around 1988 there was a riot in Mandandalay because monks were denied kickboxing tickets. They wanted to to buy tickets to a boxing match and they were refused because they were monks and that was like inappropriate for monks and so they just ran a muck and just started like

screaming and smashing things.

So yeah, I think you did well to uh you just stay away from like poly universities. Just if you you want to learn dhamma, learn it from a meditation master and not from some academic who probably doesn't follow dharma very well, doesn't follow vineia.

And that's it. That's the end of the end of the uh Q&A. That was the last question, last answer to the last question. So, like I should always say at the beginning, never do. If you think that I can answer something, you got a question you want to ask about like early Buddhism, Terravada Buddhism,

monasticism,

Burma, that kind of thing or I mean that those would be more my field of expertise. The farther you get away from that, you know, into like Mahayana Buddhism or Hinduism or Western philosophy, that kind of thing, then the chances I'll be able to answer intelligently goes down somewhat. And no more than three questions per person per episode, please.

And aside from that, I just say like and subscribe if you haven't done already, and be happy.

Alrighty then.

I think we're recording. Is this on?

Hello and welcome. Hail audience

to question and answer number 155, which
of course is not prime. It's 5 time 31.

I am your host Po Basa. This is your
co-host, my beverage. And it's way too
hot to be drinking coffee. It's very hot
here in South Carolina.

mid 90s Fahrenheit wise. At least it's
not mid 90s centigrade wise.

Uh we got quite a few questions to
answer and so I suppose I should just
cut to the chase so to speak.

So

see first question is from Siovak and

Cipad Zidena and Siovak and Cipad

Ziderna says this is this is a followup to a question he asked in the previous Q&A because he specializes in yeah but kind of questions.

He says I don't understand how cells didn't exist before someone thought of them. When the first person looked into a microscope and saw cells, he was very confused as to what he was seeing. No one before had thought about the body being made of smaller living things and that all living things are made of these same living things. How do you explain something like this if no one thought of cells before? Before atoms, people thought the world was made out of the

four or so elements. But for some reason that never happened to be found when investigation occurred.

So

this is a followup to a question where I was saying that um you know that like atoms and DNA did not exist in our version of reality until somebody hypothesize them.

So with regard to cells, that would be along the same lines. You know, anything microscopic that cannot be seen without a microscope invented in modern times.

Just didn't exist until somebody laid eyes on them. Sort of like certain subatomic particles are notorious for

this in that nobody was able to see these things until they were hypothesized and then all of a sudden they're cropping up everywhere.

Also, it's kind of similar to something that Rupert Sheldrake brought up with regard to crystals. Certain crystals very hard to make until somebody starts making them and then all of a sudden you can make them in seventh grade science classes.

But let's get back to the actual question here. I I assume oh yeah, there's a question mark. There is there is in fact an actual question here. So, I don't understand how cells didn't exist before somebody thought of

them. And then here's the other thing. How do you explain something like this if no one thought of cells before? Okay, so let's go with the standard theory of the simile of the block of marble, right? You got this block of marble and it contains within it in virtual form, potential form, conditional form, every single possible statue.

So you've got a mind that is singling out statues or I mean the mind the the mind itself is one of the statues but it's all in there in virtual form.

So if the mind isn't at a certain level of subtlety yet, a certain level of sophistication with regard to like

objectifying objectivity,

then it's just not going to be it's not
going to be like singling out fine
details.

But when you get to the a level of being
able to single out fine details, then
you're going to start singling out fine
details that still really aren't there.
It's just that you're getting into a
deeper level of sophistication and still
and there has to be a kind of
stability.

In order for some sorrow to exist for
more than just a a fraction of a second,
just like a moment, there has to be
stability.

And so you're gonna have to be singling

out something that is stable,
which I mean with regard to humans, then
it just turned out that it was cellular
structure. And I'm sure that before
people were looking at cells, they were
looking at animalcules. You know,
they're looking at pond water, that sort
of thing, under the microscope and
seeing all these little critters
swimming around like single-celled
organisms. So it wasn't too far of a
leap to have people made out of it. Even
though it may be that nobody was
consciously expecting that we would be
made out of cells, but still you have to
like tune in on a possibility that is

stable.

So we tuned in on cells

even though the cells aren't ultimately real. We aren't ultimately real. Nothing that is singled out and particular part particularized is ultimately real. It's a kind of construct.

And it's really hard to explain this kind of stuff to people that like don't really take it seriously or, you know, they're just kind of already like emotionally committed to some kind of scientific explanation for the universe we're living in. that sort of thing.

But still, I mean, it's it's kind of hard to explain. I probably shouldn't have started off right off the bat with

a question like this. It's easier to answer easy questions first until I get some momentum going and then you can get into like the the more subtle stuff.

But really, it's just a matter of

I mean, it it wasn't really there until it was singled out by a perceiving mind.

And I'm really not sure how to explain things

more clearly than that.

That essay esperipi

as George Barkley used to say to exist

is to be perceived. So I mean it didn't

exist. I mean there was the potential of

it obviously

but until it got perceived

it wasn't there

just in potential form like

retrospectively

you know you can retcon it into the past
that sort of thing.

So

I think I'm just going to move on to
next question. This is also from co of
action coded and I hope I get a few easy
ones to kind of help me build momentum
here.

What is the Buddhist justification of
not stealing if nothing is actually me
or mine and no one actually owns
anything? Well, I mean, nobody actually
exists in Buddhism. So, I mean, that
would just murder would would be all

right, too. I mean, you're not actually killing anybody, which is kind of the approach taken towards the beginning of the Bavad Gita. But I mean it's it's not so much stealing just the the mechanical act of stealing really. It's mechanical acts are ethically neutral. It's mental states. So you're deliberately inflicting suffering on somebody else when you steal their bicycle, for example. You know, it's like you know they're not going to like it, but you go ahead and do it anyway.

Also, it's generally greed and just a kind of callous lack of compassion or

consideration that causes people to steal in the first place, which also is an unethical or unwholesome, unskillful mental state.

So, I mean, taking morality and just boiling it down or crystallizing it down into just like five kinds of mechanical actions, I mean, that's kind of for normies, you know. That's just sort of a way of getting people to act better without having to like teach them subtle philosophy, that kind of thing.

But I mean, you're just deliberately acting in a callous, greedy way that you should know is going to cause suffering to others, and you just don't give a damn, and you do it anyways.

Even though ultimately
there's nobody to steal from, there's
nothing to steal and there's nobody to
do the stealing ultimately. But we are
not operating at the ultimate level
right now.

At least most people are not focused at
the ultimate level.

So, I'm just going to move on to
Seovatz's

next question, which is let's see. No, I
guess there's not even a question mark
in this. It's just kind of an implied
question. I don't see how acknowledging
the existence of atoms and DNA makes me
a materialist. Since you talk about

evolution a lot, isn't that also appealing to a similar sentiment? Well, in the previous question, he was bringing up the existence of atoms in DNA as a kind of objection to spirituality. And when you're doing that, I mean, as a general rule, you're adopting as like the default attitude of western people of scientific realism. Like, how can you how can you justify karma when you know, Adam's in DNA, blah blah blah.

So in a way it's kind of putting the cart before the horse putting putting like scientific realism in front of dharma or dharma.

So with regard to evolution,

I mean, if if you're interpreting
like the cosmos
in accordance with scientific realism or
just empirical objectivity,
then sure, you can talk about DNA and
atoms and evolution also, the fossil
record, that sort of thing. um without
really insisting
that it's ultimately real.

So, I may have just made the assumption
that if you're using
like scientific realist assumptions as a
way of arguing against
Dhamma,
then as a general rule, people who do
that are assuming that scientific

realism is more certain than Dhamma is.

So I may have jumped to a conclusion

there but knowing Siofax and CPA Zena as

I do I'm not sure that I was jumping to

a conclusion. Maybe Sio he just likes

these yeah but nitpicky kind of

questions so much that you know it's

just the exact assumptions are kind of

secondary to the yeah but yeah but yeah

but kind of questions.

Okay.

So, I mean, evolution,

I mean, you have to assume at least

going with like Darwinian organic

evolution. And there's another question

later down on the scroll about

evolution, too, which is nice. I like

talking about it. But, I mean, it's it's empirically pretty damn obvious that it has happened. just going with just this virtual reality within the context of this virtual reality, but it's it's not ultimately real, but for whatever reasons, it is conventionally real in our version of samsara along with atoms and DNA and and cellular structure and all that.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Java Nandin and he says, "Is Dalai Lama on Epstein list and I rather doubt it. I seriously doubt that the Dalai Lama went to

Epstein's island and was getting
massages from 16-year-old girls, etc."

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Akag Grata.

And Aka Grata says, "Is an initiation
into a terraodada sa necessary to
practice an authentic Buddhist tradition
or is it possible for a lay person as
well? As a modern westerner, this is
something I am struggling with and
currently am not in a position where I
can fully devote my life to being a
monk. Buddhism is the tradition that
speaks most to me for quite some years
now. I would appreciate your views on
this. So I mean I think that the correct
answer to this question depends a lot on

definitions of terms like is an initiation into a terra sa that would I assume that would mean like ordination is it necessary to practice an authentic Buddhist tradition. So, what does authentic mean and what does tradition mean? You mean you have to kind of hammer these out in order to like really give a precise answer.

Um, I mean, tradition would be something that's been going on for, you know, an extended period of time that is just established as orthodox and orthoprax.

Um, and authentic. I mean, that depends on that. That's even more problematic because what some people think is

definitely authentic, other people would not like like Abid Dama like the Abidama pitica for example. Is that authentic?

I mean, it's obviously traditional.

So, is it possible for a lay person as well to practice an authentic Buddhist tradition? I mean, it's possible for a lay person to be like an authentic Buddhist traditional lay person.

But I mean most of Dharma if you read the polyutas and vineia I mean the first pedekica

number one in the polytopetica the Buddhist trapetica in general number one is vineia which is rules of monastic discipline which applies to ordained monastics.

So, Terravada was founded by a monk for monks and the lay people are kind of an afterthought. I mean, mainly it was renunciation meditating out in forests.

So, I mean, do you have to be initiated to practice along those lines? No. I mean, you could just go off and follow whatever rules you like and and just wander around homeless and you can follow Vinaya as strictly as you want without being ordained. Technically, I mean, you couldn't try to pass yourself off as a monk. That would be living in in robes as, you know, by theft as it's called, that kind of thing. That's

frowned upon. But just going off in and in alone without being ordained and living the life of a monk, I mean nothing's going to stop you. And unlike a lot of Burmese people, I do not think or I mean even Orthodox tradition, I do not think that a formal ordination ceremony is going to cause some metabolic change in you that's going to allow you to get to like sustain more advanced states, anything like that. I mean that's sila paramasa that's clinging to morality and observance especially observances at that point.

So

I mean this is kind of a

it's it's kind of a tricky question

because it depends a lot on interpretation of key words like initiation, authentic and tradition. I mean tradition isn't I mean that's that's fairly straightforward but initiation I mean that just presumably means ordination and then authentic I mean that's the that's the trickiest word because what's authentic to one person might not be authentic to the other person even though they might be equally like devoted to dharma like like I've said many times before western monks generally don't consider the third pitika of the typica abidama to be authentic to for it to actually

represent genuine teachings of the founder of the system.

A lot of texts that aren't in Abidama. A lot of sutas probably wouldn't be authentic to like a western mind that is that is like familiar with critical thinking, willing to exercise critical thinking or like a devout eastern Buddhist who just accepts it all as gospel truth who does not dare to question it.

So

let's just get back to the actual question here. Is an initiation into a terabato sunga necessary to practice an authentic Buddhist tradition?

Uh I mean at the highest level yes

but I mean if you just want to be a good lay person I mean the door is open for that. You'd be an authentic Buddhist traditional lay person but you wouldn't be practicing at the highest level.

And I guess I might as well just move on this question here. This is from Fred, and this is kind of a strange question, but Fred specializes in these. He says, "Did you experience that plant in Asia that reacts to your touch and curls up?" And I think it's called the sensitive plant, or at least, you know, that's just sort of a common name for it. I have encountered them before in America,

like at like stores. I think it was like a hardware store. What do you think? Also, they had some kind of plant that you just touch the plant and it turns the lamp off and on. That was kind of nice.

But, uh, no, I didn't see any wild plants in Asia. Not that I recall where you touch it and the leaves kind of close up as kind of like an automatic defense mechanism. Um, also like a Venus fly trap. You can touch a Venus fly trap and it'll close. But I didn't see any of those in Asia either. I've seen all all the Venus fly traps I've seen have been in America, I'm pretty sure.

So, I think Fred might be confusing the

plant that curls up to the touch with the resurrection plant I mentioned in the previous Q&A where if you don't water it, it just curls up into like a dry brown this very lightweight dehydrated ball and then you put it in water again, opens up and turns green and becomes alive again. Which reminds me of the tardigrade question about how a tardigrade which is capable of completely dehydrating.

Like they a lot of them specialize in living in moss and like during the hot summer time the moss dries out. The tardigrades the little animals that live on the moss dry out. Metabolic processes

cease and then it gets wet, rehydrates
and essentially becomes alive again. And
someone was asking about like the the
karmic stream of this and then I
mentioned human beings that are
cryogenically frozen. They might be
cryogenically frozen for decades and
then they get thawed out again some
future date. I mean what happens to the
karmic stream during that hiatus
and I was thinking I mean it's like time
and space are really just a construct.
So it may be that from the the point of
view of your karma
just like a gap in time is just
negligible. I mean it might not even
exist. You you could just skip

decades and

from from like the point of view of this
empirical samasara it might not be
possible

but like your karma might be working at
a different level where time is not it
doesn't have to follow the same rules
and that may also help to account for um
like someone who dies

like 10 years ago and then it's like 10
15 years before they take rebirth. It's
not necessarily the case that I mean
from the terra point of view you I mean
time apparently is essentially real and
so the karmic stream immediately the
very next moment has to take rebirth

after death. But if time is an illusion and it doesn't really apply to certain other realms, at least not on the same terms as this realm, then you you could just skip 10 or 15 years and and it wouldn't really violate anything. So I was I considered that when I was taking a shower the other night.

I have I get I have my most philosophical ideas in the shower for some reason. Even when I was a monk, I'd have these weird insights sometimes that would result in blog post or whatever while taking a shower. I don't know why that is.

At least it doesn't happen when I'm

sitting on the toilet.

So, I guess I answer that question. I'm moving on to the next one. This is from Romeo. We do have kind of a lot of questions so I shouldn't be like malingering

loitering in my question answering.

So this is from Romeo

and Romeo says my questions are about the difference between Buddhist equanimity or upka and plain old garden variety indifference. Both involve being unbothered by whatever comes up in life. but I am having a hard time understanding what sets them apart. Can you tease out the difference between

equanimity and indifference and if possible illustrate how they differ with an actual real world example from life?

And I mean sometimes I have um I have translated up as indifference. I think in my uh Atakawaga translation I have upeka or variations on on the root the same root as upka translated in English as indifferent or indifference.

So I mean

equanimity like UPA could be a kind of indifference but I guess Romeo has specified plain old garden variety indifference which would be just sort of normie level whereas upka especially like the highest it's the highest Brahma vihara it's the only brahma vihara that

can take you to fourth janna according
to orthodox terra Buddhist tradition.

So the main indifference is plain old
the main difference did I say the main
indifference the main difference between
equanimity and indifference

would be indifference is you're just
kind of like

you're you're just like being callous
you know it's like you're not letting it
get to you know it's just you've got
like this shell of indifference and the
events out there are just kind of
bouncing off of it. So in a way you're
kind of numb to it. Whereas equanimity,
the Buddhist idea of equanimity is you

become like transparent like a pane of glass. So it's like going right through you. For example,

um I mentioned recently in a Q&A that I spent two months doing intensive practice at Pandidorama in Rangon back in like 199798 thereabouts.

And the Burmese, including venerable, they just are kind of indifferent to loud noises. So the Burmese just don't mind lots of noise. Whereas Westerners, especially if you're meditating, you want some quiet. But Seattle Upandida had I mean just about every monastery in Burma is under construction. There's always some kind of new building going

up somewhere. So there was a new building going up at Panda Rama and venerable Seattle Upandida had this guy literally pounding out sheet metal gutters with a hammer right under the eaves of the meditation hall. So we're in there trying to meditate doing intensive retreat and there's this guy out there literally pounding on sheet metal with a hammer just bang bang bang. So the Burmese, a lot of the Burmese people, it's just be kind of indifference where, you know, it's just they're not paying attention to it. You know, it's just kind of like selective ignorance in a way.

For Westerners like me, it for a while
long while it was bothering me, but then
finally I reached this zone in my
meditation where it was just like the
sound was going in one ear and out the
other and it was just like washing
through me without any kind of
resistance.

So that would be more like oopa where
it's you're experiencing it deeply with
zero judgment, zero resistance. It's
just going through you like light going
through glass.

Whereas ordinary kind of indifference
usually there's like a selective
ignorance or just like a numbness, you
know, this shell of of just not giving a

[__] just kind of blocking stuff out.

So

I guess I'm just going to move on to

Romeo's next question

which is as follows. Also are equanimity

and indifference held in the body

differently. Well I guess I kind of

already answered that held in the body.

You know it's like ordinary

indifference. I mean you could just be

in a foul mood and just I don't give a

[__] And that could be a kind of

indifference at least with regard to a

lot of the stuff going on out there.

Even though you might be in a foul mood

internally, you know, it's like you just

you're in a bad mood. You trample something. You you break something. It's like I don't give a [—] You just keep going. You know, where I mean that kind of thing obviously it's going to feel different from being just sort of like transparent just everything is just flowing through. You're experiencing it all deeply in a sense without any kind of reaction with no friction, no resistance, anything like that.

So true equanimity would be just being completely at ease.

Whereas indifference, there'd be a kind of resistance and how that feels in your body.

Probably more tension in regular indifference than in equanimity where there'd be like no tension at all if you had mastered it. you're a master of the fourth Brahma Vihara, then you'd be completely at ease. And there's a dog licking my elbow right now.

So, let's just move on to the next question. This is from Yoshi Buouie.

And Yoshi Buouie, hey dude.

Yoshi Buouie says, "You had mentioned that there is ultimately no free will, but if doing good deeds help someone for instance, can earn one good merits, then that seems to imply that one has free will to do good deeds. If not, if doing

good deeds is part of karma,
uh, i.e. karma causes one to do good
deeds, then how can that generate
merits? In other words, how can
something that is not done intentionally
or done without free will be attributed
positively to the person who did it via
merits? Well, a lot of actions,
especially someone who is not fully
enlightened, a lot of your actions
really is just through force of habit.
So that's why like a lay person is
supposed to like break unh wholesome
habits and establish wholesome habits so
that when you're on automatic pilot
you're going to be doing good and making
good karma instead of doing bad and

doing bad karma. You know it's like the fourright efforts in orthodox terravada. It's like to abolish bad habits, to refrain from establishing new bad habits, to strengthen good habits, and to let's see, to gain new good habits, you know, to strengthen the good habits you've already got and to gain new good habits. And so, I mean, a lot of this you're earning merit, but it's I mean, you're doing an automatic pilot, especially at the beginning levels. So there there's no real contradiction there.

There is a kind of contradiction in the whole idea that you can sort of break

away from karma. I mean you can I mean everything has a cause in teraba Buddhism. And the Buddha ironically strangely paradoxically rejects both determinism and free will. Free will is pretty much refuted in the Buddha's second formal discourse after his enlightenment. According to tradition, the Anatalakanas Suta, the discourse on the marks of no self, where he's saying that with regard to any of the five condas, you cannot say let it be this way, let it not be that way, and have it reliably happen, which is one of his demonstrations of the idea that none of the fiveas including volition is really a self. it's not me because you

don't have complete control over it. But on the other hand, he denounced the Aivacas who are strict determinists.

He said you could even go to hell for believing that stuff that there's just this blind determinism.

So there could be a kind of paradoxical semi-free will there would be like a middle path between

like or orthod like regular free will the the normal person's idea of free will

like Christian free will on the one hand and just blind mechanical determinism on the other like um Ramana Maharshi he was definitely a heavy hitter even though he

wasn't a Buddhist

He said that the only real free will
that you have is the choice whether or
not to be mindful.

And also

there is the idea that if when something
becomes self-referential

then paradoxes can occur. You know it's
like Gödel's theorem where there are
certain statements that are neither true
nor false like this statement is false.

Well, it can't be false because then it
would be true. And it can't be true
because then it really would be false.

And so when a you get into
self-referential

like attitudes or perspectives,

we like rules break
and the human mind to some degree is
self-referential, especially among people
that are more conscious I guess. So I
mean like you the level of an animal
maybe not so much self-referential but
you get up into like regular human
consciousness it becomes more
self-referential in which case you could
have paradoxes like somehow some kind of
free will not just what Christians
imagine but something along the lines of
free will some kind of like freedom that
keeps you from just being locked into a
mechanistic deterministic system
which the Buddha also denounced.

So I mean trying to tease out exactly the orthodox teraba Buddhist idea of free will or their attit the attitude towards it is is not easy.

But the idea that in order for an act to be meritorious, there would have to be free will, that's not necessarily the case at all since most of the meritorious deeds and demarritorious deeds um perpetrated by humans is just knee-jerk reflex, sleepwalking, and then once you become enlightened, you're not making karma at all. Once you're fully conscious, you're not making merit or demerit anymore.

So merit and demerit are entirely at the level of delusion.

Once you have no more delusion, you have no more merit or demerit. You're not making karma anymore.

So karma and merit rely on being unenlightened.

And so generally there's a certain amount of knee-jerk semiconscious this going with the flow just acting out your habits that is causing virtually all of your merit and demerit. And so by hearing the dharma that can cause you to change your attitude. You know everything has a cause. And then you can determine that you're going to establish good habits and and try to reduce bad habits so that you're making more merit

than demerit.

And I hope I answered that question more or less because I'm moving on to the next one. This is from Super Lump and Okay, Super Lump.

That's kind of weird. That's How did he come up with this name?

Oh, I think I just did something weird.

I just lost my place on the Oh, here we go. Super lump. He says, "Do the monks

who handle money make any attempt to

justify it?" Well, some of them do. I

remember one time some Sri Lankan monks

visited me when I was a junior monk

living at Mahagandon in central Burma

and one of the Burmese monks told him

that with regard to me he doesn't handle

money because that's pretty rare in in
the the Burmese SA like I've said before
definitely

more than 95% of Burmese monks handle
money. So they some Burmese monk told
these these two Sri Lankan visitors that
were monks that I didn't handle money
and one of them kind of looked at me
strangely and said how do you manage
so I mean the assumption there is they
just assume you they just can't manage
you know they can't do what needs to be
done like get bus tickets or something
if they don't handle money but most
monks handle money they know they're not
supposed to. They know it's against the

rules and they just go ahead and do it anyway. mainly because they're just following along with what all the other monks are doing. Like all the monks at a monastery might be handling money. You know, it's sort of like in Christianity, too. I mean, how many Christians gather not up their treasures upon the earth? You know, there's there's a an epistle of Paul that says, "If you're you're unmarried at the time you become a Christian, you should remain unmarried. And if you're married at the time that you become a Christian, you should remain married." Well, how many Christians follow that? I mean, you're just born and raised as a

Christian, then you grow up and get married. So, there's certain teachings in Christianity that are just so much in conflict, so inconvenient with Christianity being like uh a majority like traditional popular religion that it just it just gets ignored, you know? Or they'll just say, "Well, that applied in ancient times, but it doesn't apply now." that kind of thing.

And it's kind of the same way in in Buddhism. I mean, some things like there's a a rule of monastic discipline saying that a monk is not allowed to bathe more than twice a month unless there are certain circumstances like

he's been sick or he's been traveling or there's been a storm or it's the hottest time of year, that kind of thing. But aside from these relatively few exceptions, a monk for most of the year is only supposed to bathe no more than twice a month. And even in ancient times that apparently was so inconvenient and monks just didn't want to do that that it was like new like new loopholes got added that that allowed monks outside of the Ganges Valley like it got interpreted to mean that applies only to the Ganges Valley but anywhere outside of the Ganges Valley it's okay to take a bath as much as you want.

So handling money is is kind of along

those lines. It was just so inconvenient. Like the what was it? The second council, the second great council was largely debating whether monks it's okay for monks to handle money because already, you know, within a hundred years of the party of the Buddha, you've already got monks just thinking we need to handle money.

And it's not really necessary. I mean it takes a certain amount of faith in dharma that if you protect dhamma dhamma protects you so that you don't have to be worrying about tomorrow you know where will I sleep and what will I eat this kind of thing I mean Jesus

apparently taught similar stuff give no thought for tomorrow you know God will provide in in Buddhism it's more dharma will provide your own karma will provide but a lot of monks just cannot take that step.

And also a monk who handles money, especially in some place like Burma, he's going to be considered a saint. You know, people are just going to be falling all over themselves offering these monks whatever they need because they like to single out the the more virtuous monks that are considered to be more advanced.

And Richard Gomerich who used to be president of the Polytech Society I

think he uh spent some time in Sri Lanka
uh way back in the 20th century and he
was saying that it's sort of like monks
that and it's true too it's like the
monks that are the strictest are the
ones that have the most people trying to
spoil them rotten
just because you get more merit
supposedly by offering donations to some
monk that is very strict so that they're
just falling all over themselves just
trying to spoil the strict monk rotten
and sometimes they succeed.

So getting back to the actual question
of super lump here, do the monks who
handle money make any attempt to justify

it? Some of them do, but I mean for a lot of them, how many Christians justify gathering up their treasures upon the earth? Or how many Christians justify getting married after they converted to Christianity as children? You know, it's like it's just what everybody does.

There's no I mean, it doesn't even occur to them. Do you even have to justify it? And so for these monks, their their sila is never pure.

Never. Because in order to purify your seal, like in order to make confession and have the offense go away, you have to get rid of all of your money and everything that you have bought with money. And almost nobody's willing to do

that.

So, I'm just going to move on to SuperLum's next question, which is as follows.

What exactly was the Saadisa penance that caused someone to disrobe? I've heard of having to go last on alms round, but that doesn't seem like a big deal. The most difficult pain in the neck part about sanadisa penance like you've committed a sanadesa offense.

Second most serious level of offense.

the most serious level of offense shy of excommunication for life

which would involve you know it involves there's 13 of them the main one the main

two I think are deliberately having an orgasm or touching a woman and deriving pleasure from that touch.

So the main difficulty of the penance like there was a friend of mine knew a monk who realized like 2 years after the fact that he had committed a serious offense that he had he finally realized I broke a serious desecration rule I've got to do penance or it may be no that wouldn't be the case at all. It wasn't that he didn't know. He knew. Maybe he was just sort of unconscious. And then finally he just decided I I really need to to like set the record straight. I really need to just straighten this out. I need to

be a good monk. And so he decided he was going to do sadisa penance for like two years. And it was such a pain in the neck that he eventually just dropped out of the monkhood. Because I mean my original scenario where he didn't realize if you don't realize you've done it then

then you haven't really committed the offense. Let's see. No, it could be that you don't know. No, because if you don't know that you're concealing the offense, you don't have to do the extra penance.

It's only if you're deliberately concealing the penance or concealing the offense. You know, you you you committed

the offense. you know you committed the offense

and you just don't say anything about it. You just keep it covered up, keep it a secret, then you have to do an extra day of penance for every day that you don't you don't confess it. But if you don't even know that you committed an offense, like you built a meditation cabin that was too big and you weren't even thinking about it and then two years later you realize, oh, that cabin I built for myself was too big. That's a sin offense. then you wouldn't have to do the the penance because you you weren't deliberately concealing it. Or even if you're not sure, it's like,

let's say a monk is not exactly spanking the puppy, but just kind of petting a little bit and then it just goes off, then he's he's like psychoanalyzing himself. It's like, did I do that on purpose? Did I do anything to help it along, you know, after it started? And and so you're not sure. And in a case like that, even if there was some element of deliberate causing oneself to have an orgasm, that the uncertainty keeps you from having to confess it immediately because you have to know for sure if you did it before you confess it.

There's actually in Vineia a certain

confession for for being in doubt that
I've never heard of any monk ever doing.
I've considered doing it a few times as
a as a like uh when I was a monk, but
the other monks wouldn't even know what
I was doing because it was so
they' never heard of it before.

So, let's see, where was I? Yeah. So,
let's say a monk builds whatever it was.
He had to do penis for two years. I'm
just I'm just straying out into the into
the weeds into some kind of wilderness
in this in this answer because I'm just
trying to nail down stuff that doesn't
even really have to apply to this. So,
if you're doing penance for two years
and it's just such a pain in the neck

that you can't do it or it's just it's not worth it, then you generally it's the making confession repeatedly like you'd have to make confession to every monk at the monastery. I think it's like once a week if you're doing I mean if I'm I'm like confusing myself. All right. First there's the six days and six nights of penance for breaking the rule that for that penance you have to make confession every single day to every monk at the monastery. But for the concealed penance, the the extra penance for concealing the offense, I don't think it's every day. It could be once a week.

But still, just finding all the monks and making confession to all the monks, like even once a week is it's really a pain in the neck because you got monks coming and going and you have to make confession to every single monk that has stayed at that monastery. And then it's time to make confession. and you ask where's venerable so- and so it's like oh he took off this morning he he went to visit his parents or he went off to some other monastery and then that day doesn't count because you failed to make confession to that monk and if monks are coming and going you got to keep track of all of them and make confession to every single visitor and and every monk

before he goes to off on a trip or something it's really a pain in the neck so there are some monasteries in Burma that specialize in sanad Seesaw penants where they're just remote areas. There's not a lot of coming and going, not a lot of monks there, and it's just it just works better that way.

So, I guess I answered that question from Super Lump. Oh, and I was going to this next one. I was actually going to look this up. Super lump asked me, "Do you have any stories about agoris?" And I have no idea what an agori is. I'm just here. Let me I'm just going to look it up. What the heck? What is an agori?

Agori?

What is agori?

It's a Hindu monastic order of ascetic
shyite sadus based in Uttar Pradesh,
India. They are the only surviving sect
derived from the Kapalika tradition, a
tantric non-puranic form of shivism which
originated in medieval India between the
4th and 8th century CE.

Okay, so now I got to go back to
actually seeing the list and everything.
Yeah, I'd never heard of agories. I've
heard of tantric shivites. I mean, some of
them might be like the ghouls who who
live in cemeteries and eat the offerings
to the dead and um in some cases maybe
even eating the dead, that kind of

thing. But

yeah, I don't have any personal experience with them. There's I never heard of any in Burma. So yeah, no stories about agoris. I'm very sorry to say. Now I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Tzasquez.

And Tzas says, "My favorite New Testament verses are similar to yours. I would add Philippians 4 12-13.

Please comment or as tradition says, thoughts." And as it turns out, I just happen to have my trusty Bible right here. And strangely, I don't know why this is, but I actually had a bookmark

right at that page where it has where
Philippians 4 12-13 are. But I'm pretty
sure the bookmark wasn't for that. But I
don't understand this. Here's
Philippians 4:es 12 to13. Let's see
here. He did this to prepare all God's
people for the work of Christian service
in order to build up the body of Christ.
And so we shall all come together to
that oneness in our faith and in our
knowledge of the son of God. We shall
become mature people reaching to the
very height of Christ's full stature.
And why that would be a non Buddhists
one of his favorite Bible verses, I have
no idea. It really does not really
strike a chord with me at all. I think

possibly the reason why I had a bookmark that had been in this Bible for years.

It probably had been there since I was a monk. But here on the same here on the same page or the the other on the other side is Philippians chapter 5 starting with verse 21 21- 24 it says submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ. Wives submit yourself submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband has authority over his wife, just as Christ has authority over the church, and Christ is himself the savior of the church, his body. And so wives must submit themselves completely to their

husbands, just as the church submits
itself to Christ. And that's another one
of those teachings that Christians
nowadays just ignore, or at least a lot
of them do, especially Christian
feminists.

[Music]

So that was kind of interesting.

But with regard to Philippians chapter 4
12-13 is it just didn't really do much
for me. I have to admit
there is a saying of Paul though that I
like and he says to the pure man all
things are pure. And that's got some
profoundity to it. So that would be one
of my favorite verses I guess. I don't
remember the exact verse though like

where it is. It's in the epistles of Paul somewhere.

So Tzascus is a second question. He says this is stolen from Seio

because Seova seat was the first person to ask this question on the discord server

and it is as follows. Quote when taking chemicals can predictably induce mystical states what does that say?

Well, what it says is that within this version of reality, taking chemicals can predictably induce mystical states.

That's what it says. I don't know why I didn't read read his own sentence

because it's right there. That's what it

says.

So

I guess seaction cotzena is still kind of arguing against spirituality because you can take like a chemical like LSD and it can at least in some people predictably induce mystical states.

But so what I mean I don't see what the problem is with that. It's like we're in a version of reality where stuff is happening and you you can identify this and that and so I mean what would be the problem in taking a chemical that induces a mystical state you know it just sort of thins the veil you know it sort of interrupts your habitual thought

patterns so that more light can shine through something like that I mean obviously the opposite is true. There are certain chemicals that can just make a person stupider and thicker, you know, more opaque, you know, that can work. It works that way, too. And I really don't see what is the

what is the problem with that. Why is that so difficult to accept

is none of it's ultimately real anyway?

So, I'm just going to move on to Chas is his third question.

which is why in terravada there are in fact nine precepts for noviceses not 10.

It's the same eight precepts as for

anagaraka plus not handling money but one precept is split into two same as in Catholic version of the ten commandments where they remove the second commandment and split the ninth into two because it must be 10 of course. Well, you could say that for noviceses there are 10 precepts, but for someone taking eight precepts, it's like two of the novice precepts get lumped together because if you read I think it's what is it the sixth I don't remember I think it's the sixth or seventh precept for of the eight that you've got what nacha wadita which is like dancing and and singing and and playing musical instruments and looking at entertainment shows. And then

you've got Malagatada

or Malaganda Wipina and and like let's

see wearing wearing ornaments and like

perfumes and that kind of thing which it

really it's just like two rules that got

lumped together. One is like

entertainment like frivolous

entertainment which is sensual and the

other one is like self-

beautification.

So that's two rules really that somehow

just get lumped together in this long

clumsy precept when you for someone

who's taking eight precepts. But for a

salmon era, they're just divided into

two, which makes more sense.

So I think it's really that there are 10 precepts for novices and maybe nine for someone taking eight precepts, but there's two of them that are just combined together, even though it's two entirely different rules.

And I used to give these precepts on a weekly basis and it's been so long because nobody asked me to give them precepts anymore that I'm getting rusty. Let's see here.

So I guess I guess that's it. I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Sedarta Lohachita.

And Sedarta Lohachita says, "People with children, what do you think would be the most appropriate way to introduce the

dharma to kids? Although sometimes it seems a bit futile to me because since Terravada is so intellectually inclined, I imagine it's not really made for children. Yeah, I mean Dharma is relatively philosophical and advanced dharma is pretty much beyond the reach of children, beyond the grasp of children, beyond the grasp of most people. But still, I mean, as a parent, you can instill basic dharma into kids. I mean for example just like an elementary understanding of kama you know you just kind of sort of indoctrinate your kids teach your children if you do good things good

things are more likely to happen to you
if you do bad things bad things are more
likely to happen to you just give them
like a basic intro and elementary you
know karma and ethics for example
you know when you hurt somebody you hurt
yourself even though you might not
realize it at the time. If you help
somebody, you help yourself even though
you might not realize it at the time.

And I mean if parents teach their
children that on a regular basis,
especially in a loving way, not like
harping at them so that they start
resisting it, but you know, just sort of
sharing the world view that kids absorb
from their parents, then they're going

to start off on a on a better a better
foot than a lot of children do. You
know, teaching them, you know, don't
step on bugs just for the fun of it.
Like my father, I mean, he was no saint.
and he was not really into aimsa even
that um you know he he he had actually
killed humans as a soldier you know he
used to hunt a lot do big game hunting
in Alaska and so forth but at the same
time from the time that I was a kid he
really strongly impressed me with this
idea never kill anything just for fun if
you're going to kill something you
better have a good reason for it you
know you're going to eat it or it's, you

know, endangering you or someone else,
that kind of thing. Okay. But don't kill
something just, you know, just for
laughs. He he really despised like
trophy hunters, people that would just
go out and hunt and then just not not
even eat the meat, that kind of thing.
So things like that you could you could
teach to children fairly easily. Also, I
mean, even elementary meditation, like
you got some little kid might just be
five years old sitting in your lap and
you're all comfy cozy with each other
and you could even lead him on a little
guided meditation, but it would have to
be something imaginative that little
kids could follow. I mean, you're not

going to have a kid, you know,
5-year-old kid just watching his breath,
that sort of thing. I mean, for
children, just making them sit quietly
is a kind of punishment nowadays. A
timeout, you know, go sit in a corner,
that kind of thing. But still you could
teach them like children's guided
meditation where just imagine yourself
getting bigger and bigger and bigger
until the you know it's like to you're
as big as the whole room and you're as
big as the whole house and you're as big
as the whole neighborhood and all the
people are inside you know this kind of
thing that that would be kind of an

elementary child level kind of guided meditation.

But yeah, I mean you can you can teach them the simple stuff. I mean, Jotica stories that I mean, that would apply that that would be interesting to some children. At least some Jotica stories, you know, it' be like Asup's fables, things like that. But I mean, you don't want to be just sort of forcing it down their throat so that you wind up with like preacher son syndrome, which my father, he had preacher son syndrome when he was a kid. He had to be one of the rowdiest kids in the neighborhood because his dad was a preacher man. So he didn't want to he

didn't want that stigma attached to him so much. So he was like one of the rowdiest kids in the whole neighborhood. So let's see here. I guess I answered that question.

But I mean you can teach them basics especially you know just if you do good comes back to you. If you do bad comes back to you. You know don't hurt animals. I mean if you have to but don't do it for fun. Don't just go out and step on bugs. just because you it's it's like an interesting hobby seeing how they squish that kind of thing.

Tell the truth,

don't steal. I mean, that kind of stuff.

I mean, any parent should teach that kind of stuff to their kids.

And it's familiarizing with who the Buddha was. You know, you've got a Buddha statue in the house. You know, you could explain to the kid who the Buddha was. you know why you're, you know, offering flowers or whatever.

I mean, little kids in Burma, they can be toddlers and already they know, you know, to offer to the monks and to bow to the monks. And some some little kids, it's like, um, you know, when I was a little kid, you know, kids would, you know, parents would have them show off to adults by having them count to 10, that kind of thing. Some little kids in

Burma, they know a lot of chanting already.

So, let's see here. I guess I should move on to the next question. This is also from Sedar Lohachita and this is kind of an interesting one. Says, don't you think that Darwin's theory of evolution was created by the British Empire is a kind of political doctrine similar to Aristotle's theory of master and slave where nature granted the rule to the master over the incapable slave. It's not different where the rule of the evolved aka the Anglo-Saxons is confirmed by nature granting them the empire. Later, this entire racist and

supremacist approach was eliminated and remained only as a scientific doctrine.

No, I don't think that at all. I mean, first of all, Darwin's theory of evolution, when he went on his um his uh his trip on the the HMS Beagle, he was looking for for evidence in support of creationism, and he just kept finding the opposite. And it was against his will with a lot of just I don't know just a lot of soulsearching and pain and despair that he just was pretty much compelled to accept the evidence of evolution and the evolution it's so freaking obvious to anyone who looks at the the evidence. I mean the exact mechanism what is what is like driving

it that's up to that's up to debate. But unless you want to just argue against the fossil record for example, you want to argue against embryology like the embryological development of of of animals, you want to argue against vestigial organs, that kind of thing. I mean, it's it's futile that evolution has occurred is fairly obvious.

How it actually occurs, you know, what exactly is driving it, you could argue on that.

But when Darwin came up with this theory of evolution, he was ostracized. I mean, the Christians, I mean, they wanted him excommunicated. They were in state of

uproar.

He just he just stirred up this he
tipped over a can of worms or stirred it
up or something. There was some kind of
can of worm action going on. And I mean,
he was just demonized.

And I mean, it wasn't like the British
Empire was behind this. It wasn't some
kind of conspiracy.

So I mean it was that I think it was
even like Darwin's nephew
that that became like a social Darwinist
who was applying Darwin's theories to
like civilizations
which
as far as I can tell is is valid within
certain contexts.

Um and that became politically incorrect. But I mean it's like the strong succeed and the weak kind of don't

in many cases. And by strong and weak, I don't just necessarily mean like political power or whatever. I just mean like ability to survive and reproduce.

So let's see here.

Darwin's theory of evolution was create
I don't think Darwin's theory of evolution was created by the British Empire. Just read his books. You'll see the evidence and he he lays it out. I mean, he has to. He knew full well that there was just going to be like a a

tsunami of of push back against his theories because he was challenging Christianity.

So, I mean, he just puts evidence, I mean, just evidence after evidence after evidence. I mean, very cogently put forth.

And I mean, most people rejected it with scorn and outrage at first. It took quite a while before Darwin's theory finally Darwin's theory of evolution finally, you know, caught traction and was accepted by most scientists.

So,

yeah, I don't think it's a racist and supremacist approach necessarily.

is explaining it is at least putting

forth a plausible theory as to how evolution occurs because evolution is occurring.

Just look at the fossil record.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Raphael. And Raphael says, "Would it be beneficial if Terraata Buddhism in the USA had a central authority that oversaw all monasteries and excommunicated monks who, for example, advocated for abortion?"

Well, I mean, that would be tricky. I don't know how you'd go about it. Like, Terra Buddhism in the USA, it's really a combination of like Thai Buddhism and

Burmese Buddhism and Sinhali Buddhism. a little Cambodian Buddhism. You've got like the the Goinka people, I guess. Not a whole lot of monks in the Goinka system. Um there are some though.

Um you know, you just got Western monasticism, that kind of thing. You've got the weasa people. Um, and putting all that under a central authority or at least um like the monastic aspects of Terra Buddhism, putting it under a central authority. I I don't know like I don't know if it would work. I mean, they don't even have that built into Vignia. I mean, there is no central authority other than the SA itself, the SA of the four quarters. you know,

they're supposed to police themselves. And there are so many corrupt ones now that if any policing is done, it's the corrupt ones kicking out the good ones in in like a lot of places, not everywhere, but a lot of places. It's the good monks that get antagonized and driven out, the conscientious ones that are following vineia rules strictly and so forth. I have read that in Burma during the like the kings before the British Empire took over the entire country that there was sort of like a minister of SA affairs who was in charge of you know making sure that monks were following the rules and I don't think I

mean I think they understood Via well enough to know that you can't just kick monks out especially a lay person even the king can't just kick a monk out of the SA but I do think they had a jail. So that monks that were like drunk in public. I think in Thailand it's still to this some of this is going on to this day in Thailand. You got monks that are like drunken and disorderly in public. They get thrown into the SA jail and they stay there until they decide to drop out or you know their you know whatever they're sentenced to is is fulfilled that kind of thing. But how you would do that in the USA was separation of church and state. And I

mean, the church isn't even a Buddhist church.

You'd have to have some non-governmental central authority and then somehow you'd have to get the Burmese and the Thai and the Sinhales and the the Westerners all to agree on it.

So, I mean, theoretically, I mean, it could be beneficial, but I don't know how you'd set it up. I don't I think it's just kind of not really practical to do that. If you have a Buddhist society with a Buddhist king who sets it up, then sure that can work. Still, it might be corrupt because government government agencies do tend to have some

corruption,

but still how it would happen in

America, I really don't know. I don't

think it would be particularly easy or

even realistic to do that. So, I'm just

going to move on to Raphael's next

question. In order to attain

enlightenment in Tibetan Buddhism, one

must overcome dualistic thinking such as

good and evil and pure and impure. For

this reason, an advanced monk must be

able to ingest feces and urine without

feeling disgust is such a way of

thinking foreign to early Buddhism.

Well,

um, according to one or two sutas, the

Buddha before he became enlightened, I

think it might be in the Mahasi Nada Suta would be one of them, that he was eating cow poop as part of an aesthetic practice, apparently some ancient Indian aesthetics just ate cow [__] But he realized that that wasn't the way to become enlightened. You know, it wasn't like he was demonstrating his upeka, his detachment by eating it after his enlightenment. He was trying to become enlightened by doing these outrageous austerities and it just didn't work and so he gave it up. With regard to drinking urine, every monk who is ordained at his ordination ceremony is admonished that from now on, now that

you are a monk, you should make do with stale urine as your only medicine.

But if if you can't do that, then you can take other medicines too. Just like if you can't live under a tree, you can live in a cabin or something. But every monk at his ordination is admonished to take put muta as his medicine, which is putrified urine.

So there's quite a few monks out there, not a majority, but quite a few monks out there who do drink urine, either cow's urine or their own. But still I mean it's not any kind of spiritual proof of anything. It's just in ancient India that's what apparently like renuncience did. It was just sort of

relatively primitive

like folk medicine. I guess that

drinking stale urine was or putrified
urine

or like slightly fermented although not
alcoholic urine was good for you. Had
some kind of medicinal properties. There
are people today that drink their own
pee and and think that it's beneficial
in some way. I've I knew a few monks who
did it and I I tried to point out to
them it's like that's the reason why
your body gets rid of pee is because
it's like metabolic waste.

You know, it's like it's toxic waste
literally. But I guess there's some kind

of also beneficial

compounds or something in there. But I

mean the reason why your body gets rid

of it is because it is metabolic waste.

So yeah, this way of thinking is foreign

to early Buddhism that I mean you you

don't have to do that. Um even though

some renunciates did eat like cow dung

at least and even more renunciates would

drink stale pee for medicinal purposes

without feeling disgust maybe just a

little bit of ug this is gross but I'm

doing it anyway.

But that kind of thinking of I mean in

order to become enlightened you have to

overcome dualistic thinking. Sure. And

that the monk I mean an advanced monk

has risen above the distinction of good and evil. He's not trying to earn merit. Certainly not trying to earn demerit. You know that's merit is for lay people. That's what I used to say to to monks in Burma a lot. Merit is for lay people.

So

yeah, I mean this this approach is a little too extreme. You know, it's kind of like some Christians, there's that verse in the Bible that says that a true Christian can handle snakes and they won't bite him and he'll drink poison and he won't die. And so you've got some like the Kentucky snake handlers that are drinking drinking poison and dance

around with rattlesnakes,
but I mean it it's not really meant to
be taken literally. I'm pretty sure it's
not like you're supposed to be just
seeking it out.

And I hope I answered that question at
least kind of cuz I'm moving on to the
next one. And this is this is from
Austin. And Austin says, "Can a monk
golf?"

There's no rule against monks playing
golf. I'm sure that the Buddha would not
condone it. You know, it's like there's
lists in the text like the silakonda of
the deanaya where it's there's all these
lists including like games frivolous
frivolous entertainments that monks are

should not do even though it's technically speaking is not a vineia rule not to do it still that kind of thing is discouraged for monks. So I mean there's no rule against a monk playing golf. Golf hadn't even been invented yet. Just like there's no rule against smoking cigarettes because there was no tobacco in India at the time. If there was, probably the Buddha would have forbidden it.

Um I remember once the only time I've ever set foot on a golf course and walked around the the links, is that what it's called? The links. use a little golf jargon. There was I was in

Bali and I had a friend and supporter
who played golf and I just followed
along and got my scalp pretty sunburned
and my shoulders in the equatorial
blazing sun of Bali
walking what 18 holes with with my
buddy.

I was just watching though. I wasn't
even catting.

So, I mean, monks can golf. Maybe even a
few monks do play golf for all I know.

But I mean, the golf courses in Burma
are pretty ridiculously bad. I've seen
some golf courses in Burma. I mean, it's
like just wasteland pretty much.

So, yeah.

I mean, they can play cards, too, I

guess, but

it's it's against the spirit of the rules, even if it's not specifically specified.

So, I'm just going to move on to Austin's next question.

He says, "When I'm discussing dependent origination and emptiness with people, I will say every conventional thing is dependently caused by other causes and conditions." But I will often hear in response, "Energy is neither created nor destroyed." Do you think this is a concise rebuttal to emptiness? Not really. I mean specific forms of energy are dependently arisen. I mean you can

say that

just energy in general

that if it's not distinct, it's not

particularized. You're just saying

energy in general that's like some

formless infinite

that I mean when something is formless

and infinite you can't really say that

it exists or doesn't exist. sort of like

the quantum field in theoretical

physics. You know, it's like empty space

can contain zero energy and also

infinite energy depending on how you do

the math. The math works out both ways.

So that would be kind of like nibbana,

you know, it's sort of like, you know,

it kind of transcends the duality of

exists and doesn't exist. It's formless
and and infinite in a in a sense. And so
you can't really say that it's there or
isn't there or or it at all.

So I mean but energy is neither created
nor destroyed. It's changes form.

And so I mean with with regard to
dependent coarising.

Yeah. I mean it's the form of it is
dependently coarisen. The arising of it.

I mean you can't even say it arises
without a form.

So I mean I might be
failing to account for energy existing
but I mean energy is is pretty much of
an undefined term in physics. Maybe you

could say it's the capacity to do work
but I mean that is certainly dependently
coarising.

I mean the work itself the capacity
itself the specific capacity I guess
dependently arisen

so

let's see

every conventional thing yeah so if you
say every conventional thing is
dependently caused by other causes and
conditions and they say energy is
neither created nor destroyed then I
mean they're talking about just this
generalization that is not a
conventional thing It's just an
abstraction pretty much if you unless

you can point out a specific form of it
in which case that's dependently cool
rising.

So I guess I kind of answered that one.

I'm moving on to Austin's third question
and he says, "Would you ever be inclined
to using the dark web to acquire
spiritual substances?" I assume he means
enthiogens.

And yeah, the dark web. I don't think
I'd really be inclined. If I was going
to seek out enthogens, there's maybe one
or two guys at work that I would maybe
inquire. Although, my woman would
definitely be opposed to me getting
enthogens from the dark web. Anyhow,

I'd never hear the end of that one.

I remember somebody that I didn't really know personally, but I knew as a supporter online for a considerable time sent me a kind of enthiogen and I just went ahead and took it and yeah, I was in the doghouse for a while. It was a pretty intense experience, too. She she didn't know whether I was going to like have to be rushed to the hospital or something. Not that I was like freaking out or having a physical meltdown, but it was very intense situation and doing a little bit of like panting and making little noises and so forth. Good stuff.

So, I mean, the answer to that question

is no. I would not consult the dark web to acquire spiritual substances. And I don't even know how to access the dark web really. I've heard about you can get certain like dark web browsers that that can get into stuff that's under the surface, you know, stuff that you're not g that's not going to come up on Google or duck.go, that kind of thing. But, you know, that would be kind of a certain expectation of shadiness involved in that. And uh yeah, I've never I've never really consulted it and would not be inclined to try and get entheogenic substances by that by that means.

So I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Stellar

Supreme, formerly known as Libra Lamb.

Occasionally still known as Libra Lam,
etc.

He says, "How deep into a cave is a monk
allowed to go?" I think he's just
running out of he's running out of like
the obvious questions. He's he's kind of
he's kind of scraping the barrel on on
on this one. So he says, "I hear deeper
in caves it's cooler than towards the
entrance." Yeah. I mean, there's no rule
at all regarding how deeply into a cave
a monk is allowed to go. It goes in a
mile. You could go in a mile if you
wanted to.

I don't know why you'd want to.

So, yeah. I lived in one cave that went in about 60 feet. So, it was like a walking meditation

uh like a walking meditation path like from the entrance going back into like the main shrine room which is where I slept.

So, yeah. Yeah, there's no rule at all with regard to there's no anti-spalunking rules. You know, a monk can just explore a cave if he wants to. There might be better ways of spending his time than exploring caves, but he can do it if he wants to. There's no rule against it.

So I think I'm just going to uh move on to Stellar Supreme's next question which is as follows. Do you believe in billocation wherein a person is in two locations at the same time? And the only person that I've I've read about or heard about that allegedly could do this would be Nim Curly Baba who's up there on the top of the bookcase there. His picture I mean not him personally.

And there's in in the book miracle of love stories about nim curly baba Rahm doss who compiled the book has this personal anecdote about he he's sitting somewhere with some scientific type maybe some kind of science professor and he's talking about some of the

psychological feats the superhuman powers of nim karoli baba and this scientist guy is acknowledging yeah I can accept the possibility ility of that until Ram Doss got to the point of telling him about how Neim Curly Baba could be in two places at the same time and the the scientist said well I mean that goes against physics I really can't accept that that that would be impossible and then Rahm Da says it might be impossible but he did it anyway so I'm I'm open-minded on the possibility of I mean anything is possible

I mean there there are rules in this

version of reality like laws of physics
and so forth

but still just because there's a law of
physics doesn't mean that law of physics
cannot be broken you know sort of like
in the matrix where if you're a normie
who's still bluepilled so to speak
you're just completely immersed in it
some things are impossible but if you're
redpilled you know you're you're
entering the matrix voluntarily knowing
that you're in the matrix, you can break
certain rules, free your mind.

So, I think that it it is possible.

Um, I've never really seen any proof.

I mean, not all the stories in Miracle
of Love are true. I assume there's some

pretty wild ones in there,

but uh yeah, I do think that it at least
in theory it is possible.

You'd have to be very advanced to be
able to do that or else just have some
kind of freak weird thing going on. Some
some total anomaly.

So I mean also Nim Curly Baba could just
disappear in one place and appear
somewhere else allegedly. Although

Buddhist advanced Buddhist practitioners
including the Buddha himself in the text
could do that also. uh with regard to a
person I mean yeah I mean this is one of
the psychic powers mentioned in the
sutras that the ability to produce

multiple versions of yourself. So like according to the legend when the Buddha taught abidama up in heaven he left like a this sort of like a replica of himself on earth which maybe wouldn't qualify as the same person being in two places simultaneously. But there are also stories like the the famous story of the dullard who was this in intellectually very slow monk who just couldn't meditate very well. He just didn't have the the capacity for it until the Buddha gave him a piece of cloth and just says, "Rub this." And I can't remember if there was like a mantra that went with it, but the dullard became fully enlightened. And one of his duties was

to sweep the monastery compound. And there was some meeting and some of the monks were at the meeting and the dullard wasn't there because usually he wasn't invited. He he really didn't have anything to contribute. So, he just stayed behind and was sweeping the compound. But somebody asked, I think maybe it was the Buddha asked, "Why isn't the dullard here? Somebody go fetch the dullard." And so they go there and they see multiple dullards all sweeping the compound. And so he comes back with his eyebrows way up and says, "Well, there's a there's a lot of them there." And the Buddh's

the real one. The Buddha just says,

"Just pick one and bring him."

So apparently it is uh mentioned in the
poly texts that there is the possibility
of multiplying yourself into
more than one person

like Krishna according to the Hindus he
did that on the famous occasion with the
uh the 500 gopies or milkmaids
multiplied himself into what was it 500
Krishnas and uh scored with all 500 of
simultaneously,

although a good Buddhist saint would not
do such a thing.

So yeah, I'm open-minded on the subject
and I'm just going to move on to the
next question also from Stellar Supreme,

formerly known, etc., etc., etc.

He says, "Do you find it disingenuous that despite it being publicly released that there is messed up stuff in the Epstein files and having campaigned on its full exposure, Trump is denying the voter base that supports that, saying they should let it go?" Yeah. Well, I mean, politics itself is disingenuous. As a general rule, a perfectly honest politician is a rare bird.

Um, so I mean Trump was campaigning on that and then probably I mean there there are theories out there as to why he is behaving as he does and there there's some theories of of the 4 D

chess variety like he's sort of like um
pl he's been planning on releasing the
files and then um he's just pretending
not to want to release the files so the
Democrats who oppose anything that he
does will insist

and then he'll release the files and
it'll show all these Democrats have done
all this horrible stuff. Um, one theory
that I read on the Discord server by an
intelligent person who wrote it there is
that, you know, he was promising to
release the Epstein files and then
finally he gets a hold of them and
realizes that the previous
administration had redacted and just
censored it until there's nothing of

value left.

So then he's just kind of in an embarrassing situation where there's really nothing to show. So that's a possibility also, but I mean that wouldn't be particularly disingenuous if that version of what happened happened.

So

it's it's hard to say. I mean, I really don't know the exact circumstances of this whole Epstein thing. I mean, Trump is no no idiot despite what people will claim about him and he is really good at certain kind of machavelian maneuvering. Yeah. And I'm sure that he's going to be doing I would

not be at all surprised if like people involved in the whole Russia collusion hoax are going to go to prison. I would not be surprised like at least James Comey Obama might be sroanked you know he might he might he might pass but

I think that uh Trump really is he's it's no more Mr. nice guy that I really do think that Trump is really going to stick it to the people that were trying to destroy him for years, at least some of them, cuz that's just the kind of guy he is. I mean, he he was sort of trying to hold out an olive branch his first term. And, you know, he's like bringing in like

neocons into his administration who just promptly stabbed him in the back every chance they got. So this time he's learned his lesson and you know he's got people that are on the same page as him which the Democrats are all saying, "Oh, he's just got these obedient cronies." But of course you have to have somebody who agrees with you at least on the important stuff.

So I I do think that they are going I mean Trump has seen the the writing on the wall. He's seen the writing on X just a lot of his base. you know, it's not like they're just worshiping him, that he's just kind of like representing

a movement that he has kind of shafted a little bit, at least in their their perception of this the situation. And so, he's going to start, you know, he has

heard the feedback, you know, felt the push back and so I think he is going to uh be more cooperative on the Epstein files. But it could be that like the person on Discord was saying that it could be that the previous administration just like redacted it and censored it till to the point that there's practically nothing left. And then you've got just Lane Maxwell who's going to testify. But I mean that could just be theater also. I mean she could

be bribed or coerced into into saying whatever somebody wants her to say. So yeah, we're just going to have to wait and see on that one. There's a good chance that there is some disingenuousness involved. After all, this is politics. But Trump has been generally pretty conscientious with regard to keeping his promises. And there is a good chance that I mean they're going to expose what can be exposed. Anyhow, so I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Francois. And Frank Kois says, I know it's not really Francois. I just

mispronounced French names on purpose because I do not know the correct way of pronouncing French names or French words and so I mispronounced them deliberately just to kind of put it out there that I really don't care.

So Frank Kois says, "You keep talking about not having any remorse. I kind of understand what you mean, but a sense of shame for past bad actions should be useful, I guess.

Well, I mean, if a sense of shame for past bad actions, remorse, regret, guilty conscience, if it helps to prevent you from doing the same in future, then I mean that would be a like a beneficial result, but the point is

it's not necessary. So, you're adding this unh wholesome mental state of regret or remorse and using that as a kind of gimmick or crutch to help you not do the same in future when really you don't need that. You can just decide, okay, I just won't do it in future. I'll I'll do my best not to make the same mistake that I made that time. There you go. You just let it go and keep going. But you're running a race. I read this in there some famous person or at least they were famous a few hundred years ago in um William James the varieties of religious experience which I highly recommend to anyone who really

wants to understand religion the religious mind but there was this one person some Christian said that if you're running a race and you trip and fall the last thing you should do is just sit there on the ground crying because you tripped and fell the best thing you should do jump right back on your feet and keep going and that makes sense.

So the sense of shame for past actions is a kind of shabby not particularly good crutch to help you do the same to help you avoid doing the same in future. But it's not necessary. Just common sense would be sufficient to prevent you from doing the same bad

thing twice.

And the guilt and remorse is just you're beating yourself up unnecessarily and just adding more badness to an already bad situation.

So Francois's second question says,

"Ajan man, I assume there's a different Ajan than Ajan man who is called Ajan man. Ajan man advised Ajan Sha to take the two guardians of the world which is hiri a sense of shame and Otapa uh the fear of consequences as his guides. What do you think of this? Yeah, that's fine. Yeah, there's no problem with Otapa.

Those are those are considered to be wholesome. But the thing is those are a

sense of shame that occur before you do the bad thing as opposed to kukucha which is the sense of shame that happens after you do the bad thing which is unskillful.

So skillful shame from the point of view of Buddhist ethics is shame that occurs before you do the bad thing and ideally prevents you from doing the bad thing.

So it's doubly wholesome then because it it prevents you from doing the the bad thing.

Whereas kukucha you do the bad thing and then you do another bad thing by just kicking yourself over it possibly for years.

So yeah hira and notapa are fine.

That's that's wholesome from the from
the traditional terabara Buddhist point
of view. is kukucha which is the the
shame you experience after you've
already done the bad thing. That's what
is uh the unskillful mental state. And
I'm just moving on to the next question.

This is from Phil Lees

and we've been going for an hour and a
half. By golly, I hope this I hope this
is still working. Yeah, apparently is.

The the little green bars from the
microphone are going like this. So I
assume that means the microphone's
working.

So, Phil Lethy says,

"Have you ever surprised Burmese people with your knowledge of Burmese, whether in or out of Burma?" Yeah, I've done that. Sometimes Burmese people will just because I'm a foreigner, they just assume that I don't understand uh Burmese, and so they they'll be talking about me right in front of me, not realizing that I know what they're saying. And then I might just like agree with them or something or disagree with what they just said and then they get really embarrassed especially if it's like a teenage girl or something who are the the most likely to be making like these giggly comments about the foreign monk right in his

presence assuming he doesn't understand. So yeah, that happened uh in Burma and also at Burmese monasteries in America where they see that I'm a foreigner and they just assume that I don't understand Burmese and so they'll be talking about me in my presence and then I understand what they're saying and will comment in Burmese as to what they they've been saying and then they of course get very embarrassed.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question from Phil Lees. Have you ever been to England and what do you think of it? Well, I've never been to England. I've never been to Europe. The closest I

ever came to Europe was being on board a Polish fishing vessel off the coast of Oregon,

but I mean, technically, I was on Polish soil because I had to go through customs after I got off the ship. So, that's the closest I've ever been to actually setting foot in Europe. But England, what do I think of England? I've never been there. Not in this life, anyway.

I think I was probably English in past lives,

but in this life, what do I think of it?

Well, I think England has pretty much castrated itself and uh it's definitely on the downhill slide. I think the only hope for England now would be a kind of

purge of foreigners. Not all foreigners, but especially the illegal ones. I mean the British Empire they kind of had an open door to to like people from Commonwealth nations you know like Jamaicans, Pakistanis and so forth that had used to be part of the British Empire.

So I mean it's it was easier for such people to come to to England but an excess of foreigners who do not accept like English cultural conditioning English values that sort of traditional English values. Um, yeah, I think England has just utterly cucked and castrated itself like most of Western

Europe at this point and Canada and New Zealand and probably Australia.

So,

let's see here.

And probably chances are there's not going to be a like a race war like a civil race war in England and a purge, which I mean like deportation. I'm not I don't mean like genocide. I mean deportation like what's going on to some degree in America. I just kind of doubt that it's going to happen to any significant degree. And so England is probably going to degenerate into a kind of second or even third world country largely due to the wonders of feminism.

Compassion.

We need to be compassion to everybody.

We need equity.

Yeah. So we just destroy our own country in the process.

So I'm just going to move on to Phil

Lee's next question. He says, "As

someone who totally agrees with you that

the Buddhist ethic is for the monk and

the semiviolent normal ethic is for the

layman and that bad things happen when

the two are mixed. I think it comes down

to the basic idea of doing whatever you

do to the fullest. If you are a

householder, you should look out for

your family. If a monk, you should be a

true nonviolent aesthetic renunciant. I feel that everyone, whether monk or householder, would be better off if people had this thoroughbred instinct to fully embody whatever they choose to do. The modern world seems particularly bad at this with its mixing of rules and ethics in a melting pot.

Yeah. Well, that's what I was just talking about with regard to England castrating and and cucking itself. It's like you've got the left and to some degree just globalism in general that has replaced any coherent standard of ethics with unrefined feminine sentiment. And so we want compassion and and just we shouldn't

kick we shouldn't kick out even illegal
aliens, you know. It's just when you
have universal compassion guiding like
politics

is it's just going to result in national
suicide.

You import the third world, you become
the third world. And then the third
world doesn't like feminism very much.

So, I mean, the useful idiots that
brought about the system to a large
degree, I mean, they're one of the first
to go to the wall, especially when you
got feminists trying to team up with
like fundamentalist Muslims
and you got like the the gays for

Palestine and that kind of thing.

It's just

you got to have a certain amount of ruthlessness. any like superpower, any just really vibrant like dominant society in history has been ruthless.

They may have had like compassion and and like a sense of justice for their own citizens, especially the law-abiding ones, but the enemies of the country, whether internal or external,

I mean, they were just ruthless.

And you pretty much have to have that.

We're getting back to Darwin, Darwinian evolution again.

Excess of compassion and kindness and and the sense of equity, diversity,

equity, and inclusion. I mean, it's suicidal. Regardless of any ethical superiority it might have. What is good and right from a political point of view is not necessarily what is good and right from a like an ethical or spiritual point of view.

From an ethical or spiritual point of view, you should forgive transgressions. You should forgive criminals instead of punishing them.

I mean, how's that going to work?

So, let's see here.

This this attitude though, I mean, if you're I mean, this is kind of represented in the Bavad Gita, you know,

it's your dharma. If you're if you're a soldier, you should be the best soldier you can be. You know, if you're a renunciant, you should be the best renunciate you can be. If you're a father, you should be the best father you can be. And I mean, that's more of of a Hindu attitude really than a traditional Buddhist one. The Buddhist one is renounce the world. And I mean, if you're not ready for that, then you're not entirely ready for Buddhism. So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Gnostic Rucker. Anastatic rocker says, "When you were a monastic in Burma, was secular nontropical literature like poetry,

philosophy, and the classics an essential part of your insight learning curve? And if so, assuming you were often out in the sticks in a post British Empire, post colonial developing state, where could you where could you could you get hold of such texts?"

Well, yeah. I was very I was a very eclectic reader. I knew some monks, especially German ones who were just all he wanted to read was just terrible Buddhist stuff. You know, they just considered anything else to be just a waste of time at best. And I just don't think that way. I mean, I I never read

the Bible, including this one, till after I became a monk. like I read a lot of like Hindu texts, you know, Dowist texts, that kind of thing after I was a monk and also I read CL I read Dosski. I remember um when I was a junior monk, I had already read Gibbons Decline and follow the Roman Empire classic. And then after I became a monk, I I was pretty strict early on my first several years as a monk. You know, I didn't want to read novels. I'd still read some philosophy, that kind of thing, but like history, that kind of thing. I was kind of resistant. And then I was reading the letters of Nyanova, the famous eccentric existentialist monk

who who lived in Sri Lanka in the mid
20th century. And he said that that, you
know, there's drama on every page of
Gibbons decline fall of the Roman Empire
that he was going to he'd already read
it twice and was going to read it again,
something like that. So I thought, well,
there you go. So I read decline the
gibbons decline fall of the Roman Empire
again largely because of the
encouragement of of Nanover but I kind
of wanted to anyway. So yeah I was
pretty much of a voracious reader as a
monk. I hardly ever read I mean I
haven't read a I've read maybe three or
four books since I stopped being a monk

which is very different from before I became a monk where I was reading a lot.

So

uh yeah, I mean I would I would read whatever I could and and in the text it does say it's good to be bahusuta having having heard much you know to be learned and to be familiar with other points of view other philosophies that kind of thing.

So yeah I did and then so the next part of the question here is how did I get that material when I was a monk living in Burma? And there were two main ways of getting books when I was living in Burma. One was I could have them sent from America. So I had people send me

books from America, including one person
uh a like a female person. She was the
mother of one of my ex-girlfriends who
was still a friend of mine or at the
time she was. She sent me this big box
of books and it was all like chicklit. I
mean, the probably the most masculine
book in the entire box of books was
Nicholas Nickleby by Charles Dickens,
which got me interested in Charles
Dickens. I have to admit, Mr. Mantelini
is probably my favorite character in all
of Dickens.

Worthless CAD that he was.

Um, so I mean I if I'd come back to
America, which I did every few years to

visit my folks, then my father would just let me have anything I wanted off of his bookshelves. He had several bookshelves. And uh, also he'd he'd say, "All right, here's feel free to order 200 bucks worth of books off Amazon, that kind of thing." So I could get books that way, too. But in Burma, the main way to get books is every year I would make like this pilgrimage to Down Away Sappi, which was this used bookstore in Mandandalay. And they had a lot of old English books, most of them published like before like the early 1970s.

So

I I I would go there once a year and you

know with some my pisad gama who was had like money for my my benefit you know money for my use and I would get I would get books there if I could. But I got some pretty interesting books there.

Like some books on my bookcase came from Don Oay Sappi in in Mandalay when I was a monk. Like uh Battle for the Mind by William Sergeant. That wasn't one of the most important books I've read in my life. You know, it'd be on the top 10 of really influential books that just changed the way I look at things. I got that in in Mandandalay.

So yeah, every once in a while you you I mean you wouldn't get anything really

recent, but you could find like
sometimes classics and that kind of
thing at at used bookstores in in Burma,
sometimes in in Rangon also.

So let's see here. I guess I answered
that question both parts of it. I'll
move on to Nasi Rocker's next question
which is as follows.

You mentioned that in the Thai SA
everyone has to conform whilst this
person is not American I'm pretty sure
because Americans don't say whilst they
say while I'll start again you mentioned
that in the Thai sa everyone has to
conform
whilst those in Myanmar
or Sri Lankan SA are more free to go

their own way

I remember when in conversation with a certain well-known contemporary monk who joined the SA in the 1970s. He told me that joining the Thai SA was just the same as joining a military boot camp.

And indeed, if one reflects further, the differences are obvious. Think of all those intellectuals that the Sri Lankan SA has produced, those German monks such as Nyanaponica Terra when those eccentric, insightful 1950s and 60s

British monks like the original Nyanamol Terra. Can you elaborate on these institutional, cultural or anthropological differences? It would be

interesting to hear your perspective since you were on the inside for decades. Well, Thailand may have I mean it was influenced by the fact that I Thailand was never fully colonized. you know, they were sort of playing off the British and the French against each other and and maintained a kind of independence, whereas most other countries in in Asia or Southeast Asia and South Asia were essentially colonized.

So that may have kind of isolated the ties from as much western thinking as the Sri Lankans and the Burmese were exposed to. The Burmese were very hard-headed conservative types and so

they really didn't have much use for the British point of view. The British really didn't have much use for the Burmese point of view and so the the like the British people who were interested in Buddhism were much more interested in like the Sinhalese version than in the Burmese version. There was a lot of back and forth with like Letty Seattle, you know, on technical points of dharma like the the Polytech Society like Caroline Reese Davids had like a correspondence going with venerable Ley Seattle who was just this walking Buddhist encyclopedia as well as a meditation master. He was sort of like a

an early precursor of Mahasi Seattle in a way.

But yeah, the Sri Lankans for some reason they tended to be more interested in intellectuality and sort of thinking outside the box to some degree. You know, they're they had taken to heart more, you know, like British thinking. You know, they still play cricket there for crying out loud. You don't see cricket being played in Burma.

So yeah, it was like for for whatever reasons um Sri Lanka was seen as a better place for Westerners to go to to be ordained, you know, is like Burma was mainly for like dogmatic conservatives. And I'm not saying dog being a dogmatic

conservative is necessarily bad. I mean, as I've said before, there are phenomenal scholars in Burma. You know, it's it's dogmatic learning. They don't have many independent thoughts, but they just master the texts. They can just recite the texts. You know, it's I I've told the story before. I went to a a meditation retreat with a Seattle in the Mahasi tradition. And this this was in San Jose, California. I was a monk at the time, but this was in California. And he would be giving these long um he'd give a dama talk, you know, every evening. And it'd be he'd be just giving long quotes from from various sutas and

so forth. And he'd be looking down all the time. And I thought he'd be looking at notes or something until finally I realized that when he's looking down, all he was looking down at was a picture of some kind of seabirds flying over the ocean. That was it. I mean, he's just kind of looking down modestly. Not to be distracted by the women or by, you know, whatever. He's just looking down modestly like Burmese monks used to always do. or they'd hold up a fan and talk from behind the fan, you know, to avoid distraction. But all this stuff that he was reciting is just from memory.

And he was he was like a meditation

master kind of of of Seattle. He wasn't really one of the heavy hitter like scholar seats.

I mean some scholaros in Burma have memorized the entire 40 volumes of the Burmese tip toitica in addition to like medieval poly grammarss and commentaries and that kind of thing. It's just it's just amazing.

But the Sri Lankans for whatever reason they were more anglicized in their their approach to everything and so they were more inclined to have independent thinking on certain things which then um you know was reinforced by an influx of British and German monks especially or

British and German people who were
ordained as monks there
and the ties just kind of remain sort of
isolated and and more Thai, you know,
more ethnic, I guess.

And the British or the Burmese just
stubbornly insisted upon remaining more
ethnic.

So,

let's see. Did I answer the question,
though? Really, that's that's the main
point here. Can I elaborate on these
institutional, cultural, or
anthropological differences? Yeah, I
mean, one of the main differences
between Burma and Thai the ties is the
ties really are not scholars. I mean

nowadays you're getting some more Thai
schol like Buddhist scholarship but I
mean compared to the Burmese it's kind
of pathetic really like you've got
certain famous Thai aons
and I think venerable venerable Lee
Damandaro I think that's one of them he
would there's books by venerable Ajan
Lee Damadaro

I think I'm getting the name right that
this Australian monk I used to know
showed me this book as kind of joke.
It's like read this, you're going to
love it. And this venerable Ajan who was
a meditation master I assume he just did
not understand the meanings of poly

words. He didn't understand poly very well. He was like using words just obviously wrongly, you know, just not understanding what they really mean, that kind of thing. Just getting stuff wrong. Because partly part of the reason for this is that early modern times the British are the Burmese who are already starting to be like invaded and taken over by the the the English. So the British had already already ruled parts of southern Burma. So the Burmese kings, they couldn't really beat the British. You know, the British had the the the military hardware and the the the strategies and everything worked out. So instead the Burmese kings in in upper

Burma just made this unprovoked attack on their traditional archenemies and they just essentially sacked the capital city of Syiam which was Aayutia at the time and it was like Autia was where like the headquarters u so-called or so to speak of like the the Thai ecclesiastical hierarchy was including the like the the Thai uh educational system for for like like monastic education and so forth. That all just collapsed and they never fully recovered from that.

And so to this day, the Burmese are just like phenomenal scholars, which has its good points and its bad points. I mean,

one of the bad points is that if you've got a meditation master like Mahasi Seattle who has an idea that doesn't really fit with like orthodoxy, he'll favor orthodoxy to his own personal experience in meditation. Whereas the Thai agon, they're not as heavily invested in what the texts say, especially like the commentarial tradition and so forth. And so they will just follow their own teaching. They're more inclined to teach based on their own experience is what I'm getting at which has its good points.

And with regard to Sri Lankan Buddhism, I really I really don't know a whole hell of a lot about it. I mean I know

some of the history that I mean the SA had collapsed in Sri Lanka more than once where they had to import monks from Burma and Thailand just to get the SA going again because the ordination lineages and all that had just been like ruined.

But in a way that kind of made them more open-minded and maybe a little bit more eclectic, more open to western ideas and so forth.

And I'm just going to move on next question. I don't want to just keep yammering away about on one question because we got quite a few. We're we're knocking a good dent into it though. So

let's see. Gnostic rocker third question.

He says, "As society changes with different social conditions or pressures or as diverse cultural awareness is spread, what differing motivating influences or factors do you notice amongst?" Another thing Americans don't say much amongst those people drawn to or fascinated with Dharma. When I got into Dharma in the late 1980s, the influences were usually the massive effects of beatnik hippies or the other intense motivating influence was the thought of people like Nietzsche young, early 20th century avantgard bohemian thinkers or people like the 14th century

German monk Meister Eckhart. But more recently, I can see very different motivating factors calling people to Dhamma. There's those restless young people from the ex-communist blocks who feel let down by capitalism and the EU. Or there are those who are totally computer or AI tech heads or those who feel alienated from the emotionless harsh impassive coldness of the post-globalized assassinated ruthless world we are all compelled to exist in. There's all kinds of other motivating factors. What's your take on the above? Okay. Well, my generation of monks, more than half of them probably started with

psychedelics. You know, you start with mushrooms or mescaline or LSD, and then it causes mystical experiences, expanded consciousness, and then it causes you to get interested in trying to, you know, get into these heightened states of awareness without having to use the chemicals. So that's sort of like the the open door into starting meditation and then you get more interested and eventually you become a monk.

That was a very common approach to my generation and probably the generation preceding my generation which was like the hippie generation. I used to know this French monk that he was telling me

about how he first went to Thailand. He had like long hair and like like big earrings and this kind of thing. And he looked at me knowing said, "I belong to that generation." And then I said, "Yeah, the hippie generation." And he said, "Yes." With his like Jacqu Kusteau voice, he was a hippie.

So yeah, it was my generation and the generation like the half generation right before me was sort of like the hippie psychedelics was kind of you know sort of like the conduit into the sa for a lot of western men not all of them but a lot of them probably at least half then my experience with Gen X you know

the the next generation I'm kind of like
right in between boomers and Gen X I
mean according to most like systems of
determining who's what. I'm like early
Gen X, although some people would would
put me into like very late baby boomers.
Anyways, the Gen X people and I think a
lot of like young men even now, you
know, which would be Gen Z, Gen X
millennials, Gen Z
that in a way they're just kind of
blackpilled. they're just blackpilled on
the whole society which kind of I was
too. I mean in order to become a monk
and renounce the world you kind of have
to be sort of blackpilled um at least
redpilled with regard to just the status

quo like the the the secular status quo
plus maybe like institutional
Christianity that kind of thing. I mean
as a general rule is a prerequisite for
renouncing the world becoming a monk is
not to have much use for that.

So my experience with younger terra
Buddhists which is kind of limited is
they tend to be pretty black pill.

They've got like a bleak attitude
towards what's going on in the world
like like western women and western
politics and western religion. This kind
of thing they just are just
they don't like it.

So, I mean, they're not so much into the

psychedelics and the hippie stuff, but the just the black pill stuff is still there. And that's they've got nibbida, you know, they've got disgust towards the world um in general, which then kind of leads them to search and desperation for something better. Also, I knew this one person who was Gen X and he was just he was like a punk rocker and um kind of I mean he was still kind of a smartass kind of a guy in in a good sense. I've always been I've always kind of gotten along with smart asses as a general rule so long as they're not like like picking on me very much.

But he was actually uh you know committing crimes and so forth just in a

way just has this nihilistic attitude and then somebody out of compassion and friendship suggested he might try a Ginka retreat and it was like it just changed his whole mind is is you know his it changed his life going to a Ginka retreat. So I assume there's still a lot of Goinka people. You know that was another factor of people becoming monks in my generation. My generation was the Goinka people who got interested in Terravada Buddhism through Goinka. But Goinka has such a simplified version of Terravada with no real monastic system that they wanted to get deeper into it after you know getting their foot in the

door with Goinka. So I assume that still happens to some degree also.

But I mean, I'm no authority on what's going on with uh lay people nowadays, especially young ones. You know, I have a little bit of exposure to them because I have some of them on the Discord server. Some of them were just raised in Buddhist families at this point. That's probably in on the increase in young Western Buddhists is, you know, they're they've actually been raised Buddhist to some degree.

Um, also one thing I noticed, um, when I was a monk back around 2012 is you ask people that come to the meditation center, come to a meditation

center wanting instructions on how to meditate, you ask them, why do you want to learn how to meditate? And probably at least half of them just want stress reduction. You know, they're so stressed out by the world, they want some way of of of calming down. So that's kind of a an increasing reason for getting interested in Buddhism is just using you know mindfulnessbased stress reduction and then you know some people are more sensitive uh to you know dharmic influences and so that's kind of like their foot in the door also I assume. So I guess I guess I answered that question pretty much. I'm just going to

move on.

to Clefy. And Clefy says, "Please tell us an encouraging Buddhist story. The reality that my karma is creating for me at the moment looks grim." Well, I'm sorry to hear that Cleiff's reality looks grim at the moment. Um, and I was I was considering I should I should come up with some some story in advance, an encouraging Buddhist, and I didn't do it. So now I've got to like rack my brains to come up with an encouraging Buddhist story. But I mean some of the stories I've already told, you know, like the person who was, you know, he was just this nihilist who was committing crimes largely just out of

boredom or maybe rebellion.

And then some kind, compassionate friend suggests you might try a retreat. I don't what are they called? They're not called retreats. a Ginka

course I think they're called and it just changed his life just just waking kind of um you know there was just this dormant area in his in his heart so to speak that wasn't being really used or fulfilled in any way and then it just opened this door to him

encouraging Buddhist stories

golly I mean the story of Anguli Mala is about as encouraging as it gets. You know, he was literally a serial killer.

According to Richard Gomer, he may have been a devotee of Kie who was still I mean, he's still a serial killer. He's still killing people, but he was he may have been doing it for more sort of quasi pseudospiritual reasons than um than is given in the in the the like the official version. But Anguli Mala I mean he was mass murderer and then he gets converted by the Buddha. He's he was technically he was going to according to the story he was going to kill his own mother. I don't know if he recognized that it was his own mother or not but the Buddha was like you know he felt the disturbance in the force so to speak. He didn't want

somebody to just commit such an atrocity as murder their own mother. So he he went there and it was somewhere nearby or else the Buddha just trans teleported as one of the psychic powers and so he sort of acted as a decoy to lure Anguly Mala away from Anguli Mala's mother. So then Anguli Mala just kind of took the bait and starts following the Buddha. But the Buddha again using psychic powers, he's just walking along at a leisurely rate. And Angulim Mala I mean this can happen in dreams I guess where he is going as fast as he can trying to catch the Buddha in order to kill him. He can't

catch up to him. So then he calls out to the Buddha. It's like you know why don't you why don't you stop? I don't remember the exact details. It's been a while since I read read the the suta and the Buddha says I've already stopped. Why don't you stop? And you know he's he's talking philosophically. You know he stopped like the stream of karma and all this demerit and everything. And anyways, partly because he blew Anguli Mala's mind with this psychic power that you know, Anguli Mala became very receptive and so Buddha kind of converted him to a dharmic way of looking at things and then Anguli Mala just had the the change of heart and

decided he wanted to become a monk and then the Buddha ordained him and Angulimāla despite all of his bad karma, you know, despite the fact that he was literally a serial killer, he was like he'd already killed like 99 people according to the according to the legend according to the sutta that he became fully enlightened in a way he's it's sort of like the Buddhist version of legion in the Bible the New Testament you know it's like the Jesus crosses what is it the the the Sea of Galilee I guess and goes to the he's in the land of the gatherers and there's a a cemetery there and there's this crazy

man who's who's living in this cemetery
just screaming and gashing himself with
rocks

and Jesus asks him what his name is and
he says my name is Legion but we are
many you know the assumption is that
he's possessed by so many demons he's
got an army of of malignant spirits
inhabiting him so Jesus drives the
spirits out who then go into this herd
of pigs nearby the herd of pigs just
immediately rushes down into the lake
and and drown. And people come, they
hear about the pigs. They come and they
see this this crazy man is just
completely lucid now, just kind of
sitting there peacefully at the feet of

Jesus. And they get scared by the pigs and the crazy man all of a sudden being cured. And they ask Jesus, you know, please go away. You know, we're we're unworthy.

So, I mean, the Buddhist version of that would be Anguli Mala in a sense. You know, it's like he's he was like the the example of someone who was just like had pretty much renounced humanity. They were so far gone. You know, they were hardly even human anymore. And then through through Dharma, even though they had all this, especially on Gulima, he had all this bad karma, but still, I mean, it's never too late.

You know, you you may have kind of obstacles of of bad karma cropping up that kind of, you know, interfere, but still, I mean, you can always you can always practice dharma. And to the extent you practice dharma, dharma protects you.

So,

I guess that would be an encouraging Buddhist story. It's about as encouraging as as I can think that even a serial killer who has killed well up into double digits. Still can become fully enlightened in this life.

I mean, he's going to have obstacles. He got beaten up a lot as a monk. You know, he's going for alms and people realize,

hey, that's that's the Jeffrey Dmer of ancient India, you know, the Green River killer.

And then they'd beat him up or whatever. And because he was fully enlightened at that time, you know, he forgave them. Or maybe it never even got to the point of him having to forgive anybody. If you never if you never like perceive an offense, then you know, there's nobody to forgive, I suppose.

But I think I better move on to the next question. And I hope Cley's situation improves.

Next question is from Ruie. And Ruie says, "Are we intrinsically doomed to

atawada or self view, I guess, or the doctrine of self?"

I think I'll just start over. Are we intrinsically doomed to atawada in the sense that we cannot but perceive a certain degree of permanence and duration?

And could the whole Buddha Dharmama enterprise be only about utterly destroying atawada? No, I don't think I mean this is the kind of thinking that's very common even even among like really devout like intelligent Buddhists that I mean utterly destroying self view utterly destroying the doctrine of self utterly destroying your defilements utterly destroying all badness

inside yourself.

I mean I you chime rouge tactics against your own defilements which would include doctrine of self or you know sakaya you know self view personality view that I mean it's a simplistic two-dimensional way of looking at it that I mean you don't necessarily have to destroy self view because without self without any self view at all no self I mean you're not going to be able function.

So, it's like, let's say you're an actor playing King Lear going mad with grief in the storm out in the wilderness and all of a sudden, I mean, you've been

living the part so intensely. All of a sudden, you get this flash of insight.

Whoa, I'm just an actor playing King Lear. I'm not really going mad with grief. Even though you're up there on the stage, you're still going through the motions, still raging at your your two like evil daughters.

So, it's it's it can be like that. It's not that you necessarily destroy self view. It's just that you you like outgrow it. It's still there. It's like you've transcended it. You've just no longer centered at that level of interpretation or that level of reality. You become like the actor who's just playing the role of the the person that

believes in himself kind of sort of.

So I mean to like completely destroy
uh the perception of a certain degree of
permanence and duration I mean you just
become like I mean you you'd become like
a vegetable. I mean you wouldn't be able
to function anymore.

So I mean it's just it's still there.

It's just that you no longer take it
seriously. You no longer identify with
that.

But it has to still be there in order to
function.

Even even like desires and so forth.

I mean, you just don't identify. You've
sort of gone beyond that. It's still

there. You just it's it's just like
practically irrelevant now. It's just
nature taking its course and you are not
identified with it anymore.

But it's hard to explain to someone who
hasn't experienced it.

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Kundrew.

And Kundrew says, "Are you familiar with
the recent Thai scandal regarding a Thai
woman blackmailing monks for \$12 million
after having sex with them? Did large
scandals like this ever occur in Burma?"

Yeah, well, I am familiar with it. I've
there's been some commentary on it on
the Discord server and there are some
people on the Discord server just

entirely blaming the monks, but
obviously the woman was at fault also.
Everybody involved in that was at
fault

from a superficial like conventional
point of view because ultimately nobody
exists.

So,

uh, did large scandals like this one
ever occur in Burma? Not that I ever
heard that. I mean, there's small
scandals. I've heard of that. Like, for
example,

when I was uh, let's see, I used to know
this Burmese monk who was a retired
surgeon. He was a he was like upper

class kind of guy that you know he still kind of talked down to like monastery attendants like they were like servants or something but I mean he had he had came from a a rich upper crusty kind of family but he had been to you know all the major meditation centers you know he met all the famous Seattle you know during the course of his lifetime. He said the one the most impressive Seattle he ever met was way Seattle and then after that was probably Shuin Seattle. But let's see here. Um oh he said that one time he was staying at the the original Mahasi center in Rangon and one fine day uh a monk who was one of the teachers there and he and if

you're a teacher at a mahasi center that is pretty good indication that you are considered to be at least a sodapana and I noticed that I'm lagging now but you have to be at least a sodapana in order to be a teacher at the mahasi method. So, one fine day, um, this teacher at the Mahasi method just went into the the office and took all the money out of the office and just ran off with one of the female meditators.

So, things like that happen. I heard one unsaavory rumor which may be true about another uh teacher of the Mahasi method relatively famous. He was he was done like international tours and so

forth that he was seducing he was like a
a serial seducer of lay women and nuns.

So that might be more along the lines of
this recent Tai scandal. Although um it
didn't get proven.

Um but then again, the Thai are more
sensual people than the Burmese. The
Burmese are very like Spartan in their
tastes. They're not a particularly
sensual people. But I remember back in
the 90s there was another I can't
remember his name, some ajon who was he
was world famous, you know, at least
among Buddhists. and he got kicked out
of the the SA by the the Thai government
because um he was like um having call
girls come to his hotel rooms when he

was in Australia and they had the records. They had the literal receipts because he was paying for this escort service with his credit card which is kind of dumb.

So yeah, he got kicked out. I mean, technically, you can't really kick any monk out of the SA other than that monk him that monk himself is the only person who can kick somebody out of the SA, but they just went ahead and did it anyway because that's the way it's done in Thailand because it's very authoritarian in their in their Buddhism. Thai Buddhism is very authority based. So, yeah, he he got kicked out and then

I didn't hear about him for years after that. Next thing I heard about him was that he was in prison in America for entering America with a fake like a counterfeit passport or a counterfeit visa.

And then I didn't hear about him for years after that. And finally I heard that he had he there was like people taking he was still a claiming to be a monk and but people were taking pictures of him at like some disco or nightclub where he was like dressed as a lay person and then there he got drunk. He was driving drunk and got in an accident and somebody died as a result of it and then he kind of went insane and then he

was still sort of a dama teacher but he had like long hair and a beard at that point.

So that kind of stuff is more likely in Thailand I guess. Um, in Burma it can still happen, but not on quite as large of a scale. And even if it does happen, it generally is not going to get publicized much just because the Burmese are very hesitant to badmouth monks and they don't want the SA badmouthed. They don't want the SA to be disgraced. That sort of thing. Even though um one reason one result of that of the reluctance of Burmese people to criticize monks is you've got more lax monks.

My experience in Burma is that the places with the best monks and the strictest practice are places where the the lay people have like a critical eye on monks. You know, the lay people know something about Vinaya and they know if a monk is is not following Vinaya and they're less likely to support that monk. The the places with the worst monks are the places where the people are just they just indiscriminately revere all monks and I mean they do not dare to say anything bad about monks. But I think the Thais are a bit more rascally in their culture than the Burmese are. They're more sensual. You know, like the Burmese and the Thai were

traditional arch enemies for centuries,
kind of like the English and the French
or the uh the Spartans and the
Athenians.

And it looks like uh the sound has
caught up with my mouth, which is good.

So

yeah, scandals do occur in Burma, but
they're smaller scandals or else they're
just better concealed partly because
people don't want to know bad things
about monks.

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Yugao.

And Yugao says, "Tell is more of a
difference between faith in Buddhism and

the one in Christianity."

Um, I don't think there's really that much of a difference in Christian faith and what in Buddhism is called sada or like in Pali is called sada, which is usually translated as faith. Although a lot of Westerners don't really like the word faith very much because it reminds them too much of Christianity and so they'll come up with another rendering for sada like confidence.

But yeah, I mean faith in Christianity mainly is belief in a story, you know, belief in a dogma. You don't I mean, you don't know that it's true. I think even Paul of Tarsus was reasonable enough to admit in one of his epistles that I

mean, it's it's faith because you don't really know it. I mean, if you really knew it, you wouldn't it wouldn't be faith anymore. It would just be knowledge.

So, it's it's kind of a guess, kind of basing your life on a guess.

And there's a lot of that in Buddhism also. It's it's you're just kind of guessing that Dharma is true because you don't know for a fact that it is true because once you know for a fact that it is true, it's not faith anymore.

But I mean, Christianity had really advanced practitioners, too, like St. John of the Cross. And what St. John of

the Cross called dark faith. I mean that's that's relatively advanced. That's beyond just believing perceptually in a story. What St. John of the Cross called dark faith is like I mean anything that isn't God you dismiss from your mind. That was pretty much his meditation method or his contemplation method was if it isn't God dismiss it. So I mean you can't imagine God. So dismiss imagination. You can't figure out God rationally. So, you dismiss rationally.

You know, it's like it can't God cannot be contained in any mental state. Just dismiss all mental states until you've dismissed pretty much all mental states.

You're just sitting there in what a Buddhist would call Janna. You're not thinking anymore. And then St. John of the cross says after you have dismissed everything from your mind that can be dismissed and he was a meditation master once you've dismissed everything that can be dismissed you know there's still something there and according to St. John of the cross. That's like the allervasive spirit of God that you can't just dismiss that it's always going to be there. So after you've dismissed everything that can be dismissed, there's still something there. This this dark I mean

it doesn't have any discernable qualities really. But still, I mean it's you know it's there. And that is what he called dark faith.

And that's that's kind of getting into more advanced levels of faith in Buddhism, too. It's like I mean, you have faith in a story. You have faith in these doctrines. And then through your own practice, more and more of it gets verified. You can see for yourself that it's true, and which might cause you to have more faith in in some of the stuff that you haven't verified yet.

But also, you know, it's you know that you're on the right track because you're heading in the right direction.

And in Christianity, you kind of have that. Although, I mean, believing in Jesus and the Virgin Mary and all that really, I mean, it's not necessarily closely connected with liberation. You know, you got the story and you got the liberation.

So the liberationoriented faith would be I mean it'd be easier to come by in Buddhism I think whereas in Christianity they're they're so locked together that I mean in a way it's it's kind of a handicap but there are at least two texts in the polytopic that says a monk should have no faith.

One is a strange verse in the dharmapata
and and then one is in the the atikawaga
of the sutini pata.

So yeah I mean for the for the average
village Buddhist in Southeast Asia and
for the average Christian faith is
pretty much the same kind of faith. But
when you get more advanced, faith is
easier in Buddhism, I think, just
because it's not so firmly tied to this
narrative that you couldn't possibly
prove.

So, I mean, if you're a Buddhist, you
can get very advanced without having to
believe the the legend of God Buddha.

You know, it's like he was born with his
mother standing up holding onto a tree

branch and this kind of thing. It's not nearly as important in Buddhism as it is in Christianity. Jesus died for our sins. I mean, that's just central to Christianity. The whole narrative about this person,

whereas in Buddhism, I mean, God Buddha is just kind of in kind of incidental. He discovered Dharma, but Dhamma is still there with or without him.

So like the details of his life are not nearly as important which makes faith kind of in a way more stable more robust at least it can for a Buddhist practitioner than for a Christian practitioner who has to believe this

story.

And I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Zeno Demon.

And Zeno Demon says for a younger generation can you explain the difference? It has he has deference here, but I think it's difference between a beatnick and a hippie.

Well, the Beatnicks arose in the 1950s and they still had like short hair for the most part. Um, they listened to jazz music. They were influenced by like Zen Buddhism and existentialist philosophy. And there were there was a certain like avantguard intellectualism about the beats. It never really caught on in the mainstream nearly as much as the later

hippie movement. You know, it was just sort of like this intellectual avant intellectual and like artistic avantgard that was emphasizing like meaninglessness or like the paradoxical nature of existence, you know, existentialist philosophy, that kind of thing. and they would be like nonconformist and offbeat just deliberately to make a statement that kind of thing. And then gradually from the beat movement evolved the hippie movement which um they didn't really like well they didn't like jazz music nearly as much. they they preferred rock and roll which is

one of the advantages the hippies had over the beatnics is the beatnics were listening to like this avantgard jazz stuff or just like people reciting like poetry that doesn't rhyme while beating bongos that kind of stuff. So the hippies in a way it became more popular in a like a mainstream acceptance kind of way just because it was less I mean it was more human in a sense you know they they didn't like Zen so much they like Hinduism they didn't like this meaninglessness of the beatnic philosophy you know they wanted meaning of like love and peace and joy and this kind of thing so it was more of an emotional kind of kind of thing. And

of course, the the hippies had like the long hair and the beards, bare feet, you know, and the male hippies at least would go around with no shirts. They wore bell bottoms, that kind of thing.

And uh it started off as a kind of you know to some degree even a spiritual movement you know it was sort of an artist aesthetic movement but then it just became like a fad and then people were just sort of following along just because they wanted you know less rules they wanted to rebel against their conservative Christian parents that kind of thing. you know, the drugs and sex,

sex, drugs and rock and roll.

The Beaties were, I mean, they were into alcohol and drugs and sex, too. Jazz instead of rock and roll. Well, there's definitely a kind of a difference.

Although, I mean, there had to have been this evolutionary like like the missing link, the transitional form. you know, some people like Alan Ginsburg, I mean, they were like like an intellectual leader of the beat movement until the hippie movement kind of supplanted it and then they became like an intellectual leader of the the hippie movement.

So, I'm not exactly sure what the transitional form would be,

but it is true that the hippie movement arose from the beat movement.

Like the Beatles for example, they started off as beat, hence the name Beatles and then they uh became hippies when uh you know like 19 like the late 60s when they let the hair grow long and started taking LSD and going to Maharishi's ashram in India, that kind of thing.

So I think I'm just going to move on to Zeno Demon's next question. He says, 'If westerners are more animal people in your last vid, then how is the how is west more developed the Bernia? And I didn't understand what more developed

the Bernia meant until somebody pointed out to me that it's just a typo. He I think he means how is the west more developed than Burma?

because western people are more animalistic

in a way. So it's it's kind of reminds me of the Christian statement. It's I guess it could be one of my favorite verses in the Bible. You cannot serve both God and Mammon.

So I mean the Burmese, they have this weird advantage over us because they don't have much mammon to serve. you know, they're living in a an impoverished fourth world country and so it's much easier for them to turn to

religion as their consolation.

Whereas in the west, we're more materialistic, I guess. You know, we we judge our own value or the value of other people largely by the things that they own, the money that they make.

And so, I mean, we might be more capable of critical thought.

um you know we might be more sophisticated in our education and so forth but at the same time more western people are just stuck in mammon worship you know just more materialistic more living at just a superficial level like the Burmese I used to when I was in Burma I used to note that like a

westerner has a much broader mind than the average Burmese person but it's shallower than the Burmese you know they have the same amount of mental energy let's say but what they lack in width, their broadness of their mind is compensated by depth.

So they're much more empathetic than the average westerner. At least a lot of them are, you know, they're very very people oriented, for example. And so they have a depth of feeling like somebody's house burns down, the whole rest of the neighborhood just or the village will just get together and build them a new house. Not very difficult to build a house in

Burma. So it's not nearly as complicated as in the west, but they have more like spiritual depth to them on average.

So the west is more developed than than Burma because they're more superficial.

They're more they're more like focused on just what they can see and hear and not so much focused on what they can't see and hear, which is deep down inside them. Like people in the west they want to understand reality they look outwards. Whereas more traditionally in the east you want to understand reality you look inwards which is a more advanced approach spiritually although it's much less conducive to science and

technology and world conquest.

So it's like bringing back Charles Dickens. You know Charles Dickens was definitely like an ethnic supremacist. He definitely considered uh English people to be vastly superior to little brown people.

And so he I mean he really didn't understand that for example he didn't understand just the arrogance and foolishness of Anglican missionaries going to places like Burma or or Siam trying to convert the people there to Anglican Christianity which is just inferior to what these heathens already were already following because you cannot serve serve

both God and Mammon. And so it's like the British Empire, they were like foremost in the world of serving Mammon, but they just had this idea that they were also foremost in the world of serving God somehow, which was just silly.

Anyways, I should just move on to the next question. And we are getting pretty close to the bottom. Pretty close. Yeah, there's not very many more questions here.

So, next question is from Xenithoid. This is going to be less than three hours. Let's hope.

Xenithoid says, "Do you think making

analogies between physical laws and mental laws is a bad way to go about explaining idealist takes? For example, the way I go about explaining my atheism is that there is no need for a super mind to ground all other minds. In the same way there is no need for a super atom to ground all other atoms. Also I think of tna as being a contracting force similar to gravity or chemical bonds. But for consciousness as opposed to material which is what created creates the self. Are these analogies too reductive? Well I think the the analogies are just kind of too abstract for most people to follow them very well.

With regard to this first example, let's see. There is no need for a super mind to ground all of their minds in the same way there is no need for a super atom to ground all other atoms. Well, I mean, I wouldn't consider that to be a very good analogy. I mean, an atom would be more like a mental state than a mind, you know, like in going with like terraovato philosophy, you got mind and you got mental states.

And an atom would be more like a mental state like an individual perception than it would be like consciousness in general. Consciousness in general might be something more like the quantum field

from which everything arises.

But uh yeah, so I wouldn't consider that to be a really good comparison.

You know, it's sort of apples to oranges in a way.

Um

let's see.

I think of tata or craving as being a contracting force similar to gravity or chemical bonds. But for consciousness is exposed to material which is what creates the self. Yeah. It's just too abstract and too sort of obstruse. I think most people will have difficulty even following this line of reasoning. So, I mean, if you're going to try and persuade somebody or win a debate, that

kind of thing, you want something that's easy to understand, something that people can visualize in their mind or at least grasp in their mind fairly easily without having to get into like obscure arguments that are hard to follow that people for the most part aren't going to be able to follow.

So I mean you can kind of compare mental phenomena with physical phenomena like I just compared consciousness in general with the quantum field but

or you know a mental state with an atom that kind of thing but I'm not really trying to persuade any um materialists

you know I'm just kind of trying to come up with analogies that might in some cases help somebody to understand something.

So the analogies, yeah, I suppose they are too reductive, but also they're just too obscure and abstract and obstruuse and just difficult for people to follow. For example, I mean, it it wouldn't make much headway with me that using that kind of argument. Um, because it's it really is not self-evident. It's not clear the way it's explained. So that you know is there's nothing that really clicks.

There's no aha moment.

So I think I'm just going to move on to

Zenithoy's next question. How do Paticha Samuata and the three marks of existence relate to the concept of entropy?

Well, I mean in the Buddhist time when they came up with Paticha Samupata and the tilakana, the three marks of existence, I really don't think they had much of a concept of entropy. I mean, everyone knows that you get older, that kind of thing. That's kind of a kind of entropy, I guess.

You know, they know that things tend to break, you know, it's just like all water pots end up breaking, you know, all fruit eventually falls from the tree. So, that's kind of entropy. It's

impermanence definitely. So, entropy
definitely would fit under a niche,
which is one of the three marks of of
existence. It would definitely I mean
entropy definitely is uh an aspect of
impermanence

with regard to dependent coarising.

Yeah. I'm not it's not entirely clear to
me how entropy and padicha samuada would
be related to each other. I mean
everything is related to picha samupata.
Everything is related to entropy from a
like the scientific point of view or
other than maybe the quantum field or
something like that.

So

um but like picha samopata it's not like

an aspect of the idea of dependent core
rising that everything is kind of
running down running from order to
disorder

that that I don't think that entropy is
necessarily

contained within the concept of
dependent core rising and dependent core
rising is not nec maybe some form of it
some scientific form of dependent
corrising could apply to entropy but
entropy doesn't necessarily apply to
dependent core rising as far as I can
tell but certainly entropy would be um
an aspect of ana or impermanence or
inconstancy.

So I guess I better move on. I got to keep my keep to my goal of staying within three hours on this thing. So the next question is from PSA and PSA says, "Do you think Bridget Micron or Micron is a dude?"

Bridget Micron.

Yeah. Well, I mean, I haven't watched all of Candace Owens's exposees, but it wouldn't surprise me. I mean, based on what little evidence I've seen, yeah, Micron's wife might actually be a [__] And even if even if Micron's wife isn't a [__] nevertheless, I mean, she was kind of a predator going she was like a pedto going with, you know, the the western definitions of the

terms. I mean, she was fully adult. She was like 40 years old or something like something like that when she first started messing around with Micron who was 14 years old at the time. So, I mean, it's it's criminal went on apparently. I mean, I don't know what the laws are in France, so maybe maybe it's wouldn't be criminal there, but uh yeah, I mean, it wouldn't surprise me that that Micron is is kind of a a twink and that his his wife is is a she male. Wouldn't surprise me, but I really don't know for sure. And so, I'm not just going to start like leveling accusations or making assertions on the

subject. So, I'm just going to move on to PSA's next question. What do you think of Stephen Cobear's late show getting cancelled? I got no dog in the fight. I never saw a single episode of Steven Coar's late show. I mean, I saw a few clips, you know, when he's doing saying something egregious or dancing around with people in in like hypodermic syringe costumes. I've seen that before. You know, making some of his ridiculous accusations against Trump. how, you know, Trump is is Putin's dick holster or something. So, I mean, I don't really care. I mean, it's it's a good thing, I suppose, that Steven Coar, he's just another

hysterical left-wing propagandist bigot.

So, yeah, the fewer of those the better, I suppose. Although I mean western prop left or like right-wing propagandist bigots aren't all that great either.

But I mean what exactly is right-wing? I don't think anyone's ever fully agreed on that. Leftwing is obvious. I mean extreme leftwing is communism. I mean that is not controversial. Extreme rightwing

people just don't agree on that. That's controversial.

Certainly not Donald Trump. And it's not even fascism.

So, what do I think of Ste Steven Coar's

late show getting cancelled? I think it's a good sign that the left is losing control of the cultural mainstream that they have gone so far to the left, they've become so extreme that they are just losing credibility and also they've told so many lies that are coming to light that people just don't trust them anymore. So, that's good.

So, the next question from PSA is one that I do not fully understand. He says, "Will there ever be a rainbow?" And I'm pretty sure that there have been lots of rainbows already. I've seen lots of rainbows in my life. So, yeah, there will be a rainbow.

And finally, we move on to the last

question and this is from Jules. And Jules says, "In the context of sila and the precepts, how accurate is the English translation of intoxicant from the original poly? Other than heedlessness, did the Buddha ever prescribe any specific qualities or characteristics of a substance that cause it to qualify as such?" Well, like the fifth precept for lay people is So surah is like beer or ale. Surah is like wine. And then maja is intoxicant. And then pamada and pomada is like it's tana just means like a grounds for. So pom it's grounds for pomado. Maja an intoxicant which is

grounds for pamada. And the mada in pomada has the same etymology as maja.

Maja is like you know it's it's more of an adjectival term. Pomada is is like the state of being intoxicated or drunk or just befuddled. You know, like befuddled might be a better term for like pamada and maja is like what causes it. And maja is just the standard term for like for alcohol. Maja pana is is like alcoholic drinks.

Pana is like water or or beverage beverage.

And uh the maja is like like drunkenness beverage or like befuddlement beverage, intoxicated beverage. So or intoxicating beverage. So maja um generally it meant

like like alcoholic drinks. Pam or mada
pomada would be like drunkenness. But I
mean drunkenness isn't necessarily
caused just by alcohol, you know? was
just like befuddled, being like, you
know, stupid and clumsy,
that kind of thing.

So, let's see. Let's read the story.

Let's read the question here again. In
the context of sila and the precepts,
how accurate is the English translation
of intoxicant from the original poly?

Yeah, I mean, it's it's fine. I don't
really see any problem with that.

Other than heedlessness, did the Buddha
ever prescribe any specific qualities or

characteristics of a substance that cause it to qualify as such? Well, not alcohol would be I mean standard I mean that would be like the starting point.

Alcohol would be numero uno because alcohol is called maja in pi or maja pana.

So um there is the the origin story like in in Vineia every rule in Vignia has an origin story and there's this origin story I think it was he was even an arahant a monk who was an arahant wound up drinking something alcoholic and he passes out with his feet pointing towards the Buddha which I mean in Buddhist countries you don't point your feet at anybody especially if they're a

venerable person or towards a Buddhist statue or or anything like in Burma You don't like point with your foot at anything really. It's considered rude because the foot is considered to be like the armpit of the human body.

So anyways, this monk kind of passes out with his feet pointing towards the Buddha. And so the Buddha was like pointing out it's like, you know, this this monk, he he he like defeated a naga with his spiritual powers, you know, this cobra dragon. Now, I mean, he couldn't defeat anything, could he? Look at this. He's he's just lying there unconscious with his feet pointing

towards me. So I mean that's kind of
heedlessness I guess even in Arahant in
this case but it's it's just kind of
like being

stupid you know it's it's just sort of
like decreasing your wisdom

um

or just

being intoxicated

being high but I mean no I mean high

wouldn't be a good term because I mean

some some drugs that get you high like

cocaine wouldn't necessarily make you

heatless. I mean, caffeine is is

chemically related to cocaine and I mean

caffeine isn't considered to be an

intoxicant that leads to heatlessness as

a general rule.

So

yeah, I think uh let's see is the English translation of intoxicant from the original how accurate is the English translation of intoxicant from the original poly? Yeah, it's not bad. It's about as good as you're going to find.

So yeah, it's about it's about good.

Intoxicant. Yeah, that's I think I'd say that's a fair assessment or a fair rendering of the word maja into English.

Like majana would be like an intoxicating beverage,

an intoxicating drink, but mainly it means alcohol.

So

see, other than heedlessness, did the Buddha ever prescribe any specific qualities or characteristics of a substance that calls it to qualify as well like if it makes you like temporarily insane, that kind of thing.

But uh yeah, I haven't really studied up. I mean if you were to read the vineia you get to majapana like the the rule for monks against majapana then I mean you could read the sutu banga which is the the ancient commentary that's embedded in the text and it will probably give a better explanation which I neglected to do before I started doing this Q&A. So if you have an English

translation of the vineia then go to the
padim mochoka rules, the pacidia rules
and look up the rule against a monk
drinking intoxicating beverages and see
what the the ancient commentary says and
that will probably be the like the uh
the best authoritative description of
exactly what constitutes u mud.

And that's it. We're done. And like I
should always say at the beginning, I
never do except maybe once. You got any
questions you think I can answer like
especially with regard to like early
Buddhism, Terraata Buddhism and then as
you go farther and farther away from
from that then the odds of my being able

to make an intelligent answer to give an intelligent answer will decrease accordingly. I think I do I am fairly wellversed like biology. I have a degree in biology, western philosophy, like classical literature, that kind of stuff I know something about also. But my main field of expertise, I guess, would be early Buddhism.

And no more than three questions per person per episode, please. And if you have questions, just feel free to put them in the comments below this video. And uh aside from that, just uh be happy. And I'm going to stop recording now by hitting this here particular uh button.

Alrighty, then. I think we are recording.

If we are indeed recording, you should hear this. You should hear me tapping the microphone like this.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 156.

I am your host Panyo Boss and this is my beverage that I haven't put the paper umbrella into yet.

So, let's just do that as a kind of traditional preliminary.

So, that we put the paper umbrella into the beverage

like so, then we immediately take it

back out again.

Because after all, it's simply to demonstrate my sophistication by using it.

Okay.

So, let's see here. 156

is certainly not prime because it is in fact $2 * 2 * 3 * 13$.

And I personally am feeling like a wet rag today cut because just the past week, I've been working like 10 11-hour shifts, just working my butt off.

Just

sort of

metaphorically speaking.

I do still have a butt.

And it's just like a 90° plus heat and
I'm just feeling like a wet rag today.
Today is my day of glorious laziness and
recovery.

So, last night after a 10-hour shift in
90 plus degree heat, working my butt off
as I was saying,

my my lovely woman informs me that she
just ordered about a ton and a half of
rocks and gravel

for the backyard

that has to be moved from the front
where the car is parked and so forth to
the backyard with a wheelbarrow and I
said, "Well, it's not going to happen
tomorrow. It's just not going to happen

on that day.

Cuz as I say, I need one day just to be lazy, but I can still exercise intellectually, which I do in these Q&As to some degree.

And so, I guess the thing for me to do at present is just wade into this and it's not going to be a real long one.

There's there's a relatively small number of questions this time due to just the lassitude of the heat. People just not really been able to come up with lots of questions cuz they're just kind of lying there.

So, first question is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, it seems that more often than not when it comes to choosing a

prospective mate, people seem to be attracted to a certain type based on specific characteristics like personality type, like introvert versus extrovert, etc. Body size and shape, race, race, ethnicity, etc.

As you are a Buddhist with a deep knowledge of Western science, I was wondering if you could give your overall take and understanding of romantic attraction and mate selection based on a similar type as well as what influence, if any, karma has in this regard.

Well, let's see here.

Choosing a prospective mate, attractive type. Yeah, it reminds me, I had this

this one friend in high school who
after his first girlfriend, after after
his first girlfriend, it it was like he
would

like target the least attractive girls
in school. And it that could be some
sort of mating strategy where you, I
mean, a guy who hook who hooks up with a
like a manifestly unattractive female is
unlikely to be cocked cuz no other guy
wants her.

But I that just popped into my mind. I
haven't really gotten the momentum going
yet

with regard to answering these
questions. So bear with me.

Overall taken understanding of romantic

attraction

and mate selection. Well,

I have always been I mean I've been open-minded. For example, when I was in school, I fell for a couple of blonde girls.

Not at the same time, but different different times.

But as a general rule,

I have my like feminine ideal is like a fair-skinned brunette with blue eyes and big boobs. Like an hour like a curvy voluptuous hourglass figure.

And as it turns out, that's the kind of girl I got now.

And it kind of scared me

many years ago when I realized that my mother was like that. And it's like what is this is this an Oedipus complex?

But it turns out, I mean, one thing I kind of reasoned with myself is well, I could have just inherited that attraction for

fair-skinned

blue-eyed buxom brunettes from my father because he was attracted to my mother.

But my father was pretty much attracted to just about any kind of attractive woman.

But I have subsequently come across the information that it's a genetic thing that men tend to be attracted towards women who resemble their own mother.

That it's like a genetic thing inherited
from the mother
to increase the likelihood
that her genes will be propagated.

So, I mean, that would be
kind of a mechanistic thing if you
believe in mechanistic things.

Um

Schopenhauer

good old Arthur Schopenhauer had this
idea that we are sort of
instinctively attracted towards women
that will kind of compensate for our own
shortcomings, but his ideas about that
sort of thing about heredity and all
that were just

laughable by modern standards. So, we can just forget Schopenhauer's ideas, I guess.

Um

It is true though that that men do tend to be attracted towards women who resemble their mother.

And also, of course, there are some guys out there who are just attracted to any female.

Just sort of indiscriminate. Just they'll just hit on any woman until they finally get one, you know, they they get a get a bite, they strike traction or something, they they might stay with that one until that one gets fed up with their womanizing or whatever.

Um let's see. But, what is the actual question here?

Let's just get down to the actual question.

So, let's see. I was wondering if you could give your overall take and understanding of romantic attraction and mate selection based on a similar type.

Um

Yeah, I think some men just do have like an instinctive attraction towards a woman who like feels gaps. You know, like the first Rocky movie, I think it was. You know, someone's like questioning his attraction towards Adrian.

And he says, "We fill gaps. I got gaps, you got gaps. Together, we fill gaps."

So, I mean, there there's some of that, too, I think.

Um I've always been attracted to vivacious women.

The like the passive ones that want you to make all the decisions, I've never liked that so much. Partly just cuz I'm lazy don't want to have to make all the decisions for both of us.

But, I I I don't want like a bossy, domineering woman either.

So, it's sort of a middle path scenario on that one.

Um see, overall take understanding romantic attraction mate selection.

Well, I mean, just getting down to the basics, men tend to be attracted to young healthy women because young healthy women, just going with Darwin, are more likely to produce lots of healthy offspring. So, obviously, standards of beauty are not just arbitrary cultural constructs. To a large degree, it's animal instinct in the human animal that you want a well-formed healthy-looking woman at the beginning of her breeding cycle. I mean, that's just natural. But, with regard to your specific tastes, like some guys like brunettes,

some guys like blondes, some guys like curvaceous buxom types, other ones like athletic muscular type women.

So, I mean, that to some degree it could be karmic.

To some degree, it could be influenced by what their mother is like.

Uh to some degree, it could be just this instinctive or intuitive desire to fill gaps.

So, I assume it's it's very complex, especially get into the karmic stuff.

You know, it could be that you just have this karmic thing going with a certain woman or or more than one woman. You know, you've had karmic connections in past lives or whatever, and you come

across them and there's just like
already this momentum going.

So, I mean, there's that possibility
also.

Um

I I noticed when I was younger, like
when I was still in school, I'd off
often fall hardest for women that at the
very beginning I wasn't attracted to at
all.

You know, it's just kind of ew.

And then,

you just wind up with that one thinking
she's wonderful.

But that was just another aside, I
guess.

Um

Yeah, I I suppose I pretty much answered the question as well as as well as I'm capable of answering it off the cuff like this.

Let's see. I'm just going to make sure before I move on to the next one here though.

See, I wonder if you can give your overall take and understanding of romantic attraction and mate selection based on a similar type.

Uh yeah, I suppose it would pretty much be in accordance with what I've already touched upon.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Trzaskazis and Trzaskazis
is asking the same question as he did
last time with regard to
my my take, my commentary on Philippians
4:12-13

because last time when I answered the
question,

I went to Ephesians instead of
Philippians.

A common mistake, I'm sure.

Most people probably can't tell the
difference between Philippians and
Galatians

or Philippians and Ephesians. See,
Galatians, too.

So anyways, Philippians 4:12-13.

I got to make sure I get it right this time. I don't want to just keep reading Bible verses just episode after episode. Make sure we're recording here cuz I don't want to read this again.

All right.

So, Philippians 4:12-13

says, "I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough.

I have learned this secret so that anywhere at any time I am content,

whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me."

Well, I mean, part of this I don't fully comprehend like let's say you're

familiar with what it is not to have
enough so that makes you satisfied when
you don't have enough. I mean,
why?

So that part I don't fully understand. I
mean,

what I like better than than that verse
is actually a proverb of hell
written composed by William Blake's
devil.

Which uh this might not be an exact
quote but is essentially you do not know
what is enough or you cannot know what
is enough unless you know what is more
than enough.

So that was sort of a

a motto that I would uh occasionally
spout as a young man.

You know, in order to know what is
enough, first you have to learn what is
more than enough.

And then you back up a little bit.

You know, it's same the same proverbs of
hell contains such gems as the road of
excess leads to the pallet of palace of
wisdom.

Which

not necessarily true or if the fool
would persist in his folly, he would
become wise. But still to a like a
19-year-old, that stuff is gold.

Um but still I mean,

it's it's like

from a Buddhist point of view, it's not really a knowledge of what is more than enough and a knowledge of what is not enough. It's just sort of like accepting whatever happens.

You know, accepting whatever you've got. And not getting upset over what you don't have. You know, it's like getting upset over what you don't have is essentially you're suffering because of something that doesn't exist.

You know, it's like fear of leprechauns or something. Not that I'm trying to offend any real leprechauns out there.

I've heard that they're invasive in the

United States now.

So, let's see.

Yeah, I I

I assume that's that's kind of my commentary. It's It's better than most of Paul's quotes, I suppose, but I really don't have much use for Paul of Tarsus. I think he messed up Christianity at the same time that he was sort of turning Christianity into like a world religion.

Muhammad Gandhi had the same idea. He thought that Paul really just messed up Christianity at the same time that he was turning it into this world religion.

So, let's see. I'm just make sure here.

I just I've got to I'm kind of a

perfectionist.

So, I got to make sure.

Let's see.

I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. That's good, I suppose. I've learned this secret. I mean, I don't know why it would be a secret unless he just doesn't tell anybody.

So, that anywhere at any time I'm content, whether I'm full or hungry.

Yeah, I really don't know why it doesn't make good logical sense to me.

So, I think the proverb of hell actually is more logical.

You cannot know what is enough unless until you know what is more than enough. But, that's kind of satanic and all. So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Maximin, the first barbarian emperor of Rome, if I remember correctly.

And Maximin says, is it against vinaya to stream a basketball game if you have access to a computer?

Um well, obviously streaming basketball games on a computer is nowhere at all mentioned in the ancient poly rules of monastic discipline.

They didn't have basketball or computers in the ancient Ganges Valley like circa 5th century BCE.

But, going with the spirit of it, I mean just going with the spirit of Dhamma, monks really shouldn't be making efforts to watch basketball games. Although, technically, it wouldn't be against the rules, it would just be sort of inappropriate behavior that technically doesn't break any rules, but it could be against the rule if it is illegal. Like you're pirating it or something. If you are committing copyright theft in such a way that you could be arrested for it, then yeah, that would be against vinaya. In fact, if you're committing copyright theft in such a way that you could be

arrested for it, you could even be
parajika. You could be excommunicated.

So, you have to be careful with such
things as copyright theft, I suppose, if
you are a monk.

So,

with regard to the actual laws regarding
copyright theft of streamed basketball
games and so forth,

I'm no expert. I'm not a legal legal
expert.

So, you're going to have to figure that
part out for yourself.

But, I would assume I would guess that
as a general rule, streaming basketball
games is not illegal enough that you
would be prosecuted for it.

Unless you're like
you're then like selling it,
you know, making a profit from it, that
sort of thing.

But still, a monk should be careful,
especially with regard to something that
involves excommunication.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Stellar
Supreme, who is asking possibly
the most disgusting question
that has been asked in the history of
these kind

Oh my goodness.

He says, Stellar Supreme etc. etc. ad
infinitum,

says,

"Does popping acne count as self-beautification with or without a mirror, or can it pass as a healthcare sort of thing like brushing your teeth? And I mean at the same time that it's disgusting, still I mean pretty much everybody does it except for those who have been blessed with a perfect complexion their entire lives, including when they're like 15.

So,

popping zits, squeezing pimples, I mean it's just an unsavory kind of thing. I mean, you can get satisfaction from doing it yourself, you know, in the privacy of your own bathroom. But like

watching somebody else do it,
for guys especially, I mean that's it's
sort of like watching somebody else take
a dump or something.

But

women, some women,
got like my own one, bless her heart,
she will actually watch YouTube videos
sometimes of like people bursting boils.
And And women are just They just love
that. They have like this grooming
instinct, this primate grooming
instinct. And that's one thing that even
guys have with regard to themselves, you
know, it's like you're squeezing a
blackhead or something.

It's not necessarily a case of self-beautification or a case of health, it's just this primate grooming instinct. You know, in a way it's health because I mean it's that's what caused the instinct to arise.

Plus maybe reproductive success, a little Darwinian sexual selection in there.

But um yeah, I knew this other woman, too. She was the wife of a friend of mine who She I mean she told me she just fantasizes about popping boils.

Some women, I mean it's just the grooming instinct is is it is strong in them.

So, I guess that's one reason why they

like going and getting their hair did
and their nails did and all that. It's
just this kind of primate grooming stuff
going on that satisfies
deep instincts in the human animal.

So,

popping acne. I mean, it depends on your
motivations. It's like, you know, you
don't want the village girls to see you
with this big zit on your cheek, and you
squeeze it for that reason.

I mean, that would be
self-beautification, wouldn't it? On the
other hand, let's say it's just it just
bugs you to have this unsquoze
zit on your face, you know, it's like

the animal grooming instinct thing, then
or it just kind of bugs you to have this
bump there,

then you squeeze it for that reason, I'd
say it's it's a totally different
animal. It's It's It's not for
self-beautification,

not necessarily even for health, but
it's just like this

primate grooming instinct that wants us
to keep our skin relatively clear.

And like pick off, you know, pick off
like dried scabs, and squeeze
blackheads, you know, pick lice off,
that kind of thing.

So, yeah, it depend on the modification
the modification?

Yeah, it depends on the modification. I just invented that word.

I'm going to patent it. I'm going to get royalties.

So,

let's see here. I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question. We don't want to dwell too too long on this question of squeezing pimples.

So, Stella Supreme et cetera et cetera ad infinitum's next question

is what would be your commentary on this quote from the Tao Te Ching?

And the quote from the Tao Te Ching is, "Become totally empty. Let your heart be at peace. Amidst the rush of worldly

comings and goings, observe how endings become beginnings.

To return to the root is to find peace.

To find peace is to fulfill one's destiny. To fulfill one's destiny is to be constant. To know the constant is called insight. Not knowing this cycle leads to eternal disaster.

Knowing the constant gives perspective.

This perspective is impartial.

Impartiality is the highest nobility.

The highest nobility is divine.

This way is everlasting, not endangered by physical death.

Unquote.

Um well, there's a few things I could have some comments on. Become totally

empty. And that's

Mahayana Buddhists teach that kind of thing. And it's one reason why uh Taoism and Mahayana Buddhism kind of merge together so easily in China, like medieval China.

So, see, let your heart be at peace.

Yeah, that's a good idea.

At amidst the rush of worldly comings and goings, observe how endings become beginnings. Yeah, that would be the sort of like impermanence, just this constant cycle of, you know,

like causes and results, and then the results are like new causes that cause new results ad infinitum.

So, then he's got sort of a
ellipsis,
three dots.

So, then he skips to this next part, and
this next part has two of the same sort
of pattern that is common in the Tao Te
Ching. So, to return to the root is
to find peace. To find peace is to
fulfill one's destiny. To fulfill one's
destiny is to be constant. To know the
constant is called insight. So, it's
it's like this this leads to that leads
to that leads to that, which
I mean, it could be just an artificial
stringing together of simple statements
into a more complex statement, and
that's

uh some people have hypothesized that that's how the 12 Nidana theory of Paticca samuppada or dependent co-arising arose in in Buddhism.

Where you have like these simple statements, this causes that, and then you have this other statement of that causes this, and then they just get string strung together, and there's lots of those in the Daode Jing. I'm not exactly sure why.

I mean, it could even be influenced by dependent co-arising like through the influence of Buddhism in early China. I don't know.

So, let's see here.

Not knowing the cycle leads to eternal disaster. To seek is to return to the root is to find peace. The root here, I suppose, would be Dao.

You know, sort of like the the ground of being, you know, the the absolute.

To find peace is to fulfill one's destiny. Not exactly a Buddhist way of expressing things.

Let's see. To fulfill one's destiny is to be constant.

Um, unless you're just sort of returning to the Dao, which is sort of unchanging.

You know, you're sort of transcending this

this hubbub of samsara and getting to the absolute, the unchanging absolute,

which presumably underlies all of this changingness.

So, let's see. To know the constant is called insight.

Um, not I mean, that would be like the highest insight from a Buddhist point of view. I mean, you have lesser insights before then. You know, you're seeing the arising and passing away of things. That kind of thing would be insight also.

At least to a Buddhist.

So, not knowing the cycle leads to eternal disaster, which could be just eternal birth and death.

You know, the cycle of samsara, transmigration, and so forth.

So, I mean,

it's

sort of Buddhist.

You know, it's not uh

an exactly Buddhist way of expressing

things, but the the general idea

would is kind of Mahayana Buddhist, more

Mahayana Buddhist than Theravada, I

think.

Let's see. This perspective

is impartial. Impartiality is the

highest nobility.

The highest nobility is divine. So,

again, it's this this string of

statements where, you know, the object

becomes the subject of the next

statement, which, you know, is just

sort of a chain of these simple statements.

Uh let's see. Impartiality is the highest nobility. That's kind of a value judgment, I suppose.

The highest nobility is divine. So, again, I mean, is if you're transcending samsara, becoming enlightened, you're becoming aware of ultimate reality instead of just being lost in the illusion, then Yeah, you can call it, you know, a highest nobility. I mean, nobility would be like aryahood, you know, arya means noble.

Um the highest nobility is divine. Yeah, that's all fine. I got no problem with

that. And then the last statement in this Tao Te Ching quote, "This way is everlasting, not endangered by physical death." Again, presumably he's referring to the absolute, which to the Taoists is Tao.

To a Buddhist, it would be like, you know, nirvana, nibbanadhatu, the one mind, that kind of thing.

So, I guess I commented on that.

So, I'm just going to move on to the question. This is from Eka Grota.

And Eka Grota says,

"What Now that you have left the monastic life for a couple of years now and are now strictly speaking a lay person,

is your means these days

Oh, okay. What is your means these days
of spiritual realization?

And with hoping to avoid vagueness of
terms again, I would define spiritual
realization a living that spiritually
fulfills you, whatever that means for
you, for this life and the next.

Well, in a way I'm kind of just
coasting on momentum. You know, I
developed these habits
of

I'm I'm not even sure exactly how to
express it.

It's like you're kind of searching
or it's not even really searching, it's

just you're aware that there's something that's beyond the veil.

And I mean, there's always this awareness

that this is not ultimately real, that there's something beyond that, and

you're just kind of like

to some degree you've got a certain amount of focus beyond this.

And that's just this this like a a mental habit at this point.

Like I was saying you know, a recent Q&A, it's like once you reach a certain point it's it's like you hit the point of no return, so that even if you turn your back on Dharma, you know, you just get fed up with it at the surface level,

you know, I'm done.

I don't care anymore.

You turn your back on Dharma, still deep
down you feel Dharma back there
breathing down your neck.

And also, I mean, part of my spiritual
practice is just doing these Q&A's. I
mean, this

these Q&A's is possibly the most overt
spiritual practice, you know, the most
acted out kind of spiritual practice
that I do nowadays, other than just
like, you know, forgiving people, being
patient, you know, just not lying, that
kind of stuff.

So,

yeah, I mean, in a way it's just an attitude. It's not really acted out at the physical level very much. It's just sort of like this mental attitude where you you realize that this is not ultimately real and so you're just kind of like extending beyond it or kind of leaning beyond, leaning through the veil or something. I don't know exactly how even to put it into words.

Let's see. Did I answer the question?

I hope so.

Cuz if I didn't, I'm going to have to come up with a better answer than I already gave.

So, spiritual realization of living
that spiritually fulfills you, whatever
that means to you. Well, I mean,
I'm not like
dissatisfied
other than this sort of like at the
surface level there's always going to be
dissatisfactions. You know, that's just
the first noble truth. So long as you're
like existing,
there's going to be dukkha.

So, there is that, but at the same time
there's just like this deep awareness
that I'm dreaming,
that this is a dream, a like a dream
state.

So, in a way it's kind of like that.

It's like you're asleep at night, you're
you're dreaming, like maybe you're
having a bad dream, but still you have
enough

like wisdom or awareness to realize it's
just a dream.

And so, you've got like this part of
your mind that's still awake, so to
speak.

And I mean, the more practice, the more
spiritual advancement or progress you
have made, the more that you're more
like identified with the awake part even
when you're dreaming.

And a lot of people they think that
being sound asleep that you're just

completely unconscious which isn't true.
There's always like an awareness there.
Like otherwise nobody would be able to
wake you up. You wouldn't hear the alarm
clock going off. You wouldn't
you wouldn't feel people like trying to
shake you awake anything like that. That
part of you is still awake.

So let's see here.

Yeah, I guess I guess that would be a
good explanation. It's like you're
you're asleep dreaming but there's still
a part of you that is like like aware of
your surroundings as you're lying there
on the bed conjuring up this imaginary
scenario. There's still an aspect of

your consciousness that is still aware of your surroundings. You hear there's a weird noise. It can wake you up.

Somebody tries to wake you up. They can succeed. That kind of thing.

So it's just more of a like an emphasis on that aspect of your awareness of or your mind or whatever.

So I think I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Xenastoid. And Xenastoid says, "If it was impossible to exit the cycle of death and rebirth, would Nietzscheanism with its goal of becoming the master of samsara become your preferred philosophy?"

No, because in a way

I do consider it impossible to exit the cycle of death and rebirth. At least at this at the samsaric level there is no escape. See, it's you have to transcend it. But the samsaric stuff still going on. It's like going back to my very hackneyed at this point simile of the block of marble.

So you got the block of marble, shapeless, sizeless block of marble. You can't really compare it with anything else, so it's might as well be sizeless. And it contains within every single possible statue. And that's every single possible statue is always going to be in there. There's nothing you can possibly

do to erase your unenlightened statue
from that rock.

Absolutely nothing. It's always going to
be there. Every single possible scenario
is always going to be in that rock in
potential, conditional, virtual form.

So in a sense, there is no escape from
the cycle of birth and death. The only
thing you can do is arise above it to
transcend it, to stop identifying with
it. But even so, it's there's going to
be an infinite number of unenlightened
miserable yous stuck in that uncarved
block of marble. Regardless of anything
you do or don't do.

And still, I'm not a Nietzschean. I
really don't have much use for

Nietzsche. I don't even like his writing style.

A little too dramatic and like emotive for me.

I mean, a a good philosopher shouldn't be just completely emotionless, but at least he should have like a sense of humor.

Like David Hume, he had a sense of humor.

I like David Hume.

So, let's see.

Yeah, I mean, Nietzscheanism

I mean, even if there's no exit to the cycle of birth and death, especially at the samsaric level.

I'm not saying there's no enlightenment.
I'm not saying there's no transcendence,
but even if it's impossible to exit the
cycle of birth and death, it does make
sense within the context of samsara to
try to steer a path that will result in
as little misery for you as possible.

This It doesn't really matter, but still
if you prefer happiness to unhappiness,
if you prefer heaven to hell, you might
as well act upon that.

So, be like a Epicurean, you know, just
minimize your desires, simplify your
life.

You know, enjoy wholesome pleasures.
That sort of thing.

So, yeah, and Nietzsche wouldn't be

that.

Nietzsche would be like

uh you know, to be the Julius Caesar

type or something, which Nietzsche

wasn't successful at doing either.

So, I think I'm just going to move on to

Zenothoid's next question.

After checking again to make sure we are recording.

Let's see. Yeah, the green bar is

wiggling back forth, which does mean the

microphone is apparently working.

So, Zenothoid's second question, who had

a better understanding of Eastern

spirituality, Julius Evola or Rene

Guenon? And I'm

probably mispronouncing both of their names, and I don't even care.

So, who had a better understanding of Eastern spirituality? I I'm going with Evola. That I have read at least one book from each each one of these authors. Rene Guenon, he was just too touchy-feely. I mean, he wasn't really good at objective rationality, not to the extent that Evola was.

And Evola understood Buddhism more. I mean, Rene Guenon eventually became like a Sufi or something.

And

so, I mean,

I share Evola's tastes in spirituality

more than I share the the tastes of Rene Guenon.

Guenon, I don't know how to pronounce his name. Just

just don't even listen to me trying to pronounce their names.

So, yeah, I'm going with I'm going with Evola.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Xenathoid also.

And he says, "How accurate is this meme?" And it's a meme showing Julius Evola as a Kshatriya and René Guénon as a Brahmin.

So, the meme is suggesting that that

Evola is more of like the warrior type of spirituality and Guénon is more of the priestly type, which has some accuracy to it, I suppose.

That Guénon was more priestly than Evola. Evola was more warrior-like than Guénon, I assume.

So, yeah, I mean, it's I mean, any kind of comparison like this is going to break down if you scrutinize it too closely, but in loosely general terms, I got no problem with that. It does seem to be making some kind of more or less valid point.

So, let's see.

Yeah, so Evola was more of like the the fascist spiritualist.

And I mean, some people would consider that to be like an oxymoron or something, but really, it's it's Marxism that is just insists upon atheism, or it has traditionally, whereas fascism has tended to be way more religious.

So, you can have like a a spiritual fascist.

Maybe not a spiritual Marxist unless they're like some kind of Marxist heretic.

But René Guénon, yeah, he was more like the priestly kind of rising above it, you know, kind of renouncing kind of a person.

So, yeah, I got no problem with that.

And I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from Austin.

And Austin says,

I I When I When I see the name Austin now, I've got a supervisor at work named Austin.

And it's like, whenever I need Austin, I'll just call it, "Austin!"

In the same voice, you know, it's the same the same tone of voice every time.

So, that he kind of cringes now because he knows I'm going to be presenting some problem to him.

Anyway, "Austin says, where does the ushnisha come from? Statues of Mahavira also have a ushnisha. So, perhaps it

predates Buddhism or is a motif from the cultural milieu of the time. And I've talked about this before multiple times. Although, I haven't called it the ushnisha. In fact, I forgot what ushnisha meant. I thought maybe he was referring to the like the the little spiral of hair or just the knob like between the eyes of a of a Buddha image, but it's not that. The ushnisha is the lump on the top of a the head of a Buddha statue. A Buddha image. Could be a painting, too.

And it's considered to be one of the 32 marks of a great man and so forth. But, it's really not, in my opinion. The

ushnisha, this lump on the top of the head, like I've said before, it started off as a top knot. The ancient Greeks were some of the first people to make Buddha images. And for reasons of their own, just traditional reasons, they made the Buddha look like the god Apollo.

Which

kind of makes sense, I guess.

So, you have the Buddha modeled on Apollo. And at that time, Apollo had a top knot of hair. It was sort of like an arist- aristocratic hairstyle in those times.

And so, the Buddha, even though in reality he shaved his head bald, he wound up with this top knot of hair,

which underwent various evolutions.

Like, sometimes still today you can see Buddha statues where it's like a flame coming out of the top of his head like the flame of wisdom.

There was one Buddha image that I had in the meditation hall where I was where I was living at a certain monastery in Burma where it looked like an onion kind of it was sort of kind of bulbous at the bottom and then went up to a point that was like balanced on top of his head. It kind of bugged me cuz it was leaning to one side a little bit.

So,

what happened was

the Greeks, presumably, this is like the main theory anyway, the Greeks started making Buddha statues with this top knot of hair. People realized that the Buddha was a monk, didn't really have a top knot of hair, and so they kind of morph it into a flame of wisdom or some such, and then eventually it just becomes like this lump that nobody really understands it other than like the main traditional like rationalization is it one of the 32 marks of of the great man, the Mahapurisa, going with Indian tradition, which may have come from the Middle East, is that

one of the marks of a great man is he's got a head shaped like a turban. So, they think, well, that lump there is like the turban thing, but in all likelihood a head shaped like a turban just means that it was just sort of like light bulb shaped, you know, it wasn't any more long than wide, you know, just kind of like, you know, all around. That would be my guess.

Whereas the Ushnisha almost certainly came from a top knot of hair, and to this day, I mean, it would just look weird if the Buddha was shaven-headed and still had that lump.

You know, it would just look it would

look deformed or something. In fact, a lot of these 32 marks of the great man, if if any person had most of them, it'd be impossible to have all of them, but in because they just they're incompatible.

You know, some of them, like for example,

one of the marks of a great man is he has the dimensions of a banyan tree, which most people, at least most men, generally have pretty close to, which is when you have your arms outstretched like this, then the distance between your fingertips would be the same as your height. That would be one of the marks of a great man. Another one though

is when you're standing straight up, if you hang your hands down in front of you, the palms of your hands are resting on your knees.

So, if in order for both of these to be on the same person, you'd have to have thighs that are about this long and shins that were like really, really long.

And I have seen a few Buddha statues like the Ananda Temple in Pagan in Burma have tried to make the Buddha with really short thighs and really, really long shins, which looks kind of weird and even they didn't go to the extreme that would make it actually fit the 32

marks.

But anyways, and one of the other 32 marks, I mean, he's got long fingers too, which would make even even more deformed going with that problem that I just mentioned.

Also, supposedly, his heels would stick out behind his ankles as far as the fronts of his feet stick out in front so that from the side his feet would look like upside down capital T's.

And any person had 40 teeth, just he's he's got all these weird marks that would make him look like a monster.

Plus,

according to a different tradition, he was approximately 27 ft tall.

But I'm I'm just sort of straying into a kind of rant here.

So, yeah, just getting back to the idea that the Buddha's was almost always shown with head hair.

Because if you have this Ushnisha or lump on the top of the head without hair, he would just look just kind of grotesquely deformed.

So, even though everyone knows the Buddha shaved his head, still almost all Buddha statues have him with hair to compensate for these pesky Greeks making the first Buddha images with long hair. Just basing him on the god Apollo.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is also from Austin. He says a few Q&As ago we discussed how different religions describe ultimate reality in different ways. This seems to parallel the Jain concept. Oh, wait a minute. Let's get

Okay, let's get back to uh the first question. Just forget this me starting to say the next question because he mentions that Mahavira, the founder of the Jains, also has this lump on his head in at least some images. And I would assume that is just simply because the Jains copied the Buddhists with regard to lots and lots of stuff. Like the biography of Mahavira is almost

exactly the same as the biography of the Buddha.

You know, it's very similar.

Except for instead of cutting his hair off with a sword, he pulled it out. And I think it was like eight handfuls. He just yanked all of his hair and beard out.

But it's this whole story of the renunciation and all that, very similar.

And part of the reason why the Jains copied the Buddhists so much the

Buddhists so much is the Jains were like radical ascetics. They weren't as much into scholarship. You didn't have like overweight Jain scholars living in Jain

universities the way

you had overweight Buddhist monks just

living a sedentary easy life at some

university teaching classes, that kind

of thing, that the Jains were much more

rigorous in their asceticism. And

because of that, they didn't have enough

scholars

to just keep memorizing all the texts.

You know, it's It was just Indian

tradition that you didn't write stuff

down. You memorize sacred texts

especially.

You know, including like the Vedas and

so forth. So,

um because you had fewer scholars twice,

the the Jain scriptures disappeared. You

know, there were fragments of it, but the the entire corpus of the Jain scriptures, I don't know what it would be called. It wouldn't be the Tripitaka. It just disappeared. And so, they had to have like great councils trying to reformulate a body of scripture. They had to do that twice. And I assume they would fill in some of the gaps by just taking like Buddhist traditions, and which might include the lump on the top of his head, the ushnisha, if you will.

And so, I'm just going back to Austin's second question, which I already started asking or reading or something.

He says, "A few Q&As ago, we discussed how different religions describe ultimate reality in different ways. This seems to parallel the Jain concept of anekantavada, non-absolutism, which is famously illustrated by the parable of the blind men and the elephant, each arriving at a different understanding based on limited contact. This raises a question. Are all claims about ultimate truth inherently relative, or can the Buddha offer an absolute certain description of ultimate reality that stands beyond the limits of relative interpretation?"

So, before I answer the actual question, I would like to address this uh Jain concept, which in the book I read was called syadvada. The Jains actually did have some philosophical ideas other than just torture yourself until your your karma is exhausted and then die. They They went deeper than that. They had what was called Syadvada, which means Syad means something like sort of or in a sense, kind of. And so, with regard to any statement that can be made in words, these Jain philosophers were saying, I mean, to be completely accurate, you would have to

add Syad to it. So, in a sense, there is no self, but in a sense, there is a self. In a sense, you know, it's like everything is impermanent, but in a sense, I mean, nothing's impermanent. So, it's Their idea was that only a fully fully enlightened Tirthankara or a fully enlightened Jain, I think an omniscient one, like Mahavira was, can see something from all possible angles simultaneously, whereas the ordinary worldling has to see something from one point of view at a time.

You know, so, you're looking at a round table from the side, it's like a very

narrow ellipse, but, you know, you just sort of interpret it as a round table because you know that if you look at it from straight above or straight below, it's going to be circular.

So, only a fully enlightened omniscient Jain

can see something from all angles simultaneously,

whereas everybody else, you have to use this conditional language because, you know, you're obviously going to be missing out on most of it by making any kind of of assertion about it with regard to whatever it is.

Which

I mean, it's it's a valid point, but at the same time, you don't want to just be putting kind of and sort of into every single sentence

in order to be autistically accurate.

So, let's just get to the the actual question here.

Let's see, are all claims about ultimate truth inherently relative? Yes, because you have to put it into words, you have to symbolize it, which then it's not ultimate truth anymore.

You cannot describe ultimate truth in words. You cannot understand reality by thinking about it. Empirical objective reality you can understand to some

degree, but like the Jains are saying,
you're not going to know everything
there is to know about this thing.

You're not going to be able to see it
from every possible angle
simultaneously.

So, are all claims about ultimate truth
inherently relative? Yes. I mean, it's
not even really I'm kind of relative,
kind of, sort of.

But it's you're symbolizing something
that can't be symbolized. You're trying
to express something in words
that cannot be expressed in words. I
mean, even stuff in in samsara,
I mean, you can say vanilla. But I mean,

that that vanilla, that those three syllables do not at all describe what vanilla tastes like. It doesn't describe anything. It's just giving like this label.

I mean,

the letters t r e e are just infinitely different from an actual tree.

You cannot I mean, no matter how s-

no matter how sophisticated the

symbolism gets. I mean, you can be a

botanist. You can have won a a Nobel

Prize

for for your studies on trees. You can

write this huge

multi-volume treatise on trees. You're

not going to get one iota closer to the

ultimate reality underlying those trees.
It's like Immanuel Kant saying, with
regard to his critique on science, he he
declared that science will never get 1
in, 1 iota closer to the thing in
itself, ever, no matter how
sophisticated science gets it's never
going to come anywhere close
to describing the thing in itself it
can't.

So you just have to use skillful means
or will heart of Jason or just like
worldly language just to kind of
sort of be a finger pointing at the
moon.

But still I mean so long as it's useful

in helping people to practice and
develop wisdom and wake up then it's
useful but it's it's never going to
describe reality.

So let's see

can the Buddha offer an absolute certain
description of ultimate reality that
stands beyond the limits of relative
interpretation? No.

It's just I mean it's

it's it's no fault on the part of the

Buddha it's just that you cannot

symbolize ultimate reality because

once you symbolize it it's not ultimate
reality anymore.

It's just labels.

Like how close is the word vanilla to

actual vanilla?

I mean there's there's no resemblance at all.

I mean the word tree

no resemblance at all zero resemblance between t r e e and an actual tree.

And then when you go from I mean that's just dealing with samsara. I mean you can say that there's a tiny resemblance and at least they're both things they're both objects

with like figure and ground and so forth but when you get to the ultimate there's not even that there is zero I'll just use one one zero zero resemblance between words and ultimate reality.

Zero.

There's not even a correspondence.

So I think I'm just going to on to the next question, which is from Siddhartha Lohachita.

And Siddhartha Lohachita says, "I see differences in how Oh, a Nagarjuna question.

Better put on the fez.

I'm going to tastefully arrange the tassel.

So many people who wear fezzes neglect the tassel rearrangement.

So, Siddhartha Lohachita says, "I see differences in how Nagarjuna describes freedom from samsara. His method to achieve nirvana seems to differ from

that of Theravada.

While in Theravada, the path to nirvana involves holiness, which translates to stopping the generation of karma, Nagarjuna emphasizes achieving it solely through the elimination of avidya or ignorance, especially with the knowledge of shunyata or emptiness.

Are there Are they different methods or do they complement each other? Well, they overlap. I mean, you can get to enlightenment either way. It's sort of like in in dhamma, there's different approaches. You know, you've got like the feminine approach, let's just call it a feminine approach of wanting to end

suffering.

Or you have the more masculine
head-oriented approach of wanting to end
delusion.

Turns out, they both lead to the same
enlightenment. That if you're striving
to end suffering,
um you're going to wind up at the same
enlightenment as if you're striving to
end delusion, because they just go hand
in hand.

But with regard to Theravada, I've I've
sort of made this known multiple times
that I am skeptical of the idea in
Theravada that you cannot
have like pure wisdom without having
uh you can't perfect wisdom without

perfecting concentration, and you can't perfect concentration without perfecting sila or morality. I am skeptical of that. I do not think that it's necessary to become an absolute like

purely virtuous saint in order to be enlightened.

Because I do not consider enlightenment to occur within the context of samsara.

Again, you have to transcend samsara.

The [—] statues are going to remain in the block of marble. The unenlightened [—] statues are always going to be there no matter what you do.

So, what you do is you transcend
samsara. You don't eliminate it. I mean
you don't really escape from it really
even.

You don't You don't become enlightened
by annihilating with camouflage tactics
your own defilements. You transcend your
defilements. And for people that think
in in a two-dimensional sense,
that makes no sense at all. They they
just they can't deal with that.

But like Venerable Nyanavira, famous
eccentric existentialist monk who lived
in Ceylon in the '50s and '60s, he was
he I mean he was a rigorous rationalist.
You know, he says any explanation has to
be of a piece.

But still, if you're thinking
two-dimensionally,
of a piece isn't going to be enough. I
mean, it may be that the reality is not
just this flat Euclidean plane, but it's
like a cube. You know, it could be
three-dimensional Euclidean space. It
could be multi-dimensional.

So, trying to drag the ultimate down to
the level of conventional reality, which
Abhidhamma tries to do,
and fails, that's orthodox Theravada.

So, at some point,
I think early schools of Buddhism,
including Theravada, just went off the
tracks into just assuming that samsara

is ultimately real in a sense,
and then trying to work enlightenment
within the context of samsara, which is
like trying to wake up from a dream
within the context of the dream.

Closest you could come would be lucid
dreaming, I suppose.

So, you have to rise above it through
wisdom.

And purifying your conduct, I mean,
that's useful. It's not like the Buddha
wasn't saying just go ahead and and rape
and kill and steal and murder and all
that.

I mean, he wasn't saying that, but it's
like
if you

are virtuous, and you live a moral life,
then you're going to have smooth
sailing, you're going to have fewer bad
things happen to you, fewer
distractions, fewer obstacles, which
will make practice easier.

But, it's not the whole point of it. I
mean, it's not like you have to
absolutely perfect your morality, which
I mean, how do you do that? How do you
absolutely perfect your morality? I
mean, it's not just following five
rules,
or
thousands of rules if you're a monk.
I mean, that's just sort of arbitrary.

It's just sort of like making lists.

Let's see here. I'm I'm I'm ranting too much to keep track of the question here.

Okay, what is the actual question? Are they different methods or do they complement each other? Well, I mean, they they can overlap, and it's sort of like striving to end dukkha or striving to end moha. You know, it's ultimately, even though the like the mo- modification is wrong, or or is different, not wrong, but different, still, it's like it's moving you in the right direction.

So, with regard to Theravada, trying to purify your morals,

I I it's at least it's leading you in

the right direction. I mean, it's it's insufficient in and of itself and even orthodox Theravada would agree with that. They would just say that pure purity of morals or purity of sila is a prerequisite to purity of samadhi or concentration, which itself is then a prerequisite to purity of wisdom, which is enlightenment.

Sila, samadhi, panna.

Like the the holy trinity of Buddhist practice for a monk. I guess for a layperson the holy trinity is uh what is it? Uh dana, sila, bhavana. Dana is generosity, basically giving stuff to monks.

And sila is like following the five precepts and bhavana is mental development.

So, let's see here.

So, Nagarjuna emphasizes achieving it solely through the elimination of avidya. Yeah, that'll work.

And it's I do not think I am skeptical of the idea that you have to have absolutely pure morality in order to transcend

the dream. That you have to like be have it's sort of like having to have absolutely pure morals within the context of a dream in order to wake up from that dream.

I don't think so.

Of course, that makes me a Theravada Buddhist heretic, but I'm used to that because I've been one pretty much my entire life.

So, let's see here.

See, while in Theravada the path to nirvana involves holiness, yeah, well, I mean, it would involve holiness from like Nagarjuna's point of view also unless every once in a while you're going to have some kind of renegade sage like Padmasambhava to some degree who they just completely flout conventions in a way that's sort of their practice. You know, it helps them

to to break themselves loose from
samsara or to transcend samsara by just
flouting conventions.

Let's see. Doesn't work for everybody
though, obviously.

Dye your hair blue, it's not going to
get you any more enlightened.

Not necessarily anyhow.

So, see, stopping the generation of
karma.

Yeah, Theravada has trouble stopping the
generation of karma of explaining it,
you know, it's like an arahant has no
more karma, makes no more karma, I
should say. So, technically an arahant
would have no more volition because
karma is volition, it is a mental state.

Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi,
famous line in Pāli.

Monks, I say that karma is volition.

So, how does a how does an arahant do
anything?

I mean, how do they how do they get up
in the morning? You know, how do they
make their coffee? That kind of thing.

If they have no volition. So, then
orthodox Theravada tradition has to come
up with this new idea of what is called
kiriya citta or functional consciousness
that applies only to fully enlightened
beings that allows them to still do
things, which it's not mentioned
anywhere at all in the suttas.

And it's not mentioned anywhere at all in the suttas because it just got cooked up to sort of fill in this gap or deal with this sort of patch over this this sort of glaring hole in the philosophy. Developed by later Theravada Buddhist philosophers who some of whom were just hanging out, easy life in a in a monastery, not just wandering homeless, living under trees.

So, let's see.

And Gotama emphasizes achieving it solely through the elimination of avijja. Although the elimination of avijja or ignorance, I mean, one of the main ways of doing that is purifying and simplifying your life, I mean, as well

as you can.

Doesn't necessarily mean you have to be an absolutely purified saint, if such a being can even exist.

So, I I just need to get to the actual meat of this question so I can just sort of answer it concisely and move on.

So, let's see here.

Are there are they different methods or do they complement each other? I mean, ultimately

they're kind of the same path with different emphases.

But, I do think that Nagarjuna understood the situation better than most

formulators of Theravada Buddhist
orthodoxy.

And he understood dependent co-arising a
hell of a lot better than the editors of
the polytext and so forth who came up
with the

um like the traditional 12-link theory
of dependent co-arising.

The Buddha, I mean, according to legend
the Buddha thought that nobody was going
to understand dependent co-arising and
so he almost became a Pacceka Buddha
just he almost just kept his mouth shut
and wasn't going to teach Dhamma.

Um but then Maha Brahma
you know, the the proto-Hindu
personification of ultimate reality

comes down and persuades him that there are some out there with little dust in their eyes. And so then the Buddha used his divine eye, his dibbacakkhu, his clairvoyance, could see that there were people out there who were ripe for enlightenment or capable of enlightenment. So, he decided to go ahead even though at first he thought nobody would understand dependent co-arising and most people still don't understand dependent co-arising. Burmese monks will just memorize the 12 links and whatever the commentaries say about the 12 links, and think that they understand it, when still they don't.

So, let's see here.

I think I answered that question. So,

I'm taking the the majamakafaz off.

Putting it over there.

Taking a drink of my beverage.

Because of course, man cannot live by
bread alone.

There must also be a beverage.

I was kind of tickled when

uh Grok summarized my channel on X,

and ended up with this quote from me,

"Man cannot live by bread alone. There
must also be a beverage." Although I
have to admit, I stole that quote from
Woody Allen.

Back before he became politically
incorrect for

messing around with his Korean
stepdaughter.

So, let's see here. I guess I'm just
going to move on to Siddhartha Gautama's
next question,

which is, "With what argument would you
try to prove to an atheist that
reincarnation exists?"

And I mean, first of all, you can't
really prove anything.

I mean, there's something really simple,
you know, like Euclidean geometry. You
can make You can execute a proof in
Euclidean geometry. That kind of thing.

But,

to prove to an atheist that

reincarnation exists You can't prove to
a Buddhist that reincarnation exists.

You can't prove to anybody.

You also can't prove that it doesn't
exist.

So, you I'm just You can't prove that
Sasquatches exist. You can't prove that
they don't exist.

Even you produce a Sasquatch, people
will say, "Well, it's fake. It's a fake
squatch."

So, let's see. The best argument, let's
say that I'm just talking to an atheist
who thinks reincarnation is silly. the
best I could do really would be to refer
him to the works of Ian Stevenson.

Ian Stevenson made it a large part of

his life's work. I think he was at the University of Virginia or something. A large part of his life's work was trying to show my more or less objective empirical scientific evidence for reincarnation.

And mainly he was going with children who remembered past lives.

And the ideal situation is where he would actually get to interview the child before the child had met up with the family of its previous existence so that they could compare notes and collaborate, that kind of thing.

Which did happen sometimes. You know, he would you know, you got he hears of he

gets he he gets a report of some child,
you know, somewhere that is insisting,
"No, I'm not this 4-year-old kid. I was
a pharmacist 20 miles from here and I
was murdered."

That kind of thing. I mean, it does
happen sometimes. Even though the
parents, especially the father, might be
beating the kid trying to get him to
shut up about this stuff.

So, just looking at that kind of
evidence,

you know, from Ian Stevenson, I think he
was of the University of Virginia.

That I mean, he wrote several books on
the subject, mainly just case history
after case history after case history of

people who, especially in their youth, just vehemently insisted that they were this other person who had died just not long before.

And they would come up with information that the average little kid wouldn't know.

Like, you know, some they might think that it was a natural death until this kid says, "No, I was murdered. I was poisoned by that stuff that they gave me." That kind of thing. And then they can check into it and maybe uh

maybe somebody goes to jail for that.

So, yeah.

Like you can't prove reincarnation to anybody. You can't prove the absence of reincarnation to anybody, really. I mean, you might convince them or persuade them, but still it wouldn't be proof. You just gave them an argument that is persuasive enough to them that it it persuades them. And that's it.

So, yeah, the best I could do. Just refer them to the books of Ian Stevenson.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from PSA. And PSA is starting to specialize in kind of smart-alecky joke questions.

So, he's sort of like he's he's the actual new Tig.

In my opinion, cuz there used to be this guy named Tig who did the same stuff.

Maybe PSA is Tig for all I know.

They they just ask like these smart smart-alecky joke questions just just because.

So, I mean, if if this continues that of the three questions PSA asked, only one of them really counts as like a legitimate non-joke question.

So, if this continues, I will reserve the right to just not answer questions if I do not consider them to be in good faith.

So, anyways, PSA's first question is you've hit 2,000 subscribers.

Congratulations on becoming a world-famous YouTube celebrity.

When you started with your YouTube channel, did you imagine you would become such a global phenomenon?

No, I mean, I really didn't have much expectation at all. In fact, I stubbornly persist in refusing to try to maximize my presence, that kind of stuff.

Like

my woman, she started a YouTube channel just weeks ago and already she's getting more views than I get.

It was It's not on Buddhism, though.

It's It's on like uh

a certain kind of fish keeping.

So, and and I'm continually like one of

the main kinds of comments I get on

Rumble is people offering to optimize my

presence on Rumble. And I just delete

delete delete because I really don't

care. It's like the purpose of me doing

these YouTube videos is not to make

money, it's not to become famous, it's

just kind of a public service. And I do

agree with Gurdjieff, the philosopher

Gurdjieff, to some degree in that he

thought that

you should It shouldn't be easy

to get

like

profound wisdom or or like the best I can do to convey any kind of profound wisdom. That I mean, the easier it is to get something, the less it is worth.

It's just a law of economics.

You know, if diamonds were as common as glass, they'd be as of little value as glass monetarily. You know, if if glass was rarer than diamonds, glass might be more expensive than diamonds.

And we don't need to get into artificial scarcities of diamonds, you know, just to keep the prices up and that sort of thing.

So,

yeah, in a way I am a global phenomenon

in that my viewers are all over the world.

A lot of a lot of Asian people, for example.

All over the globe except for like out in the middle of the ocean.

Let's see. But, I mean, it's not the purpose. It's not the purpose of of my presence on YouTube.

And so,

I'm just going to move on to PSA's next question. Are you going to get married anytime soon with your Ethiopian boyfriend? Which is sort of like the kind of joke that like a 9-year-old would make.

And of course, the answer is no. And so I move on to PSA's next question, which is kind of a serious one.

So, congratulations on managing at least one actual question out of three attempts.

And it is, "Why didn't you move to Thailand or Sri Lanka after completing 30 years as a monk?"

I understand you were burned out after living in Myanmar for so long, but I I'm sure there would have been plenty of temples in Thailand and Sri Lanka, especially in remote villages, that would have adored to have an Ajahn of 30 wassa living there. Why punyo why?"

Well,

that wouldn't work at all. I mean, that would just make things worse.

At least in Burma, I spoke the language.

I I don't It wasn't just like

Burmese culture in particular is what caused me to stop being a monk.

I was fortunate I consider myself

fortunate to have been ordained in a

Burmese tradition rather than a Thai or Sinhalese tradition.

That was like good karma or good fortune on my part.

So, I mean,

the heat and and and this the weird food and not speaking English, that sort of thing would all have remained the same

and it would have been worse because I'd have to learn Thai or Sinhalese instead of already knowing Burmese.

But the main reason why I stopped being a monk wasn't just that I burned out on Burma. That was like a tertiary reason at best. The main reason is I just stopped making progress. I got as far as I could with it and just

I mean, it was like

the Red Queen in Wonderland who was having to run as fast as she can just to stay in the same place.

It was I was sort of turning into that.

I wasn't making any new progress. Like the best meditation of my life was back around 1999 to 2004.

And I I

continued being a monk up until 2021.

So, it was several years of just kind of stagnating, not making any pro not breaking any new ground.

And I mean, you could say, "Well, at least I'm staying out of trouble."

But, I mean, that was just one reason.

Another reason is

just I wanted to try something else.

You know, when when something isn't working year after year, it's just common sense that you try something different.

And I wanted a woman, and I got one. Got a good one, in fact.

Although, she was kind of hinting that she wanted me to move about a ton and a half of rocks and gravel today, which wasn't going to happen.

So,

I guess that's enough of an answer.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

And this is from Some Papa Lapa.

And Some Papa Lapa, it makes my beard braid wiggle when I say the name, says, "How are you, and what's new?" I'm fine, although, like I said earlier, I'm kind of like a wet rag today, just sort of basking in inglorious laziness because I've been working my ass off in blazing

South Carolina southern heat,
like 50-hour weeks recently.

And so, I'm just taking it easy. One of
my best friends at work quit. I mean,
it's weird the place where I work now.

Compared like the the first sheet metal
shop that I worked at in South Carolina
after I stopped being a monk,

I worked there for almost 2 years, well
over a year and a half. And at the time
that I left, I was still the new guy in
the warehouse.

You know, and there was like a new sales
reps and that kind of thing. New No,
there's just mainly just a new few new
sales reps, but the guys in the back

actually making the met stuff out of
sheet metal,

I was still the new guy.

And then now, the place where I'm
working at now is such a hectic kind of
a It can be high stress if you don't
have the right attitude for it, which
sometimes I don't. I'm a cussing like a
Russian Russian sailor
a lot of the time when I'm at work.

It's like cussing at inanimate objects
more than anything else.

Uh anyways,

um I mean, it's like I've been working
there less than a year and I'm already
one of the senior people. I'm like a
coordinator there.

Because it's just people coming and going coming and going coming and going. It's weird. It's sort of like working in a prison camp. You know, it's just There's somebody there for a while and then all of a sudden you're not seeing them anymore. It's like, "What happened to him?" "Oh, he he quit 2 weeks ago." Or he got fired last week. So, about half the people get fired, the other half quit. People who get fired are mainly getting fired for causing too many spills. I mean, this is like a trucking company where we're loading freight, and if you're continually ramming the like the fork of your

forklift into drums of of chemicals,
then you're not going to stay there very
long. It's an automatic 3-day suspension
for for something like that. There's
this one guy
who First, he he knocks one of the
supervisors off his cart. The The
supervisors drive around on these carts
that you stand up on it, like a power
sledge or something. He hits that,
knocks the guy right off right off the
cart. Then
he uh
he causes some kind of spill, so it's a
3-day suspension. The first day back to
work, he he per- perpetrates the most
glorious spill I've seen there, where he

just rammed the fork all the way into a 55-gallon drum of some kind of glue. And it just poured out and just hardened all over the floor. And he disappeared. He didn't work there after that.

So, it's it's kind of weird. It's It's the job I've got now is is really just kind of this hectic, potentially very stressful kind of job, and people don't last very long. There are a few people that have been there for years, but if you've been there for a whole year, you're you're like a senior senior member of the team.

So,

besides from that, the fish pond still

isn't done. We still got to get uh
the the large flat rocks to put around
it, and got to get more fish because the
water really isn't cycled well yet.

Um

yeah, my my sweetie is uh
starting to breed rice fish
at my at my suggestion.

She wanted guppies. I was like, "Why
would you want to raise guppies?

Rice fish are the future."

And rice fish, I mean, they look kind of
like guppies, but they come from Japan,
and so they can survive just about any
temperature of water. You know, it can
be frozen over. They're like a goldfish.
They can live in like

ice water.

So, they're they're kept outside, and
it's all very nice, and they're very
cute little fish, and
they breed like guppies pretty much.

Except they lay eggs instead of being
live bearers.

And I think that's enough of uh how am I
and what's new. I'm I'm fine.

So, I'm just going to move on to some
poppo office's next question here.

What have you been listening to recently
if you have been listening to music?

Well, I finally got off this jag of
listening to New World Order by Ministry
pretty much every night for like two or

three weeks. I still listen to it
sometimes.

It's just is is just like an ass kicker
of a song. I'd never heard it before
until I just stumbled upon it on YouTube
a few like

maybe a month or two ago, maybe two
months ago, let's say.

Yeah, New World Order by
Ministry. Listen to that several times.

Sometimes I still listen to Leo
Moracchioli, some of his some of his
heavy metal covers of non-heavy metal
songs like Blue Monday. Leo

Moracchioli's cover of Blue Monday is
better than the original Blue Monday.

And it's one of the I it's largely Leo

Moracchioli that gave me the idea of this beard. So you got him to blame.

Except in his case, he's got it's way longer than mine. And it's not braided. He's just got like a rubber band every every few inches, which looks it looks interesting.

I think it looks nice, at least on Leo Moracchioli.

Also, there's this one cover.

I like cover songs for some reason. Like you got like this traditional song that you're used to and you like it. And then you've got this cover in a different style

that is very intriguing and it kind of

makes the song, which is already a good song, fresh. You know, it's like you haven't heard it that way before. So it's like you're not kind of you don't have the grooves in your brain that just makes it not have an effect anymore. So there's this Ain't Talkin' 'bout Love. It's I think it's off Van Halen's first album. I think if I remember correctly, it was their attempt at making a punk song. It didn't sound like punk though. But there's this Postmodern Jukebox version of Ain't Talkin' 'bout Love.

And I can't remember the name of the singer. It's like a a '60s girl band. It's like this Van Halen song that's

done in the style of a '60s girl band.

You know, with like the big hair and stuff.

And it's it's really good. And I think that the one of the backup vocalists is a real hottie. You know, it's it's sort of like

earlier on, it was like

I've always considered like fair-skinned brunettes with blue eyes and big boobs.

Although this one she her her boobs

really aren't featured, so I don't

really know how big they are, but

she looks a lot like my my sweetie when

she was her age.

So, I I I have to admit, I've

one of the reasons why I like that song
so much is just kind of ogling one of
the vocalists.

Uh,

now half half my viewers will
unsubscribe. It's like, "Oh, my world is
in ruins now.

He likes looking at pretty girls
sometimes."

So, let's see here.

Yeah, I guess with regard to music,
every once in a while I listen to some
old stuff, like um
there's uh some videos of Led Zeppelin
like after Led Zeppelin 2 came out, you
know, they're still kind of on the on
the rise, and they played

Royal Albert Hall or something like that. I can't remember now the exact venue. But, I mean, it's really good. Really good. And you It's like video footage of it, too, which is nice. Like early '70s.

And let's see what else. I listen to Oh Well by the Rockets occasionally.

And I think I'm just going to move on to Sampalapa's next question.

Oh, also, uh I've been listening a few times to Tusk by Fleetwood Mac, which is old music, but it's still good. So, I'm just going to read Sampalapa's next question here.

He says, "I could look it up, but I'm

going old-fashioned on this question
just to be a part of the Q&A and hear a
more precise or deeper understanding.

So,

dot dot dot

what the heck is bodhicitta or the
citta?

And is that found in early Buddhism?

What is your knowledge of this thing
they call citta?"

Well, the word citta is found
in the Pali texts, plenty.

And it

is usually translated as mind. Some
translators will translate it as heart,
but not like the physical organ, but
just sort of like the mental aspect of

of heart, but really mind is about the best English translation of chitta.

And

um it has like two main meanings in Theravada Buddhism. Chitta, I mean, again, it can just be mind.

You know, mind in general, mentality in general, or more technically, like in Abhidhamma philosophy, it means consciousness in particular, not mental states, but just consciousness in particular. So, in in Abhidhamma philosophy, you've got chitta, and then you've got chetasika. So, chitta is consciousness, chetasika is mental states like perceptions and volitions,

that sort of thing.

So, that aspect of chitta is

well-established in very early texts in

Theravada Buddhism, but this bodhicitta,

or like

Ajahns of the Thai Forest tradition,

when they're talking about jit or or the

chitta that is like the the observer,

the one who knows, the one who sees,

that, in my opinion, is a kind of

Upanishadic,

more or less Hinduistic philosophy that

somehow seeped into the Thai Forest

tradition. Thailand was largely

Hinduistic in like medieval times.

Cambodia was Hinduistic, like Angkor Wat

in Cambodia was like a huge Hindu temple

complex, if I'm not mistaken.

So,

definitely Hinduistic Upanishadic kind
of ideas have infiltrated some
ethnic Buddhism
in Southeast Asia.

And so, this emphasis on the jñāna or the
you know, the one who knows, the one who
sees this sort of consciousness that is
like the Atman in Vedānta. That is like
an kind of an innovation that is found
primarily, from my experience, in the
Thai Forest tradition.

And bodhicitta, yeah, that I'm not sure
that bodhicitta is really a term that is
used in the Pali texts. You know, it's

it's kind of like what citta is in this Thai Forest tradition sense of this kind of enlightened mind that is sort of pervading, you know, underlying your unenlightened mind. That kind of thing. And I mean, you can interpret things that way.

Um

you know, I don't really have an axe to grind against Vedanta, but I have a little bit more of an axe to grind against like Hinduistic concepts or Christian concepts or whatever infiltrating this like classical Theravada, and then so people claiming that it's legit Theravada when it isn't. But citta in Pali is mainly means mind,

or it can more precisely or technically mean consciousness.

But the stuff that's said by, especially monks in the Thai Forest tradition, is kind of deviating somewhat from Theravada Buddhist orthodoxy.

And I think I'm just going to move on to the next question here. And we're getting down towards the end already.

This is probably going to be less than 2 hours.

Let's see here.

This next question is from Sea of Action Cpod Zidana.

And Sea of Action Cpod Zidana says,

"There is a story from the Theravada

Dhammapada commentary verse 35 about
monks going off during the rainy season,
and they inspired a laywoman

Matikamata

who was donating food to practice like
them. She ended up becoming a mind
reader and Anagami, and she saw that the
monks had no attainments. So, she
started giving them the kinds of foods
they wanted, and the monks quickly
became arahants as a result.

What does this mean for the Dhamma? That
them fulfilling their desires for food
gives them the motivation they need to
practice more. Seems like the exact
opposite of asceticism. I do remember a
monk in Burma telling me about this

story before I ever read it in the
Dhammapada commentary.

And uh the idea was that
some monks

um I mean there there's kind of two ways
you can interpret it. It's like some
sometimes if you have a craving for
something, it's like your body telling
you that you need something that's in
that food. Sort of like, you know, women
who are pregnant kind of notoriously get
these weird cravings for like pickles
and peanut butter, this kind of stuff,
that it's sort of their body is craving
whatever nutrients are in that kind of
food because it's like your body is

telling you that you need this, and so the monks they have these cravings for food that they weren't getting.

Um mainly cuz their body is just kind of subtly informing them that, you know, you should want this because uh we our your cells are are deficient in this nutrient or some such. And so, by giving them the food that they were craving, it sort of kind of maxed them out physically, you know, kind of buffed them up with regard to all the nutrients they needed and so forth. And then these cravings subsided, which were distractions and preventing them from making progress. That's one way of looking at it.

Another way is just
you can forget the whole deficient
nutrient thing, and it's just that these
monks just had this
latent cravings for this or that kind of
food, which were becoming obstacles, and
so she was just sort of subtly removing
those cravings, those obstacles, that
just made their path clearer.

That's the idea. I mean, whether the
story is even objectively, like
historically, true or not is
questionable.

But, I assume one of those two
one of those two explanations
preferably the first one, the first one

would make better sense, I think
would be like the correct
interpretation of what was going on in
the story.

And so, I'm just going to move on to
this question. This is from Rui. And I
always like these these technical
technical Vinaya questions. Technical
questions on monastic discipline, finer
points of monastic discipline.

Rui says, "And for some reason, I
answered this question just recently on
the Discord server, but I don't think it
was Rui that was asking me. Maybe it
Maybe it was, I don't know.

I don't think Rui's even on the Discord
server.

He is he's under a different name that I don't recognize.

Anyways,

Rui says,

"What is the maximum allowable height of a mendicant's bed?

I remember reading somewhere it should not exceed three handspans." Yeah, and on the Discord server, people were talking about high and luxurious beds.

It's It's one of the eight precepts.

"I undertake the precepts to avoid high and luxurious beds."

Yeah.

So, it's

Mahasayana

Uccasayana.

So, large and high beds is really the the literal translation.

And

a large bed, technically, is a bed large enough for more than one person to sleep on, but a high bed, according to Vinaya, so this would apply to monks. It doesn't really specify for laypeople, but I you could you could just apply this specified rule for monks to laypeople, also.

According to the rules for monks, it's eight finger widths. So, it'd be like this much between the floor and the bottom of the frame. So, if you can stick both hands like this underneath

the frame

of your bed, it's too high.

But, I mean, there's always these kind of loopholes. I mean, you could just have a a bed that's way up high with just a really big frame.

You know, you could have like a a waterbed or something. I mean, it'd be a big one. So, you'd have to have like a this little narrow waterbed that's, you know, it's just the frame is touching the floor, in which case the the height of the the sleeping surface above the floor would just be irrelevant.

So, that's kind of

nitpicky, I guess.

But, technically, it's eight finger widths between the floor and the bottom of the frame.

So, let's see here.

Uh did I Okay.

So, next question is from Raphael.

And Raphael says,

"In one of your earlier live streams, you said that if, as a monk who is homeless and without family or friends, you can live happily on an empty stomach, then you can live in any situation, and that this is precisely why the Buddha emphasized asceticism.

However, I tend to assume that the Buddha advocated asceticism so the monk

could devote himself entirely to meditation.

If the Buddha had wanted a monk to be able to thrive in every circumstance, wouldn't he have chosen the Jain path instead?" Well, I mean, he wouldn't have chosen the Jain path because the Jain path is just deliberate self-torture. And Buddhism really does not advocate for deliberate self-torture, where you're actually like um volitionally or your your mortifi- mortification is to cause bad things or pain or discomfort to happen to you. Yeah, that's out because you're just making

more karma by doing that.

So, I mean, there can be more than one reason why the Buddha was advocating the middle path between self-indulgence and self-torture, which nowadays is seen as just completely unacceptable self-torture.

Because people just tend to veer towards the self-indulgent side.

And see luxuries as necessities.

So,

I mean, to some degree, you can say that that like, for example, eating one meal a day,

then that would certainly

make it easier to devote yourself more to meditation

because you don't have to wash your bowl so much. And if you eat in the evening, then it can make you sleepier and and and on and on. So, I mean, both of these apply.

That

some some of this austerity is to make it easier to practice.

And but then, I mean, one of the main things about practice, you read the Atika Waga, read any of these early texts, is you have to be fine with whatever happens. Heat or cold, hunger, fullness, health, sickness, solitude, loneliness, anything. Hunger, thirst.

I mean, you you just have to be fine with it. You have to have equanimity towards that.

And so, when the stuff is happening to you, it's much easier to cultivate that equanimity than just avoiding it.

So, just based on my own experience, I mean, I can admit, sure, that one of the reasons for like Buddhist austerity is just to free up your time, remove distractions so you can meditate more.

Yeah, that's fine. I got no problem with that. But another reason is you just learn to be cool with whatever happens.

To make your peace with samsara.

Whatever samsara throws at you, you accept it with equanimity.

So,

I guess I'm just going to move on to Raphael's second question.

Which is, what are your thoughts on this anti-natalist verse in Ecclesiastes?

And he quotes Ecclesiastes here.

I saw the tears of the oppressed and they have no comforter. Power was on the side of their oppressors and they have no comforter. And I declared that the dead who had already died are happier than the living who still who are still alive. But better than both is the one who has never been born, who has not seen the evil that is done under the

sun.

That's relatively famous verse from Ecclesiastes.

Um,

in a way it's kind of philosophically anti-natalist, but I don't think that was the point.

I mean the point the the philosopher supposedly,

um,

what's his name? King, uh,

Solomon. You know, it's it's not really by King Solomon, you know, like that, but it's attributed to King Solomon.

Um,

yeah, I don't think that he's really advocating for anti-natalism. You know,

he's just making a philosophical point.

He accepts we're going to people get born, that women have kids. It's just the way of the world, it's just the way it is, but he's just kind of pointing out the first noble truth. You know, it's it's

futility of futilities, all is futile.

In fact, there's there's one one verse that is variously translated, but one is like God

instilled in him a hunger for wisdom which God instilled in him just to afflict him.

So, my thoughts on this anti-natalist verse in Ecclesiastes, you know, it's

kind of philosophically anti-natalist. I don't think he was really saying it in order to dissuade women from having kids.

May- probably

I mean, women weren't even reading Ecclesiastes. I mean, he obviously didn't have a high opinion of women, the author of Ecclesiastes.

But, um

Yeah, I I don't think that was the point. That he was just making like a philosophical point along the lines of the first noble truth, but I don't think that he was deliberately trying to talk anybody out of having kids. Maybe you know, he'd say, "Yeah, you're

probably better off." You know, it'd be sort of like a the Buddhist approach.

But

let's see.

Yeah, I mean

the book of Ecclesiastes is not extremely authoritative

to me or to Buddhists in general.

So, I mean, he can say what he pleases.

There is some There are some interesting statements made in the book of

Ecclesiastes. It's one of my favorite books of the Old Testament.

But, uh yeah, I really don't have a whole lot to say. I mean, he's he's just black-pilled essentially. He's just

making all these black-pilled comments.

And I'm just going to move on to this question, which is from Virgil, and it's the last question already.

Way less than 2 hours here.

And Virgil says

"Out of the three most popular translations of the Pali Canon

Bodhicaryavatara

and Tanisaro, which one would you consider the best?"

And there's a dog having some kind of dream back there.

Let's see.

Oh, she stopped her thing as soon as I I leaned over.

Huh.

Well, maybe she caught the rabbit or got away from the the wolf or whatever.

So, let's see here.

Out of the three most popular translations of the Pali Canon by Bhikkhu Bodhi, Venerable Sujato, and Venerable Ajahn Thanissaro, which would you consider the best? Well, I don't really have a lot of exposure to Ajahn Sujato's writings.

Um if he's the one that I think I'm thinking of, he may have actually banned me from his website. Like any mention of me on his website gets deleted, or so I've been told. But I don't know if that's Ajahn Sujato or not. Is Ajahn

Sujato like the the really politically
leftist one

who just like advocates for leftist
causes and so forth. I mean Bhikkhu

Bodhi's the same way. I really

cannot approve of Bhikkhu Bodhi's

politics wholeheartedly, so to speak.

Of the three, I think Ajahn Thanissaro
would be the most conservative

with regard to Buddhism in general for
that matter, not just like politics,
that sort of thing.

But Ajahn Thanissaro's translations, he

may have gotten better. I mean, you

think that he's he's working on

self-improvement and so forth, that

maybe his translations are getting

better. But I remember when I was reading his translations, you know, 20 years ago as a monk, they just seemed too self-indulgent and idiosyncratic. You know, like some of his his renderings, like like Satipatthana, he he he translates that as frames of reference. Dukkha he always translates as stress. And some of it, if you're not familiar with you know, Ajahn Thanissaro's renderings, you won't even know what he's referring to what what the Pali what the Pali original is, you wouldn't know.

And it seems to me that the best

translator is as invisible as possible,
that you should read a translated text
and it should have as much of an effect
on you as possible as if you were
reading it in the original language.

And Ajahn Thanissaro, especially when he
was translating verses 20 years ago, I
mean, he it was like the opposite. I
mean, it might as well every few lines
he should have just included "Look at
me, here I am Ajahn Thanissaro
translating this."

So, between the two
with regard to quality of translation, I
would prefer Bhikkhu Bodhi.

I mean, I don't really approve of his
politics,

which is fine. He probably doesn't approve of mine if he knows anything about them.

So,

but as a translator, I think Bhikkhu Bodhi was more

conservative in his translation style.

You know, he tries to get it literally

correct. Sometimes Ajahn Thanissaro,

he'll, you know, try some kind of flair

where he'll deviate from literal

accuracy in order to get some point

across that he wants to make.

Which again, you know, it's

it's not being invisible. It's being

kind of obtrusive.

But Bhikkhu Bodhi, he usually uses, you know, the standard Satipatthana, Foundations of Mindfulness, Dukkha is suffering, I guess is He just uses the standard accepted translations, which makes it easier to understand if you're reading it in English that you'll know what the Pali equivalent or the Pali original would be.

And Bhikkhu Bodhi, I mean, he's he doesn't meditate much if at all from what I've heard, but he's definitely a scholar.

Ajahn Thanissaro on the other hand, I mean, with regard to understanding some of the finer points of Dhamma, not from a dogmatic point of view, but an

experiential point of view, I think Ajahn Thanissaro definitely has a deeper understanding based on his own personal experience of Dhamma. So, with regard to some philosophical text, you want to, you know, get to some deeper meaning, you might be better off looking at Ajahn Thanissaro if you can get past his weird renderings for things and his his sometimes cringeworthy translations of poetry where he sort of compensates for not having meter by just sort of placing words at random on the page.

He used to do that. I don't know if he still does.

With regard to Ajahn Sujato, I really

haven't read much of his stuff, but with
with regard to general translation
style, I think Bhikkhu Bodhi would be
preferable to Ajahn Thanissaro. Unless
you're trying to get some subtle
philosophical stuff based on meditation.
Like Ajahn Thanissaro understands
meditation way better than Bhikkhu Bodhi
does, in my opinion.

So, there is that.

I mean, no disrespect to to Ajahn
Thanissaro.

Uh and Ajahn Sujato, I'm not even 100%
sure who he is.

So,

yeah, of the three, Bhikkhu Bodhi.

Although, there are translators out

there who are very good, like like
Venerable Nanamoli, the first famous
Nanamoli. Osbert Moore,
who was ordained in Sri Lanka like in
1950.

Ceylon, I guess it was called then. His
translations, I really liked his style.
Um like Bhikkhu Bodhi's uh translation
of the Majjhima Nikaya is based on
Venerable Nanamoli's mainly what uh
Bhikkhu Bodhi did was just take
Nanamoli's strange interpretations for
things and just turn them into like the
the standard, you know, accepted main
renderings. Like uh Venerable Nanamoli
had this idea, and I I had this some

degree when I was translating the
Anguttara Nikaya,
of just having one Pali word with one
English equivalent.

So, trying to find one English word that
has the various possible meanings of one
Pali word. Like something like Dhamma.

I mean, how do you have one word for
Dhamma in all of its different meanings?
Dhamma has a notoriously large number of
possible meanings.

Um or Brahma, something like that. I
think Dhamma Nanamoli just went with
idea.

Which was really kind of a makeshift,
you know, falling between four or five
stools kind of a deal. So, it does kind

of make sense that Bhikkhu Bodhi would just kind of change some of the weird renderings over to just the standard ones.

Um also, uh Venerable Nyanavira, who was a friend of the first famous Nanamoli. He Some of his translations are really good, but he didn't just I mean, he would just translate text just to, you know, demonstrate some point he was making or with reference to something. He didn't translate entire books, but his translations are good, too.

Uh

gosh.

Yeah. There's There's good translators
out there, but um

I guess the three main ones nowadays are
Bhikkhu Bodhi, um Sujato, and
Thanissaro.

And of the three, I guess I'd have to go
with Bhikkhu Bodhi, although his his
endnotes are depressing.

And that's it. I guess we're done.

After only

an hour and 46 minutes, one of the
shortest Q&As in a long time, which is
fine. I'm not complaining.

If you have anything you want to ask
that you think I can answer, go right on
ahead, no more than three questions,
please. And, you know, try to ask a

serious question. Don't just ask joke questions. I mean, it can be kind of entertaining, I suppose, sometimes, but still.

Uh what else? Oh, yeah. Like and subscribe if you have not done so already.

And be happy.

Okay then. Hello and welcome to question and answer number 157. Hail audience. I am your host Pony Basa and yes indeed 157 is a prime number. I was too lazy to do the math like factor it all out and everything. So I went to X X.com and asked Grock this super duper AI. Grock couldn't answer the question because Grock didn't know what a prime number was. I had to explain to Grock what a prime number is and then ask if prime and then Grock said yes indeed 157 is prime which means no integer will divide will like factor into 157 or it won't multiply

to get to 157 other than 1 and 157.

Those are the only two numbers that if you multiply them together, they they come out 157 is $1 * 157$. So, it's a prime number.

So, I'm glad I got that out of the way.

And I do seem to recall I vaguely remember somebody asking me a question in in the near in the recent past about the ethics of watching sporting events.

And it could be that the person who asked that question then changed it to a question that was asked in the previous Q&A about the ethics of streaming basketball games, which is kind of a different kind of question. You know, it's it's different than just the ethics

of enjoying sports. So, if anyone asked that question, I didn't just like kiss you got kiss you off, anything like that. it just slipped through the cracks. Unless just the question got unasked, changed to a different question or something. Also, somebody asked me recently about my favorite parts of the Bible. And in my answer, I emphasized with regard to the Old Testament, the book of Ecclesiastes, but recently I realized I should have mentioned the book of Daniel also, especially the second half of the book of Daniel. So it's the first half of the book of Daniel is just like myths,

legends, stories about some mythical prophet named Daniel during the Babylonian captivity. Like he and his friends Shadrach, u Melvin, and Abednego who, you know, they wind up in this furnace and don't get burned and there's an angel in there with them, etc., etc. That part is not as good as the second half, which is just surreal apocalyptic prophecy. It's sort of like the the prototype of the book of Revelations in the New Testament. And one thing about it that's so fascinating to me is you can't really understand it unless you also read the first book of Mcabes in which is in the Catholic Old Testament even though most Protestant schools

don't include the first book of Mcabes in the Bible. Like your standard like the what do you call them? the little Bibles that you that get handed out like at schools or you you find in in the drawer at a hotel. What is it? Gideon's Bible doesn't have first book of Mcabes because it's not a Catholic Bible. But according if you read the second part of Daniel, this the the surreal apocalyptic pro prophetic part and then you read the first book of Mcabes, you see that they're discussing the same issues like the little horn, the hard-faced king described in Daniel is King Antiochus Epiphanies.

So, it's like the prophecies or the the second half of the book of Daniel anyway was apparently written around 162 BC, which is relatively recent, not that not that long before the time of Jesus.

So, anyways, I got that out of the way, too. I suppose I should just start answering questions. And we got like a a mid medium amount, like the middle path between too many questions and not enough questions. So, it's about average, which is fine.

First question is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "I'm a fairly I'm gonna make sure I'm we're recording." Yeah, we are recording.

Romeo says, "I'm a fairly recent

explorer of Buddhism, and I'm still trying to fully grasp some of its fundamentals. I know the concept of causes and conditions is essential to Buddhism, but I'm struggling to understand what it means in practical terms. Can you please break down and explain the Buddhist concept of causes and conditions in as simple a way as possible citing specific examples of how it comes up in one's daily life? Well, I mean the standard explanation of causes and conditions in Buddhism is padicha samupana dependent core rising which is so hard to understand that according to the legend the Buddha himself almost

didn't teach Buddhism because he figured nobody would understand dependent core rising. So, I'm not even going to attempt it.

I would use a simile like of fire. Like if anyone was a boy scout, you know the fire triangle. Fire triangle. There are three things. If they are present, you're going to have fire. It's oxygen, fuel, and heat. If you have enough oxygen, enough fuel, and enough heat all together at the same time, there is fire. You know, it's not you don't need a seed crystal or anything. just those three conditions being present all at the same time in the same place fire. And that's the way it is with pretty

much everything. I mean, nothing has
this
inherent self essence.

At least nothing compounded, nothing
that

nothing that is a sankara, I guess. I
don't know. I gotta be careful not to
stray too far into heresy because I'm a
heretic anyway, but I don't want to pass
off

heresy as like orthodox dogma, that sort
of thing. So, let's say like a human
being or ignorance or suffering and
putting this into practical terms,
suffering is like fire. You have those
conditions there. You're going to have

the suffering. You're going to have the
ignorance. you're going to have self
but you take away the conditions the
suffering disappears the the the
delusion the ignorance disappears
etc.

So if you're suffering the thing to do
is get rid of the causes of the
suffering and the causes of suffering
according to the four noble truths are
desire or attachment like insisting upon
things being a certain way.

You take that away, the suffering goes
away.

So

like human beings, clouds, trees, dogs,
all of this, they're there like a like a

fire is there. You take away the conditions and it just poofs out of existence.

You take away the fuel or you take away the oxygen, you take away the heat from a fire, the fire goes away. No more fire. I mean, it doesn't even go anywhere. is just out.

So with regard to let's see uh how it comes up in one's daily life mainly would be something like unhappiness and unhappiness always has causes and conditions. So to understand that, you know, you don't just sit there wallowing in misery. You don't just think I'm I'm miserable. I'm pissed off.

I'm upset. I'm jealous or whatever it is. You know, it's a there is a cause that's causing this feeling to arise or it's a it's a like a web of causes, but basically the main cause is desire. If you're unhappy, you desire something. So this desire is conditioning your mental state or your unhappiness.

And it is unfortunate that sometimes I get questions like this right off the bat before I get any momentum going.

It's it's easier to start off with something simple and objective before getting into the complexities of conditionality in Buddhist philosophy.

But we're all like fires and our mental states are like fires. You know, you got

to have the conditions there or it's not going to be there.

So it's it's not like I as a person have this inherent personhood that's sort of holding me together. It's just the conditions are there that cause me to be here. I mean this is not so much coming up in daily life because this is getting into like abstract philosophy but coming up in daily life mainly like practical Buddhism in daily life would just be understanding your own attachments your own unhappiness and so forth and all of them have these conditions. So you want to get rid of the problem you get rid of the causes of the problem. You don't

just put band-aids on the problem.

So, I guess I should just move on to the next question. This is from Raphael.

And Raphael says, "Have you ever heard of the Indonesian Chiang master John Chang whose so-called chi power was captured in a British documentary? He bowled up a sheet of newspaper, for example, and by channeling chi through his hands, set it a light without any external flame source." No, this is the first I've ever heard of John Chang that I'm aware of. Although I've heard of people like John Chang, for example, DD, I think it's spelled Hume, but I think he pronounced it home. DD home, who lived like in the late 1800s,

and he was able to do stuff like I mean,
he was just
an extremely liinal person who could do
like impossible [__] without like being
like an ascended master or anything.
Like he he wasn't like enlightened. He
didn't have like meditative psychic
powers. He apparently was just born this
way. And he could do things like
like musical instruments would be
levitating in the air playing themselves
around him. Like tables would levitate.
There was there was like the the British
Society for Psychical Research came and
were investigating him. You had like
four full-grown men trying to hold this

table down and it's still lifting up off the floor. And the thing that reminded me of him reading this question is that he could reach into a fireplace and pull out glowing coals, hold them in his hands, he could blow until like flames are blowing out through his fingers and it wouldn't burn him.

So I mean it may be that this person John Chang is using Chiang as a kind of gimmick. You know like some people use tarot cards as as a kind of gimmick or astrological charts as a kind of gimmick or Ouija boards as a kind of gimmick which really I mean the psychic powers aren't in in the gimmick. It's just that it's like a necessary crutch that

somebody can use to help them channel this latent power they've got inside themselves. It's like they can't believe that they have the power to predict the future or whatever. But they do believe that maybe these cards can do it and so they have enough faith in the cards that their own latent abilities come out through the cards. And it may be that John Chang is using Chiong in the same way

because people have been able to do this that weren't Chiong masters.

They're just weird people. They're liinal people and they'll have their own like reasons, their own rationalizations

of how they're able to do it. I'm not sure what DD Holmes rationalizations were, but I think it was I think he was like a an orphan or something. He was raised by his aunt who eventually just threw him out of the house because she thought he was possessed by the devil because he could do all this kind of stuff. And this was like in 19th century Scotland when it was still very Presbyterian.

So

yeah, I'm not so sure that it's actually Chiong that's giving him these powers any more than I think that it's like Ouija boards that are causing people to come up with occasionally, usually not,

but occasionally like profound stuff.

So I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is also from

Raphael. And Raphael says, ' Were you

ever so sexually desperate back in Burma

that you looked at a young feminine monk

and thought, "Damn." Well, the quick

answer to that is no. The closest I can

even recall to something like that

happening is once I was visiting an

American monk who was living at a big

school monastery near Mandalay. I think

it was on Sagine Hill, the the the base

of Sagen Hill. A lot of monasteries

there. And I think he even had to point

out this this young monk to me and he

was the statement was like, you know, if he were a girl, he'd be beautiful. And it was, you know, I'd looked at this monk and, you know, he had very feminine features. I mean, if he had been born with two X chromosomes instead of an X and a Y, he'd be really pretty. But still, I mean, it's like just kind of like an anthropological observation. It's like, yeah, suppose so. But still, it didn't cause me to be attracted to him because I knew he was a guy and I just don't swing that way.

I suppose I should take this little paper umbrella out of the cup before I poke my eye with it. That's the main reason why I wear glasses. I don't

really need them for seeing. I just need to protect my eyes when I'm drinking coffee cuz spoon handles and stuff, it's it's dangerous.

So, I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Robert.

And Robert says, "What do you think of Biku Buddha Dasa?" And Biku Buddha, I assume that would be Well, no, it wouldn't be. I was thinking it was Ajan Lee Damadoro. I was confusing them in my mind. Buddha Dasa, slave of Buddha, or more politically correctly, servant of Buddha. Um, yeah. I don't even know who it is. You think if he was a Thai Ajan it would be Ajan Buddha Buddhao instead

of Biku Buddhadasa.

So yeah I don't even know who Biku Buddha is. So let's just move on to the next question.

Robert, second question. What do you think of the idea that Dharma practice is at its core just gladdening the mind by reminding ourselves that everything is okay, everything is fine, not a problem in the world, nothing to do, nowhere to go, nothing to become.

Then when an unwholesome thought arises, drop it and be happy. Duka to duka nood
duka to duka nood continuously might be seen as right effort.

Well, yeah. I don't think that the idea

of dharma practice is at its core
gladdening the mind. I really don't
think so. Gladdening is sort of a
positive state. And you're trying to go
the middle path between positive and
negative. Equanimity is is a higher
mental state closer to enlightenment
than rejoicing or being glad.

So I mean if you if you just read the
texts you know the text will say you
know everything isn't okay you know this
world is on fire the Buddha's third
sermon formal sermon according to
tradition after his enlightenment is the
fire sermon whereas some sara the cosmos
is in flames

that's kind of a problem first noble truth to exist to suffer well that could be interpreted as a kind of problem too especially since right after that the cause of the problem is stated and then the solution to the problem.

So I mean some dharma teachers like Paul
low to some degree teaches this kind of thing you know nothing to do nowhere to go nothing to become that kind of thing. So some eclectic kind of dharma teachers nowadays teach this
um but orthodox Buddhism doesn't teach it really as far as I can tell. I studied it for quite a while. I never really never really interpreted it this way.

So when an unh wholesome thought arises,
drop it, sure, but I mean after that you
can be happy in a kind of Buddhist sense
of just absence of suffering. But you
don't want to be developing positive
gladness as an approach to nibbana other
than I mean you're better off glad than
miserable

but still

uh equanimity or just neutrality is a
higher state than positive joyfulness
at least from a Buddhist point of view.

I mean like in Hinduism some Hindu
schools will teach about like satananda
is like the enlightened mind which is
just like

like joy ananda lit literally means something like joy or rejoicing that kind of thing.

So

yeah, I mean it can be interpreted this way and some people might even become enlightened by practicing it with this interpretation, but it's not really the orthodox terravada Buddhist interpretation. And I think that there probably are better interpretations for interpreting Dharma that will help you to become enlightened better. But there's all different kinds of people and so different different strokes for different folks, different methods, you know. So

let's see, just make sure I answer the question before I move on to the next one. What do you think of the idea that Dharma practice is at its core just gladdening the mind by reminding ourselves everything is okay, everything is fine?

Yeah. Um I mean you don't even have to be gladdened. I mean you just forget the gladdening part just remind yourself you know it doesn't matter you know it's like cultivating equanimity just observe everything and just let it go through you just like through a pane of glass you know just no resistance

no friction and that's enough I mean
that's the point of it I think at least
with regard to equanimity

So, I'm just going to move on to
Robert's third question. Do you like Bob
Dylan's music? And I have to admit, I'm
a heretic in this regard, too. I never
liked Bob Dylan. And there's two main
reasons for that. One, Bob Dylan
specialized in lyrics. And throughout my
life, as a general rule, I don't listen
to lyrics. It's like I listen to music
with the right hemisphere of my brain
and it's just not interpreting the words
into meaning. It's just more like the
vocalist is just another instrument. I
mean, you know, there's words there.

It's not just blah blah blah, but it really isn't soaking in. I'm not like interpreting the words. It's like trying to I mean, I have to to some degree stop listening to the music in order to interpret the words.

Unless I mean every once in a while there's a kind of song that's sung in such a way that you just follow the lyrics easily.

But that's that's one reason why I wasn't in Bob Dylan. But the the main reason is just he has a horrible singing voice. He's just this ridiculously bad singing voice that I've just never liked. It's just kind of amazing. Neil,

what's his name? Neil Young is another one. I mean, why would they want to be singers? Guess was it Bob Dylan or Neil Young that started off sort of like like a street musician panhandling? So I guess you know they they'd have to be going solo from the beginning. Or one a big one for me is Rush. What inspired them to have Getty Lee be their vocalist? I mean he sounds like a cross between Donald Duck and Alvin the Chipmunk. They could have easily They only had three people in the band. could have easily hired a fourth person to be the vocalist. Worked for Led Zeppelin, didn't it? But instead, they got Getty Lee with his absolutely horrible

semiscreeching singing voice.

But at least they had some damn good guitar and drumming in in Rush. And Bob Dylan really didn't have any outstanding like instrumental virtuosity to compensate for his really shitty singing voice.

I wasn't even all that impressed by Janice Joplin's singing voice. Kind of scratchy, not particularly musical.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Jeffrey. And Jeffrey says, "I've heard you and Brian talk about the Buddha saying that some people are incapable of engaging in an intelligent

conversation and conversations with these types should be avoided. Could you please cover that again?" Well, I don't like recall Brian and me talking about this other than like the Mongalasuta clearly states it's it's a list of blessings.

The blessings to a person's life.

Blessing number one is balanam which is not associating with fools.

Mental states are contagious. You hang out with people at a lower vibration than you, it'll bring you down. You hang out with people at a higher vibration or higher mental state than you, it'll uplift you. So

there is that. I mean it is true most

people are incapable of engaging in an intelligent or philosophical conversation like where I work now and there's there's another question along these lines further down the scroll if I remember correctly that I mean where I work it's probably the average IQ of the people working on the docs is below 90.

I'm I'm guessing certainly it's in double digits

and I mean these people are what would be called normies. A lot of them are good people. I'm not trying to bash them at all,

but I mean they're just completely like in samsauric mode, you know? They they

haven't gotten to the point of
questioning samsara, questioning like
the the validity or reality of it.

So, but I mean even people capable of
engaging in an intelligent conversation
if they're just hyper samsaric

you know they're like some sociopathic
surgeon or business person that they're
just completely locked into samsara

then I mean even though they're
intelligent they could engage in an
intelligent conversation still you'd be

better off avoiding people like that
going with Buddhism going with dharma

But I mean, you'd be better off hanging
out with uh like a relatively slowwitted
good person than with a highly

intelligent sociopath

as a general rule.

So,

uh still I think it's mainly just a matter of foolishness. Not the capacity of engaging in an intelligent conversation. It's just how foolish are they? How delusional are they? That I mean, you're better off hanging out with wise people. I mean, wisdom and intelligence are not the same thing. So, you're better off with someone who is wise but not intelligent than intelligent but not wise.

Like the founder of the tradition which I was ordained, Tong Pulu Seattle, whose

picture is up on the the altar there,
right about there.

that I mean he was a simple village guy.

I mean he started off that way just a
simple village boy and he had wisdom. I
mean he wasn't like an intellectual.

Certainly wasn't a scholarly type. I
mean pretty much all Burmese monks know
their dharma way better than most
western Dharma teachers. You know they
know the scriptures. They're just
immersed in it from childhood. Um, and
just the whole like monastic educational
system, the educational system in
general in Burma is just memorize,
memorize, memorize, memorize. They're
very dogmatic. They don't have much

independent critical thought, but they know what the texts say.

But again, you're better off with a wise person than an intelligent person, even if the wise person is not particularly intelligent.

So, I mean, you don't need to be capable of engaging in an intelligent conversation to be uplifting to be around. You know, an enlightened person could just sit there and he's going to be uplifting or we can just talk about just really simple stuff, you know.

So, I mean, the main purpose of hanging out with people isn't to participate in

intelligent conversations necessarily.

So yeah, I think really the the main point is to hang out with wise people and avoid fools

uh regardless of IQ

or regardless of physical height, that kind of thing.

So

um I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Kundrew.

Kundrew says, "How is a sankara

different from a dhama as used in the

three marks of existence?" the tilakana

which is sab sankara anicha sab sankara

duka sab dhamma anata and I've explained

this before that sankaras are referring

to anything that has a beginning

anything that is condition anything that
has the causes like the fire whereas
dhamma is anything at all including
which would include nibbano even it would
include not only conditioned things but
even the unconditioned
even not just like illusory samsaric
phenomena but what is ultimately real
and this this whole formula kind of
kicks in the head this idea that a lot
of especially western Buddhists will
have sometimes or or some like an John's
in the Thai forest tradition where
they're trying to come up with a kind of
self
you know they're saying well the Buddha

was just saying that it's not any of the five condas that is a self But still they just even though he didn't assert that there's some other self they're saying well he was just leaving the door open kind of implying that there is a higher self that it just isn't one of the five condas but the three marks of existence this this formula just kicks that in the head.

It's no condition or all conditioned things are impermanent. All conditioned things are conducive to suffering.

But everything whether it's conditioned or not is without a self.

So the first two are referring to sankaras are referring to samsaric

phenomena. But dharma is not necessarily referring to samsara. It's referring to anything.

So,

that's the answer. And I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from Quistor.

And it seems to me like a lot of people are spelling their own names wrong because the spell check is underlying about half the names on this list.

Quistor, for example. He apparently isn't spelling his own name right.

Anyways, Quistor says, "What criteria did you use to determine that you were no longer progressing as a monk? Did you

stop resolving sankaras of the past? Did you not see any more improvement in reducing the duration and intensity of your emotional reactions? Well, the main criterion, excuse me, the main criterion that I used to determine that I was no longer progressing as a monk was my meditation. I wasn't getting into any deeper states. In fact, I wasn't even getting to the into the states that I had already been into before. like the best meditation of my life was between 1999 and around 2004. Those five years I was getting into the best meditation of my life and then it just kind of petered out. There's a little glimmer every now and then but I just was not breaking any

new ground. I wasn't even regaining old ground in my meditation.

I just see apparently got as far as I was I was inclined to get with with that practice. And so I figured well after about 10 years more than 10 years of not making any progress in my meditation I decided

enough is enough.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Gnostic Rucker.

And Gnostic Rucker or Gnostic Rucker

says, "I wonder if you ever find

yourself in the following dilemmas or

quandaries in the workplace with worldly

non-spiritual workmates. If you are too

distant or standoffish with them, they take offense because you don't want to hang out. However, if you take the other approach and respond to their overtures of friendship later on down the line, they then don't like the fact that you don't want to go drinking every week or don't want to discuss sports, parochial gossip, or tabloid political gossip.

Let's face it, not too many people in the workplace want to discuss the thoughts of 2,000-year-old sages or mystic heretics.

Well, I really don't come don't really have a problem with this. I mean, I generally don't talk to many people.

I'll just exchange pleasantries a little

bit, you know, just kind of sort of social lubricant, you know, just kind of staying on a friendly basis with most of them anyway. Not that I have any like feuds going on. There's just a few people I don't have much patience with because they're always messing up.

So, but still I'll talk to them. I'll politely respond if they say anything to me. If I have some sort of advice or instructions to give them with regard to work, I'll give it to them in a neutral tone of voice.

But let's see here. I don't want to hang out. Yeah, I just don't hang out with anybody at work.

Just it just doesn't happen. Like I've been working there since December at this new place and I've got like the uh exchanged phone numbers with a couple of them and they no longer work there. They both quit and um just nobody's come to our house. I don't think we've had real visitors other than my sweetheart's mama in over over a year. I think just neither one of us is particularly socially oriented. So, it's it's fine. You know, it's like company comes over. It's just kind of an inconvenience to some degree. I really do not thrive on human companionship the way most people do. Like, there's some people at work, they're just like talking all the time

and I'm just mostly just working all the time. Like, I got a an evaluation a few weeks ago where my supervisor is just saying, "You got nothing to worry about. You are constantly working."

So,

let's see. Yeah, I don't I don't just hang out with anybody.

So, let's see. Other than my sweetie, we hang out with each other. So,

yeah. And it's it's like I was

mentioning before, it's there's like two kinds of people working at this place

just roughly, you know, just generally

speaking that I mean they're all sort of bluecollar types, you know, very few

college educations, I'm sure. And you know, the average IQ is probably below 90 and the pay is relatively good for like your standard, you know, bluecollar job. And so you've got some young guys who are just working just as much as they can. You 60 hours a week if they can get it. you know, they don't have much of a social life and they're mainly just getting as much money as they can to get that monster truck or to set themselves up well enough so they can afford at some future date to have a woman and children. Whereas the other group is the ones that already have a woman and children and they're just working their asses off without much

social life. you know, they're just like the the standard, you know, committed workaholic father who is just working his ass off to feed his wife and kids. And that is an honorable thing. I've got absolutely nothing bad to say about that.

And I mean, the father's not home very much. I guess the kids might not see very much of him, but he is working his butt off to make sure that his family is provided for, which is like the traditional role of a father, I guess, at least one of the traditional roles of a father.

And so I've got respect for a lot of the

people and the people have respect for me, too. I think just I'm I'm big, you know, I'm bigger than just about anybody there and just kind of gruff and work hard and do a fairly good job. So, a lot of people just appreciate me being on the team because I'm a good player. At least, you know, I'm not messing stuff up. I'm getting my my work done so that we can get out of there earlier, that kind of thing. And so I do have a certain amount of respect even though I'm sort of like the the the tall silent type for the most part. You know, I just walk past people don't don't greet them or anything. You know, I just kind of ignore everybody. And you know, it's

just kind of like the mystique or something. I don't know. They just they just accept that.

In fact, they're accepting me more and more as I'm getting more like getting better at my job, you know, kind of doing stuff better, not messing up as much as when you're just starting, that kind of thing.

So, even though I'm pretty much antisocial, just crack a joke with a few people every now and then, um, still I I am respected at work for the most part.

So, I'm just going to move on.

to uh Gnostic Rucker's second question here, which is, "What did your family

make of your immersion in Dharma?" My family pay no attention to it whatsoever, or if they are reminded of my interest in it, they consider it some kind of silly, impractical, vaguely hippie stuff, which is incomprehensible to them, or they wonder why I'd be interested in such culty stuff. I'm used to it now and barely mention it to them. Well, before I became a monk, I don't think it was really much of an issue. My father considered himself to be a Buddhist, although he was kind of in between like Mahayana and paganism, like animism.

So, I mean, his his understanding of of Buddhism was pretty sketchy, but still,

I mean, just my interest in Buddhism, my mother just didn't understand it. My mother, bless her heart, did not have a religious or spiritual bone in her body. She kind of started getting a little Christian as she got older, presumably out of fear of death.

So when I became a monk, my father was proud of me, but he thought I was going overboard. He thought that was extremism to actually renounce the world and go live in a cave.

Yeah. He he'd make fun of me sometimes for that. Um my mother was just mystified. She just didn't understand it at all. She would from the bottom of her

heart would have much preferred that I just settle down in the suburbs with a wife and start having kids for her to spoil. You know, she wanted to be the doting grandma and just didn't get the chance with me. She just did not understand it. She could not get it. My father kind of understood it, but he thought it was rather extreme to go to the to to the extent that I did.

So let's see here. What did your family make of your immersion in Dharma? My brother was proud of me. I'm not sure what his his attitude towards me is now, but he was proud of me when I was a monk. He actually came to Burma to visit me once. He didn't like it there,

though. He was glad to leave.

So let's see here.

I guess I'm just going to move on to Gnostic Rucker's third question, which is, it seems to me that all religions have strong and weak points, aspects of being which they see clearly, accurately, and encourage whilst they may have while they may misperceive other areas of life and thought and vision in their outlook or in their theology, ethics, virtue, attitudes to the world, the seen and the unseen. What do you think Christians get right which Buddhists miss or do not get right? Well, I was thinking of this I think

yesterday when I first saw the question and I'm not sure that the Christians get anything more correct than like orthodox Buddhism does. I can't think of anything really other than I mean with regard to traditional Buddhism.

Um there's one one thing about Christianity that I like is just if you're going to do good deeds, do them secretly. Don't advertise your good deeds. Whereas you go to Burma or like a Burmese temple in in America, everything that gets offered has like this little label on it saying who donated it. You know, so and so and his wife so and so and their kids so and so so and so and so and so donated this. And it's I mean

it's just like self view, you know? It's like that's you're better off just donating it and just not trying to get any kind of payback in this life, you know, any kind of recognition for anything like that.

So I mean the Christian idea is, you know, you do something in secret, God still knows and that's all that counts. That's all that really matters. But Buddhism doesn't really have that.

So let's see here.

I mean some Buddhism orthodox terraat does have some kind of weak points but I think pretty much all religions do like like

dreams

you know just describing

things about the natural world like

gravity you know of course I mean that's

not really the scope of Buddhism anyway.

The scope of Buddhism is to understand

suffering and the end of suffering

or to understand delusion and the end of

delusion because they both amount to the

same thing.

But anything that Christian that like

Christianity like the Bible gets right

which the Buddhists miss. I mean to some

degree just to some degree the whole

idea of divine grace in Christianity

where you cannot save yourself through

your own efforts. I mean there has to be

some of your own efforts but I had a Catholic priest tell me once it's like you take one step towards God takes 99 steps towards you. And I mean in I mean there is some profundity to that where you can't make yourself be enlightened. And and Buddhism acknowledges that to some degree. There's no guarantees that you're going to get enlightened. Like in the Sudatana Suta, you know, you practice this intensive Satipatana practice, then you're guaranteed of either enlightenment or getting damn close to enlightenment, but there's no guarantee other of enlightenment anyway. So I there does seem to be a kind of

like

what's the word like enigmatic

mysterious grace involved because you
can't make yourself be enlightened.

Enlightenment is not the result of a
cause because then it would just be
another conditioned thing which would be
impermanent and conducive to suffering.

So you can't cause yourself to become
enlightened but still it happens somehow
and the Christians kind of have this
worked into their system where in

Buddhism it's just kind of a blank you
know there's there's not much discussion
of it other than in Mahayana they'll
just discuss the paradox

you know they'll kind of play up the

paradox

which may be the best way to go about it but in Terravada there's it's pretty much not mentioned or at least It receives very little emphasis.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Austin.

And Austin says, "Would you debate a Hindu on Tik Tok or Discord? It's something I could easily set up. And you're the Dharma Master, so I'm sure you could do better than me." Well, it seems like if there was a debate on TikTok, it wouldn't last very long. You know, you just have to take a little clip from the debate, I guess, and put

it on TikTok. Isn't there like a time limit on Tik Tok? Can't be more than like five minutes or something. Discord is another matter, but Discord isn't I'm not exactly sure how it would work on Discord.

Um, yeah. I mean, I could debate a Hindu, I suppose. Although, what will we debate? I mean, with regard to Buddhism and Hinduism, for the most part, they're in agreement. I mean, there's more similarities than differences with regard to Buddhists and Hindus. At least that's kind of the Buddhist approach. And the Hindus consider a lot of Hindus consider Buddhists to just be another kind of Hindu.

But like even in the in the poly text
like in in the Vineia the rules of
monastic discipline that if you have a
non Buddhist wants to become a monk he
has to go on probation for I think it's
four months three months. I think it's
four months that he has to sort of like
be a novice for four months before he
can be fully ordained just to make sure
that he's gotten rid of like this these
heretical views.

Um but a Hindu or like a Vadic
protohindu doesn't have to go through
the probation because already they
believe in karma and rebirth and that
sort of thing. I mean Hinduism and

Buddhism arose in essentially the same culture. So they have a lot of the same assumptions.

But I guess we could debate some things like no self, that kind of thing. But even then it might be a kind of agreement that is like a semantic problem.

But yeah, I mean I could debate a Hindu. We we'd have to know in advance what it is exactly we're going to debate though. But I really don't have like an axe to grind against Hindus other than I mean there's certain things that you can easily debate. Like for example, I was involved in a kind of debate on Bitshoot in the comments section below. I think

it's Q&A 154. It might be to some degree and it might even be the previous Q&A.

Just some Hindus believe that Vedic Hinduism speaking Sanskrit as their religious language has existed in India for a gajillion years.

and that you know the whole like Arian invasion theory where you had the the Indo-Aryans invading India like around 1500 BC that's all [__] that you know it's like the Arian race arose in India this kind of thing I mean that could be debated I mean I'm not really an archaeologist I wouldn't have all the best data or anything but still it's fairly straightforward or certain

certain religious issues I guess but
yeah I'd be all right with that, I
guess.

I mean, it would depend on
circumstances, I suppose. And I'm just
going to move on to Austin's next
question, which is the highest order of
truths transcend binary dualistic
conceptions. Pure being and pure
non-being are undifferentiated. So, with
regard to the self, is it apt to say it
neither exists nor does not exist? Well,
no, because you can't say that. I mean,
going with Buddhist logic, it's invalid
to say that the self exists. It's
invalid to say self doesn't exist. It's
invalid to say that the self does and

doesn't exist. And it's invalid to say that the self neither exists nor doesn't exist. I mean, anything you say about reality is going to be invalid. I mean if you want to just talk at a purely samsaric level then sure you could say well the self exists in some context and it doesn't exist in other contexts and it does and doesn't maybe in certain contexts neither does nor doesn't in other context you know so long as you explain the context you might be able to validly state whether it exists or not etc etc but if you're trying to discuss ultimate reality the highest truth it's not going to work in where it's just in

Say yes is invalid to say no is invalid
to say yes and no is invalid to say
neither yes nor no is invalid it's just
it's just wasted effort
so let's see did I answer the question
pure being and pure non-being are
undifferentiated so with regard to the
self is it apt to say it neither exists
nor does not exist yeah I already
answered that so I'm just going to move
on next question this is from Sedarta
lohachita

And Sedart lohachita says, "Why are we
deeply drawn to Buddhism but not
enlightened and probably won't achieve
it in this lifetime but still drawn
towards it?" Well, there's a number of

ways of looking at that. I mean, one way that would be a more Buddhist way is that we're deeply drawn to Buddhism, but we're still not enlightened. But still there's like an aspect of us that is waking up and knows that Buddhism is like a doorway through which we can you know we can transcend samsara the god's willing so to speak.

So it's like a part of you, you know, it's like in Zen Buddhism or Mahayana, they talk about the Buddha nature, you know, you've got like the bodhicitta or something, you know, you've already got this seed, you've got this glimmer of enlightenment already in you and that

glimmer of enlightenment that that
latent wisdom or that aspect of wisdom
that you already have can see or just
intuitively feel that
Dharma is the way to go.

So that would be a more orthodox kind of
explanation. But Paul Low, who was a
rascal, one of my favorite Dharma
teachers, he's still alive as far as I
know.

Um he has this other explanation that he
says that like spirituality or religion
is a kind of cope. It's like we don't
want to really become enlightened. So we
just kind of play at it, you know, we do
all the we follow these precepts and we
do these ceremonies and we do this and

that and we sit there like a statue for, you know, x number of minutes or hours per day. And it's mainly just kind of acting out like we're pretending we really want to become enlightened while at the same time we're vehemently clinging to our own personal samsara and deep down don't want to become enlightened.

So that's that's another possible explanation and it may be that both of them are true.

I mean it's like Krishna Murdy says that um once you're bitten by a snake you don't have to take courses on how to avoid snakes. You just genuinely stay

away from snakes after you've been bitten once. And it's kind of that way with enlightenment. Once you really fully realize that you should wake up, then you're going to wake up. That I mean, the main reason why we're not enlightened is that we just don't want to be enlightened yet.

You know, it's kind of like St.

Augustine praying to God, you know, save me from my sins, but not yet.

because we like our sins or our transgressions or our indulgences, our preferences, our own personality.

It's just an animal instinct. We don't want to die

and enlightenment is a kind of death.

So

you could look at it either way. I think both of them would be applicable. So to some degree there is like an essence there is like a wisdom in us that can see that dharma is like the right direction but at the same time we're kind of dragging our feet in that direction and just using the like the the pageantry and the the busy work and so forth as a kind of cope as a as like an excuse like well you know I'm I'm working on it I'm working on

But really, if we fully realize that we should be enlightened, we would be just let go. I mean, there's nothing to do.

So, I'm just going to move on to Sedart
Loha's next question,
which is as follows.

Don't you think that most people who
defend the figure of God or rather the
idea of God don't truly believe in a
living divine being but instead in a
kind of political doctrine of order like
Rita in the Hindus would say one
doctrine that serves to explain the
cosmos while also granting them a sense
of control and a means to govern others.

Examples

God wants the king to rule his divine
right. God forbids this. Moral control.
God will judge. Psychological coercion
for compliance.

Well, let's see here. Get back up to the top of the question. Don't I think that most people who defend the figure of God don't truly believe in a living divine being, but instead in a kind of political doctrine?

Well, I mean, I think there's probably the majority of Christians just believe that there is a God.

I don't think that it's just a kind of rationalization for having politics be a certain way or you know controlling others or anything like that. Um it could be like the higher up you go in like the political scale that it gets more and more political. People who just

are very political in their thinking may think politically with regard to this kind of stuff or just with regard to like governing society, stabilizing society, you know, having society, you know, unified and strengthened by all everybody accepting the same world view of Christian theology or whatever.

Um, but the average Joe who goes to church on Sundays, I really think that they just have this simplehearted belief that there is a God kind of a sky father, father up in the sky who's watching them and will reward them if they're good and punish them if they're bad. And I mean, you could

interpret that politically, especially if you're a politically oriented person. But I think for most people it doesn't really get that complicated that they just have this I mean they were raised Christians. They just believe in God and that's just the way it is.

So let's see.

They believe in a living divine. Yeah. I would guess that most Christians, if they're devout Christians, they're devout enough that they're going to church on Sundays and actually trying to live up to some of the teachings that uh they do believe that there is a living

God.

But the more cynical you get and more political you get, you know, the more you're likely to kind of use this concept of God to control people, control society or whatever.

So,

I may you may notice I was a little bit distracted because I'm looking out the window because there was a a big pickup truck pulled up in front of the house and my sweetie had uh called some people to measure the back patio to lay some tile down and they never showed up. So, when a big pickup or something like slows down in front of the house, I'm thinking, well, maybe

it's them and I'm going to be interrupting this Q&A. But it wasn't them.

So, did I answer that question? Yeah, I think I did.

Yeah. I think most Christians, they're not really thinking of like divine order. Like I guess Veruna was like the god of divine order in like the Rigveda there. I mean to some degree, but they think God is responsible for that order. God is like enforcing that order. That order comes from God who is this skyfather.

Yeah. I don't think that they're really that philosophical. They're thinking

more in terms of the sky father, you know, the the big daddy up in the sky than they are thinking about, you know, political control and maint maintenance of order and so forth.

So, I'm just going to move on to Sedar Loha's third question.

Don't you think that when a sect or religion gets institutionalized like Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism in their respective areas and times immediately part of it becomes corrupt?

Yeah. I would say even before it gets institutionalized like if you if we can believe the polyexts then corruption was starting even when the Buddha was already alive. You you had the notorious

group of six monks who were just doing all this naughtiness. You had David trying to kill the Buddha and also you know trying to take over starting a schism and so forth. So there's like scandalous stuff already starting to go on even when the Buddha is still alive when Buddhism is still just sort of a sort of a minority renunciant movement. You know it hasn't taken over society or anything yet. So when you're dealing with unenlightened people corruption is just a given.

when you're dealing with unenlightened people and not all members of a religion, not even Buddhism, not even

early Buddhism in the Buddhist time, not all of the the early Buddhists were fully enlightened.

Early Christianity, I mean I mean you start off with like these really devout saintly types, Christianity and Buddhism too, but within a short time, within a hundred years already, you're getting like people that shouldn't be there getting in there. Like you read the early history of Christianity, there's just all this just infighting and just politics and just just machavellian [—] going on with regard to determining what's going to be official doctrine and so forth.

And it wasn't so bad in Buddhism

probably. I mean, you probably didn't have people killing each other over Buddhist doctrines very often. like Nanda University, you had representatives of all these different schools of Buddhism all living in the same compound interacting with each other. They might have spirited debates, maybe occasionally heated debates, but still they're living more or less peacefully with each other without killing each other. And that was almost impossible like in the mid to late Roman Empire where you had different sects of Christianity that were just convinced that the other sects of Christianity

were even worse than the pagans.

A heretic is worse than a non-believer.

But getting back to uh

institutionalized, yeah, I think that

the corruption begins as soon as you

start getting unenlightened people

making decisions with regard to that, no

matter how early it is. I mean, the

founder, the enlightened founder can

still be alive and already you've got

Judas's Scariot and Davidata and all

this [__] going on.

I mean like the first no it was the

second council supposedly 100 years

after the time of the Buddha after the

Buddhist part in Ibana already you've

got corrupt monks that are handling

money and like trying to like persecute monks that refuse to handle money that kind of thing.

It's just human nature to be unenlightened.

Enlightenment is definitely the exception to the rule.

And I'm just moving on to the next question. This is from P. And P says, imagine a new human popped out of the block of proverbial marble. He says proverbial, but it's proverbial.

I'll start again. Says, oh, I didn't put enough s's in there. Says, imagine a new human popped out of the block of proverbial marble. Do you think you

could tell if that were the case upon meeting such an individual? Poasa. I don't know why he throws in pubasa as a sentence with a period. There's a question mark before it and a period after it. Pyobbasa.

In other words, to see no karma as of yet being fresh.

So,

a new human popping out of the block of marble that has no karma.

I mean the the thing that that this reminds me of would be those of you who have watched the movie Fight Club towards the beginning of the movie Fight Club that you know you got the unnamed protagonist going around walking city

streets and interacting with Mara and
whatever that every once in a while
you'll see this flash of Tyler B Tyler
Deran, you know, just like a tenth of a
second he's just

just right there in the scene And that
would be somebody just popping out of
the block of marble with no karma.

Because if you had no karma, you you've
got no momentum. You're going to you're
going to exist for one moment.

So to see no karma as of yet being
fresh. Yeah. I mean, if you got no
karma, you're going to exist for one
moment. I guess that would be that would
be my personal take on it. And

especially if they're supposedly just popping out of this like the quantum field, you know, you know, sort of like a particle and antiarticle, you know, just pop out of the quantum field and then just reunite and annihilate each other.

Yeah. A person coming out of the block of marble. It might be a person and the anti-person popping out of of whatever and then they just kind of collide and and explode and that's it.

So yeah, I don't think it I don't think it would work the way is imagining it here. I mean, we're all popping out of the block of marble every moment anyway. But you have to have some kind of

momentum or continuity in order to exist for more than a trillionth of a second.

And if you don't have any karma, then that's pretty much the momentum, isn't it?

So I think I'm just going to move on this question. This is from Xenithoid.

And Zenithoid says, "Is Schopenhau the apex of Western philosophy?" And he asked me this on the Discord server, and there's this one person who's very

Schopenhauike in his attitudes who just immediately said yes. But I don't think so. I don't think Schopenhau is the apex of Western philosophy. Um I I would rank David Hume higher than Schopenhau,

possibly even Kant, even though Kant is damned hard to read. Schopenhauer was kind of a successor to Kant.

that like in his the world is will and representation Schopenhauer says you need to read you need to read Kant first before you read this book which almost nobody does I mean almost nobody reads Schopenhauer's the world as will and representation anyway or samsara as china and samsara

using Buddhist terminology philosophy terminology

but Schopenhauer I mean he had his weak points I mean first of all he was still too Platonist for my tastes He still believed in um Platonic like ideals.

What's the universals?

He still believed in universals which I don't have any use for. And I mean some of the stuff that he teaches it's uh like I mean his his idea of human heredity and stuff is just like you know it's it's worthless or almost worthless let's say.

So I mean he had interesting ideas. Um he's he's kind of a for me kind of a kind of an enigma paradoxical kind of a person because he freely admitted he could not live up to his own philosophy. You know he's talking about you know becoming a sage when he wasn't a sage. You know he's notoriously pushing the

old lady down the flight of stairs and
all that.

Um,

so

he wasn't really a wise philosopher. He
was a brilliant philosopher who had some
really interesting ideas.

Uh, he had some wisdom. I mean, he
wasn't a total fool either, but still, I
think I'd still put David Hume higher
than Schopenhau in Western philosophy
and possibly Kant also.

[Music]

So let's see here. Let's just move on to
Xenithoid's next question. Also a
Schopenhau question. Was Schopenhau more
of a Hindu or more of a Buddhist? And

I think possibly more of a Buddhist since his concept of will is very similar to the Buddhist concept of Chedana which is karma. So the world is just a manifestation of karma. that samsara is a manifestation of karma is more of a Buddhist idea than a Hindu one. But Schopenhau really was not really familiar with Buddhist texts or Hindu texts. I mean he he did read an early translation of the upupanads which he refers to as the uppikat.

So I mean he at least had read that. I mean sure he had read some other u early translations pioneering translations of like Indian spiritual texts but I mean

he was just getting in at the very beginning and his resources were very limited especially since he he was fluent in several languages but Sanskrit wasn't one of them.

So it may be that Schopenhauer was more of a Buddhist but at the same time he would just sort of he considered it to be largely irrelevant. You know it's like the the essence of dharma from a schopenhauer point of view is just denial of the will. You know whatever your whatever your momentum wants you to do don't do it. And that's taught you know Ajan Cha taught that kind of thing. Nee Crowley Baba taught that kind of thing. It's like you see a cup of tea, you want

to drink it, don't drink it

because you want to drink it, so don't.

And so you're kind of like starving your
habitual self-indulgence

until it withers away.

And for Schopenhauer, I mean, you can be a
Christian, you can be a Hindu, you can
be a Buddhist. It's all the same. I
mean, you can be a philosopher, you can
just be wallowing in superstition. It
doesn't matter. The essence is denial of
the will.

that if you're denying your will, you
are doing the right thing from a
schopenhawerian point of view. You're,
you know, it's sort of weakening the

will which is samsara.

So

yeah, I mean I think it could be argued

either way or it could be argued that

Schopenhauer was just equally Hindu and

Buddhist, but I think probably he would

kind of tip the scales over towards

Buddhism a little more just because

Buddhism is less theistic

and really emphasizes, you know, karma

as the generator of samsara and that's

will with a capital W.

So I'm just going to move on to

Xenithoid's third question. Also a

Schopenhauer question. He says, "Did

Schopenhauer have a better understanding

of Eastern spirituality than the wave of

early 20th century philosophers of the political right such as Oswald Spangler Spangler, Julius Evola, Renee Guenon, etc." I don't think so because like I just said they had just started translating and studying like Indian texts when Schopenhauer was writing you know Schopenhauer was writing like 1830 something like that. So people like Evola had much more access to translations and information about the subject than Schopenhauer did.

I mean he may have had some like insight with regard to denial of the will that maybe was deeper than like Evola or Guenon

I don't know how to pronounce French
names renewan

um I mean like intuitively with regard
to just deep down insights he may have
had some kind of better understanding
but intellectually

I think Julius Iola would have to have
understood Buddhism better than

Schopenhau did simply because he had
access to way more information on the
subject. You know, he could read a
translation of the Majimeaya

that Schopenhau couldn't because there
was no translations of the Majimeaya
into an into like a western language at
that time.

So

yeah, but Schopenhawers definitely had a way better understanding of Eastern spirituality than like Hegel like in Hegel's uh what is it the phenomenology of spirit you know he's got like Indian religion as a kind of like pantheistic nature worship you know he didn't understand it very much at all so Schopenhauer understood Eastern spirituality probably better than any other philosopher at the time.

But still, I mean, we know way more about Buddhism than Schopenhau did simply because we have almost the entire Topitica translated into English just for starters.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Phil Leys and Philys says, "Have you ever experienced or seen in yourself anything related to mental illness or breakdown in all the countless hours of meditation, concentration, and solitude you've practiced?" Well, almost any mental illness is just an exaggeration, an extreme form, relatively extreme form of just a natural state. So yeah, I've experienced in myself numerous things related to mental illness like hysterical symptoms like when I was meditating at Pandita Rama back 199798

I kept having like this weird feeling like my robe was sticking to my back when it wasn't. It was just like this like uh what is it? Psychosomatic stuff or I've I've mentioned before I had this um I mean I'm starting to feel it now just thinking about it. It's called dyspnea. It's like an irregularity in your breathing which I looked it up in a medical diagnostic guide when I was a monk in Burma. And to my humiliation, it said it's almost always a hysterical conversion reaction, which is a kind of neurotic psychosomatic symptom caused by in my case just like too much self-restraint.

So Freud wasn't always right, but I do think that he was largely correct with regard to what like neurosis and hysteria where everyone has these animalistic urges, human animalistic urges and when you restrain them. You're not making them go away. you're just pushing them down into the subconscious where they build up pressure until they have enough pressure that they percolate up to the surface in the form of neurotic symptoms.

So, I mean, when you're dedicating your life to self-observation and that sort of thing, then you see this kind of stuff more easily than most people would, at least

some of us do. Also, just depression. I mean, that's just sort of a mild case of what could be clinically significant depression or obsessivecompulsive disorder. I used to know one of the world's leading authorities on obsessivempulsive disorder. I read he'd send me books and like articles that he'd written, that kind of thing. So, I I know quite a lot about obsessivempulsive disorder and there was even a test at the end of one of his books where you can test to see if you're likely to be clinically significant. and I scored like a little higher than average with regard to

obsessive being obsessivecompulsive
but um I wasn't clinically significant
but still that would be related to
mental illness you know it's just if I
were more that way as it is it's just
like a picture hanging crooked on the
wall bugs the [_] out of me if I would
buy a used book from a used bookstore
back in the days when I would buy books
one of the first things I'd do would be
to unfold the dogeared pages you know
the corners that get bent over, you
know, just rearranging
the books on my bookshelf in just
alphabetical order or whatever, that
kind of thing. I mean, it's those are
obsessivecompulsive

symptoms, getting a song stuck in your head that you can't get rid of, that kind of thing. So, yeah, I've seen stuff related to mental illness. Um, you know, I've I've thrown a few conipions.

Although whether that's throwing a coniption isn't necessarily considered mentally ill, even though it's pretty extreme in its its symptoms sometimes.

So

I guess yes, the answer would be yeah.

And I'm going to move on to Phily's next question,

which is I believe the top knot is or became a halo. The halo exists in virtually all cultures because it's a

reference to the tangible fruit of spiritual growth or whatever its equivalent is. It basically symbolizes the point where spiritual reality and the physical meet with man being the midpoint. This is what Decart was clumsily trying to get at with his ideas on the pineal gland. Thoughts?

Well,

I mean, sometimes you'll see the Buddha with a top knot and the halo. So, um I can't remember what the poly word for the halo is. You know, nimbus is is another English word for it. You know, it's supposedly when the Buddha became enlightened, he had this nimbus with all these different colors coming out. It

was a multicolored kind of a halo. Um but I don't think that's the same as the top knot. I mean it maybe it got interpreted that way like I've I've said before sometimes especially on like Thai Buddha images sometimes that top knot will just be like a flame but that's like the flame of wisdom even I mean it could be interpreted sort of it could like have a certain overlap with halos but like if it shows the Buddha giving delivering the first sermon or the Buddha sitting with with like arahant monk disciples they might all have halos but only the Buddha is going to have the top knot. So, I do think that the top

knot or the the lump on the top of the Buddha's head began with Greek statues of the Buddha that were modeled on the god Apollo who had a top knot of hair.

So,

yeah, but I mean halos are there. It's just that halos are a different thing in Buddhism. It's, you know, lights coming out of the head and not like an actual physical lump.

So, I'm just going to move on to Phil Lee's third question

where he says, "Surely some things don't call me surely."

I'll start again. Some things more some things more real than others even though absolute reality is one or ineffable.

I have always felt there is a hierarchy of reality leading up to nibbana and the highest thing in that hierarchy is pure love as the mystics say and as you go lower you get other grades of less pure love and even lower you have concrete facts like the sky is blue a man cannot become a biological woman etc etc then at even lower levels you have all theories even obvious ones since they're just theories and even lower you have the grad ations of desire from more concrete desires to fleeting and confused ones down to just bare sensation.

Oo, this list is not exclusive and is

just from the top of my head, but it's roughly descriptive of the hierarchy that I feel leads to the highest or rather the complete reality thoughts. Well, I mean, getting down to bare sensation, I mean, that would be close to ultimate reality from from a Buddhist point of view. If you stop the diversification and the interpretation and labeling and all that and just get down to bare sensation, you're just you're real close to ultimate reality. But that's not really here or there, I guess. Um it is true that some Mahayana philosophers like in Mjamaka they divided up I mean you had like ultimate truth and conventional truth but then

they divided up conventional truth into
like like like wholesome good
conventional truth and just unh
wholesome bad conventional truth. I mean
they didn't use that those terms but
it's like um going with the philosophy
of Kant where Kant is critiquing you
know how the mind works then
understanding how delusion works is a
kind of highlevel conventional truth I
mean ultimate truth no words you know
the name that can be named is not the
eternal name you can't describe ultimate
truth but when the top level of
description is sort of describing the
structure of delusion that kind of thing

then that would be a kind of right view that is still just conventional truth. So still you can have right view and wrong view within the the realm of conventional truth. Right view in the realm of ultimate truth is just seeing through the veil and it's no words can describe it.

So yeah I mean obviously there's going to be a kind of hierarchy. I mean two and two 2 plus 2 equals 5 would be down at the bottom of just like blatant falsehoods.

So

yeah, I mean you can have like empirical truth would be you could argue within the context of samsara for

practical purposes. Empirical truth would be higher than just theories or opinions or just blatant falsehoods. But ultimately all conventional truth is worthless in in like the ultimate sense. It's all delusion. So you can have sort of a a mild delusion that doesn't obstruct you from like curing yourself of that delusion. You know this sort of like the desire to cure yourself of the delusion is built into the delusion which is a kind of you know wholesome sort of delusion. I guess when you're just wallowing it and completely lost that's that's much worse.

So yeah, I would say that there are levels. I mean there is certainly so long as we're still in samsara there's certainly a real value to empirical truth which is what science is trying to get at. So I mean the power of science should not be deniable within a samsara context. Science may not help anyone get enlightened.

Then again some cases it it might but also there's the kind of empirical truth that it's it's like subjective. It's not within the realm of science. It's like like Kant was talking about just understanding the mechanics of delusion.

So that would be like a highlevel

conventional truth.

But certainly I mean um just within the realm of conventional truth, you're going to have better ones and worse ones.

I mean when everybody is like a fundamentalist Catholic like in medieval Western Europe, I mean that's a conventional truth even though some aspects of that may not have been very empirical.

So like medieval Catholicism being replaced by modern science, it gets into a higher level of truth, I guess.

But it's all just conventional truth.

And there's a good chance that

conventional science will also be replaced as the main uh main tool for understanding human experience.

doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to be completely abolished anymore than Christianity has been completely abolished. You know, science has pretty much taken over in the west for describing samsara, describing the cosmos. But that doesn't mean that Catholicism is now extinct.

And so if something the next step beyond science arises, that doesn't necessarily mean that science is going to go extinct. Still has its place.

So I hope I answered that question

because I'm moving on to the next one.

This is from Kley and Clefy says from the dharma point of view is obstinency

I don't think he means obstinacy. From the dharma point of view is obstinacy

from negative action enough or should we strive for positive actions? In other words, by minimizing the creation of bad karma, we create good karma.

So I think he means abstension instead of obstinacy.

I mean they kind of they're kind of similar abstain and obstin.

Yeah. So okay from the dharma point of view is abstension from negative action enough? And yes actually it is. I mean

it depends on what your goals are. For a monk, definitely abstaining from from unwholesome actions is the key because if you are cultivating merit as a monk, you're just making more karma for yourself that's keeping you in samsara.

So a monk is supposed to just rise above and leave behind good and evil. He should be just neutral, like the lawful neutral.

But for a lay person who isn't ready for enlightenment, they want a better rebirth. Then you practice merit. You do meritorious deeds to get good karma.

So

from the dharma point of view, it depends on whether you are going for enlightenment in this very life or you're just trying to set yourself up for a better position next time. And if you're going for enlightenment in this very life, then you leave behind good and evil. Merit and demerit. Like I used to say in Burma to monks. Merit is for lay people. But if you are a lay person and you're not striving for enlightenment in this very life, then it may be to your advantage to do meritorious deeds so that you're going to have more good stuff happening to you as you remain in samsara. And that's

your choice to make.

So I'm going to move on to the next question. This is from RFS and RFS says, "By what means does one go deeper into practice a good book and life in general? In general, what advice do you have for a shallow westerner?"

Huh. Well, this is kind of a strange question. By what means does one go deeper into practice a good book and life in general? Well, the main thing that the main reason why westerners are shallow is because their view is so broad. You know, it's like everyone has a certain amount of mental capital, let's say. So, you've got a simple Burmese villager. They don't have a lot

of breadth to their point of view. And so, all this mental capital is just invested in this narrow range of subjects which causes their view to become deeper.

Whereas in the west, we've got so many distractions, so many things that we're attending to that we can't invest very much mental capital into each thing. And so we wind up with this superficial view of things.

So one of the best things you can do if you don't want to be so shallow is simplify your life. First, like get rid of the internet, which I mean for a lot of Westerners, even if they're devout

Buddhists, they just Yeah. Right.

because it's I mean it's just a non-starter. So you're just kind of stuck with sort of western shallowness and you just have to make make the best of it. But I mean if you want to go deeper you have to make things a little narrower I guess

so that I mean you're not distracted by so many things just simplify.

So like for example I could go deeper into a good book when I was a monk living in a cave in Burma. I could read books in a cave in Burma. There's no way in hell I could read now. You know, I could read like uh what's his name? FH Bradley

is I've got it on the book there. I've got it on the bookshelf there. I read the entire book. The book was published in 1910. And I was the first person to read the whole thing cuz it was such an old book when I got it. The pages had to be cut apart. It was only like the first third of the pages had even been cut apart with the the book knife.

I could read that. I could read the the entire Old Testament. I could read Hegel's phenomenology of spirit when I was in a cave in Burma. There's no way in hell that I could read it now.

There's too many distractions, too many other things to do.

So, I mean, if you want to go deeper into a good book, just go out into a cabin where that's the only thing you've got to read, and you're going to get into it. Unless you just it's so boring or whatever you just get distracted by going out and watching the ants running around on the ground.

So yeah, same goes for practice, same goes for life in general. You got to simplify so that you've got fewer distractions that are sapping your mental energy. You're just frittering it away with all these these different, you know, side projects and whatever.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Ruie

and Ruie says, "It is quite astounding how the mind can come up with a fully scripted narrative in a fraction of a sentence, no a fraction of a second without any intervention on the part of the observer. Furthermore, engaging in proliferative imagination seems to entail the loss of the detached observer perspective,

i.e. When one realizes one's involvement in the narrative, it is already a full force unstoppable maelstrm. Do you think nonproliferative imagination is a possibility at all or is it playing with fire? Non-proliferative imagination, you'd think that

imagination would just be automatically proliferative.

So, I don't fully understand that part.

With regard to this first statement

here, it is quite astounding how the mind can come up with a fully scripted narrative in a fraction of a second. Um, I don't think so. I mean, when we're talking,

um, it's just you're you're going with this momentum and you don't know what the end of the sentence is even going to be. You might have this idea that you're trying to describe in a sentence, but like you get caught up in your words.

You're trying to say two different words at the same time, which I do sometimes.

Then it's it's like you have this feeling in your mind and you're trying to put it into words and you it's just sort of like this spontaneous movement in that direction that's happening moment by moment. You don't have the entire sentence already in your head before you start saying it. It's just you're formulating the sentence as you go.

So I would kind of niggle with that. See without any intervention on the part of the observer. I mean I I don't understand that at all. I mean the observer as observer is just observing. So he wouldn't really intervene but

still what we call ourselves is the one
that's coming up with the sentence
just moment by moment spontaneously like
we're dancing or something.

Like if you're a good dancer, you don't
have to have to think where your next
step is going to go. It just flows.

And that's that's the way like you know
making a sentence is. It's just kind of
a flow going moment by moment where
you're kind of steering the the idea
with words or just applying words to
what comes next.

Uh let's see here. without any
intervention on the part of the
observer. Well, the observer is the one
I suppose presumably that's cooking up

the sentence.

I mean it's not just happening
like on its own. I mean from a Buddhist
point of view you can say it is
happening on its own like the saying of
a sentence like I'm saying sentences all
kinds of sentences but there is no real
self you know there's no soul that is
like the overseer of this much less the
generator of it so it's it's just cause
and effect you know it's just like these
conditions are resulting in this
sentence coming out
so I mean from From that point of view,
if you're just being mindful and
observing. Yeah, I've done that before.

I've I remember one time when I was in
Burma walking back and forth in in
Rangon talking to one of my supporters.
We're walking back and forth together in
the evening
and I got to this point where I'm just
like watching my mouth move. like
mindfully observing my mouth move and
like the vibrations in my vi my vocal
cords while the the monk is still just
having this conversation but I'm just
letting it happen while my main focus is
just on the movements and the vibrations
of so I mean it can happen it's just
human nature I guess nature taking its
course
so in that sense I suppose you can make

sentences without any intervention on the part of the observer but that's just like momentum like karmic momentum and cultural conditioning and and it's human nature and so forth that's that's producing the sentences there is no real self.

See furthermore engaging in proliferative imagination seems to entail the loss of the detached observer perspective.

Okay. So, proliferative imagination entails the loss of the detached observer perspective. Uh, I mean, still theoretically you could have like this

scenario going on in your mind and just detach from that and observe that mindfully. That'd be really advanced level. But I do think it's possible.

I mean, you can like when you're meditating, you can observe thoughts arising and so forth.

See, as a general rule, it does take effort to keep it going, but it's like habitual effort that seems effortless.

So, see, when one realizes one's involvement in the narrative, it is already a full force, unstoppable momentum. I'm not exactly sure. I mean thinking requires effort and mindfulness of

thinking it I' I've noticed like when I was meditating at Pandramama that all you have to do is note thinking and it stops. You note a thought and it stops. But music you can just keep noting that tune and it won't stop. It's like the part of your brain that notes thinking may involve some of the same parts of the brain that are required to think. So you can't do both at the same time. You can't think and note the thinking simultaneously. That's to some degree I think that's true. Whereas with music it could be a different area of the brain where you can note it and and have the music playing at the same time

and they can just sort of coexist.

So, I think I may have just contradicted myself with regard to the possibility of observing

some kind of, you know, fantasy

narrative in your head. Just sit back

and observe it. I can't recall offhand

if I've ever done that before, although

I have, like I've said, just detached

from an entire conversation to some

degree, just watching my mouth move.

So, let's see here. I guess just let's

just get down to the question mark. This

is kind of a confusing complicated kind

of a question. Let's see. Do you think

non-proliferative imagination is a

possibility at all? Yeah. I mean, I

don't I think it's like an oxymoron is
it's a contradiction in terms
non-proliferative imagination. Once
you start imagining things, you're
already proliferating.

So, or is it playing with fire?

Well, I mean, trying to do the
impossible might be playing with fire,
but uh let's see.

One's involvement in the narrative is
already a full force unstoppable
momentum.

Yeah, I'm not so sure about that.

My experience is if you're thinking and
then you note the thinking, the thinking
stops, which is very useful for a

meditator.

It it'd really suck if you just couldn't stop yourself from thinking at all.

So, I answered that about as as well as I can. It's kind of a hard one to follow.

So, I mean, if if I botched the answer, Ruie can kind of clarify and I can I can try again next time because I'm moving on to the next question. This is from Stellar Supreme, etc., etc., etc. And Stellar Supreme, etc., etc., etc. says, "Would you consider Gatit to have some blueprint of enlightenment within it?" And gatit is like character. And I think I don't recall clearly here, but I think that when the

wisdi manga is referring to the six personality types, it's referring to the six gati, which is your your personality is emphasizes greed, hate, delusion or the opposites of greed, hate, delusion, which is like faith, let's see, faith, intellect, and I think enlightenment.

And um according to the the uh the wisi manga that I mean different different personality types do have kind of different approaches to dharma and like the aversive you know the dosa temperament supposedly has an advantage in in becoming enlightened because when you have aversion for samsara it makes

it easier to renounce it and detach from

So there is that it's not really a blueprint of enlightenment but to some degree there's like a different best method of practice for different personality types like someone with like a lustful personality type than the standard method in terraada is meditation on the 32 parts of the body and people that think too much you know like too much of the intellect aspect effect of of character then mindfulness of breathing that kind of thing. People with dose of temperament you're you're good to practice meta that sort of thing. So the way you practice is different. Maybe certain advantages and

disadvantages are going to be different but I wouldn't go so far as to call it a blueprint of enlightenment.

Everybody's different and there's going to be all kinds of just complications, infinite complications that are going to muck up any neat simple system.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from PSA.

PSA says,

"You said during your latest Q&A, I consider myself fortunate to have been ordained in a Burmese tradition rather than a Thai or Sinhali tradition."

Could you explain why you said this?

Could you please elaborate?

Well, the main reason why I think I was fortunate to have been ordained in a Burmese tradition is that there's more freedom in a Burmese tradition, like in a Thai tradition, it's very regimented and the government pretty much controls the SA. Like I've been told that a monk, even though he's a senior monk in good standing in the SA, he's not allowed to ordain anybody without permission from the government.

So I mean the Burmese government doesn't interfere in SA politics or well politics yes but like SA affairs you know the the SA runs itself pretty much

unless it it starts protesting against the government or some such. So in Burma there was more freedom. There's more you allowed to follow your own conscience in your own understanding more easily than in a Thai tradition. And the Sinhali traditions there are some reform movements in in like the highlands of of Sri Lanka now. But for the most part, Sinhali Buddhism is probably the most corrupt the most corrupt SA of the three big terra Buddhist countries. That's my understanding anyway.

So yeah, I think I consider myself fortunate to have been ordained in a

Burmese tradition mainly because there was more freedom to like follow my own conscience and my own understanding than there would have been in in a Thai tradition and Sri Lanka. I just I just never really was never really drawn to even going to Sri Lanka.

So I think there is a possibility that I may have been like M in a previous distant past life or something like there was a M kingdom or empire with the the Burmese city of the as its capital you know a thousand or more years ago maybe no maybe just uh several hundred years ago that it's possible something like that. So there could also be sort of like a karmic affinity with the

Burmese. And also one good thing about Burma which is also kind of true about the other two main terra Buddhist countries though is that the flora and fauna and lifestyle is really pretty similar to the flora and fauna and lifestyle of the Ganges Valley in in the Buddhist time. So you can understand like the Irawi valley and the Ganges Valley you know this naturally they're pretty similar so that you can learn things like you can understand things that are mentioned in the texts because you have like a similar environment to compare it with but that could be true in in Thailand and and Sri Lanka also so

that's not necessarily a a a good reason why I was more fortunate to be ordained in a Burmese tradition.

But I it just I just fit into a Burmese tradition fairly well, more so than a Thai tradition, which is just more regimented, more conformitybased.

Like I said in before, in Burma, the Burmese monks are very conformist. you know, they follow they I mean, they wouldn't dare not to follow along for the most part, but it wasn't made into a I mean, because it was so natural to the Burmese, they didn't nobody thought to make it into an into an official policy. Whereas in Thailand, I mean, you got to do this, you got to wear the same kind

of robes as everybody else, for example, even if you think what everybody else is wearing is not in accordance with

Vineia. Whereas in Burma, I could just make small robes in accordance with, you know, the the Pacitia rule in the Py Mocha and a lot of Burmese monks would kind of look at me sideways and think this barbarian is just crazy, but they wouldn't do anything about it. You know, I was able to just follow the rules as I understood them, for example.

And it just kind of blew their mind. I mean, it didn't really compute. they couldn't they couldn't relate to it because it's you just don't do that.

It's you know they they just didn't know
how to deal with it and so they just
kind of left me alone and let me do it
which is good. And I'm moving on to the
next question. This is from
I'm not sure about the name. It's
capital O small M capital M.

And this question I do not understand at
all. Um, I'm just putting it out there.
He's got lion dash birthday
pond. And then in parenthesis, he says,
"Maybe I'm symbolizing too much." And
then he says, "By my count, were it
lining up? Was that the plan or just a
poetic delay?"

And I don't get it. I mean, lion
birthday pond. What what kind of

connection is it? What what kind of poetic delay or or or plan or or what lion birthday pond? I don't I really don't understand that question. So, I'm just going to move on to the next one from

he says, "Will frogs, birds, reptiles be part of the design, or is the pond reserved for fish only?" Well, the frogs have already found it. The frogs, I mean, you'd have to put up some kind of anti-frog barrier to keep frogs out of that pond. And it was the same at the the pond we had at the other house where in the springtime you got tadpoles also known as polywogs just you know

swimming around in there and the frogs like when it's frog mating season there's just like this deafening like frog orgy of croaking and thrumming and peeping and so forth going on from that pond which the neighbors may not like very much. I'm sorry to them. But yeah, so frogs definitely reptiles I mean reptiles don't participate in ponds very much. I mean we are going to have some big flat rocks around the edge of the pond which I hope we will be getting soon where little lizards can bask if they so choose.

Um, and birds. I mean, the main birds associated with ponds are birds you don't want associated with ponds. And

that's like herand, you know. It's like when we were living at the other house, we had this other pond. And every once in a while, this pterodactyl like blue heron would just land in our pond and eat about half the goldfish. So those kind of birds, we really don't want to participate in our pond. They might happen sometimes. I this pond is going to be deeper. So, it's going to have to be a larger heron that can stand in that water without just being up to its neck in it.

And other birds, they generally don't have much interest in ponds. I mean, they they might be attracted birds

attracted to like dragon flies or something that are also attracted to the water, that kind of thing. So, it's it's going to definitely have an influence on the ecosystem.

But frogs definitely. Yeah, there's already frogs in that pond.

I had to catch one earlier today.

So, I'm just going to move on to third question. Mosquito control built in or outsourced to the residents. Yeah, definitely. The fish will eat mosquito larve. No mosquito problems in in a pond that has fish in it because fish really like eating mosquito larve. In fact, I fed some mosquito larve. This is this is like unh wholesome action on my part. I

caught some mosquito larve and I set them loose in my aquariums and the fish really like mosquito larve. It's just like caviar to a fish.

They just it's just a delightful treat to those little fishes to go hunting mosquito larve. It's like their their wild instincts, you know? They're born free again. They don't have to eat [__] flakes.

So, let's see here. I'm just going to move on to the next question and we should be getting kind of close to the bottom here, but I'm just going to soldier through this. Siovakad

Zidana asks, "What does mean in Tibetan Buddhism? I noticed it is used in some thirdwheel Buddhist texts and later commentaries. So, I'm curious what the later Buddhists thought of it." Well, I'm no expert on Tibetan Buddhism. I know that M is included in some Mahayana texts in especially like there was a a kind of fashion uh during the formulation of Mahayana sutras where they would have like a mantra at the end of the sutra you know like gate gate paragate parasam gate bodhisah is like one of the most famous of these mantras and some of them contain m uh even in Burma um

It's weird. It's like this it's like a traditional thing where you touch somebody and say and that's supposed to like if a kid comes to you crying they hurt themselves you touch them and go and it's supposed to make them feel better you know sort of like kissing it and making it better in the west. So is is known in Burma also even though it's not found in terab Buddhist texts that I'm aware of. But what does it mean? I mean what does it mean in Hinduism? I mean, Hinduism is just kind of like the sort of the cosmic hum, you know, it's the sound of reality reverberating through samsara or something. I mean,

I'm not even sure that I'm it it'd be a little bit of a challenge even to say what it means in in like the upanishads. But what does it mean in Tibetan Buddhism? I'm not sure if it means anything. It's just sort of like a holy sacred sound, you know? was just, you know, it it just s has this sacred uplifting sound to it. And it's just Yeah. And especially in Tibetan Buddhism, I'm not sure exactly what it means, but I do have this idea that it doesn't necessarily mean anything. It just has like this connotation of sacredness to it. It kind of helps to sanctify a statement that contains that

in the sentence especially because it's almost always some kind of spiritual statement that has m in it. Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

But I mean, it could be something similar to the the Hindu or upanotic meaning of M, which is just it's just sort of a trying to reproduce just sort of like the the spiritual reverberation through the universe.

And I'm just going to move on to Sea of Action Cad's next question, which is kind of a technical one. He says Vazu Bandu seems to describe mindfulness in this way which seems to show how the concept was generally understood in

North India among the Sarvastivada

Sātronic and yoga

in the Abhidharma Kosha Basia he says

all mental recollection or smi

which is the the Sanskrit equivalent of

sati mindfulness

So I'll I'll start again here in the

abhidharma abhidharma kosha basia he says

all mental recollections or smi when

either concentrated samahita or

non-concentrated is the conceptualizing

activity consisting of recollecting

anushara aalpa

and then and then uh sevac continues

here and he further elaborates what he

means by recollection in his text punch

scanda and then it says what is

recollection the avoidance of
inattentiveness towards a familiar
object a state of mental discourse
so then Siovak says you have said that
this doesn't match with what the
sibatana suta says especially the part
about walking and knowing you're walking
etc firstly most of the meditations in
the suta seem like they're what terraat
would consider samata practice And
second, the ones that aren't like the
walking and to know you're walking don't
seem to be any different if you just see
it as the person has his mind on
walking. So it can't be somewhere else.
Otherwise, their mind wouldn't be

focused on doing one thing but two at least like focusing on breath and walking. I personally don't see this as some kind of different practice than what Vazu Bandu says. Mahayana translators seem to translate this chapter as applications of mindfulness rather than foundations thoughts.

Well, with regard to that last part, Mahayana translators seem to translate this chapter of Sai Patana as applications of mindfulness rather than foundations. I agree. I think it probably does mean application of mindfulness and not foundation of mindfulness. So sad mindfulness patana is could be a contraction or si of sati

plus upatana which means application which makes more sense to me. So I agree that it's probably applications of mindfulness the four applications of mindfulness not the four foundations of mindfulness. But getting back to this question first of all I've said that this doesn't match with what the study patana sutta says. Um I don't recall saying exactly that. I was saying that some um some ajons like meditation masters or instructors in especially the Thai forest tradition will and they kind of downplay sadhana to the extent that like anisero calls sadhana the frames of reference and in one of his books he

says that mindfulness is just remembering the object of meditation. And I mean it's kind of downplaying the whole idea of mindfulness in my opinion. So let's see even like in the study baton suta where it's talking about mindfulness of breathing that the way you do mindfulness of breathing as a mindfulness practice is not the same as doing mindfulness of breathing as a samata practice. Like in nari patanosut like when he breathes long he knows that he breathes long. When he breathes in short, he knows that he breathes in short. You know, when you breathe in deep, you know it's deep. When you breathe in shallow, you know it's

shallow. It's like you are being mindful of the qualities of it and not just keeping your mind like locked onto some object

that the mindfulness in that practice is whatever is arising, you're aware of it and and you're aware of like the qualities of it. And if your mind wanders away, you're aware of it wandering away. You don't just immediately bring it back to the subject so much as first you're mindful of the wandering and then you gently bring it back to the subject. So like they say in terraada you can do mindfulness of breathing as a samata practice or you

can do mindfulness of breathing as more
of a mindfulness practice or like
weasana practice and it's not exactly
the same ultimately like fourth Janna is
purity of mindfulness and purity of
samata. So there is that they converge
but still like the the more elementary
practices may be considerably different.
And it is weird to me that mindfulness
is I mean sadi the word sadi literally
means something like memory recollection
and it's weird because if you're
practicing mindfulness you don't have
memory you like you are in the present
moment you know you're not your mind
isn't projecting into the future or
projecting into the past unless you're

mindfully observing it project.

So it's like how did it come how did
memory come to be synonymous with just
being right here be here now in the
present moment

and sometimes it can be a recollection
if you're mindfulness of you know the
qualities of the Buddha or something
then you're not necessarily being right
here in the present moment because the
Buddha isn't right here in the present
moment supposedly

but the weirder thing to me is that in
Roman Catholicism ism in like the
contemplative

um orders of Roman Catholicism. It's the

same thing. What they're calling what
what we would call mindfulness where you
are right here right in the present
moment being as fully aware of what is
right here right now as you can.

They call it recollection which again
means memory. And then like St. John of
the cross when he's describing it he
says when you're practicing recollection
your memory is abolished

so how it is that these two different
systems came up with the same
counterintuitive

this word for describing being right here
right now in the present moment as fully
and as fully aware as you can.

So I mean this this second description

of Vazu Bandu, what is recollection? The avoidance of inattentiveness toward a familiar object. Well, yeah, that makes sense. Especially like if you're being mindful of the the breeze on your skin, your your clothing rubbing against you, you're like blinking, breathing, swallowing your own slobber. Those are like let's see familiar objects that we are usually inattentive to. Usually we are completely unmindful of our own blinking or of our own swallowing of slobber or of our own breathing.

So I mean that kind of emphasis of attentiveness towards a familiar object.

I mean that's be here now.

So let's see here.

This is kind of a a a strange I mean like the first the first definition he gives is is really kind of hard to follow.

All mental recollection when either concentrated or non-concentrated is the conceptualizing activity consisting of recollecting.

Yeah. I mean that's not particularly informative to me.

But when he says that mindfulness or recollection is the avoidance of inattentiveness towards a familiar object. Yeah, that's that makes perfect sense. So like a a familiar object

reaching for a doornob. Well, if you're doing it mindfully, you're aware of the the urge to start reaching for the doororknob and then like the the muscular contractions and like the the oiliness in your elbow joint, this sort of thing as you're reaching. Maybe even like the movement of air against your skin as you are reaching the coolness and hardness of the door knob when you've reached it. All that kind of stuff. That's mindfulness is the avoidance of inattentiveness towards a familiar object or a whole bunch of familiar objects.

So let's see. I mean that's not the only

definition of mindfulness because you've got other kinds of mindfulness or recollections. Even the 32 parts of the body is considered a recollection.

Well, that is kind of the emphasis on mindfulness as a term that's used in Buddhism like Burmese Buddhism and which has spilled over into the vipassana movement in the west which is largely based on Burmese Buddhism and it wasn't some kind of western innovation that Mingun Jetawan set in Burma probably early 20th century just revived an interest in the Satipatthana Sutta or Maha Assad Patanos Sutta and two of his disciples at least temporarily were Mahasi and Tappu

and I don't think the British had much to do with it unless maybe just the British Empire colonizing Burma helped through diffusion or osmosis or something a little bit more critical thinking a little more independent thought.

So yeah, I really have no problem with I mean mindfulness has more than one definition, but certainly one definition of mindfulness is right here where it says the avoidance of inattentiveness toward a familiar object, which includes every motion that you make every time you blink your eyes or swallow your own slobber.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question, which all of a sudden this is the last question. Boom.

always takes me by surprise.

Master Poe says, "What was your favorite Woody Allen movie?" And this one should be not too difficult to predict.

Love and Death. Because Love and Death is like a satire or a parody of 19th century Russian novels. And I went through a long phase of reading 19th century Russian novels. I mean people that know me should know that I have a very high regard for Dostki for example and Toltoy. I like Dostki better than Toltoy. Like Gaul Czechov these guys. I mean 19th century Russia. I mean the

great some of the greatest novelists
in the world have been 19th century
Russians.

And so the Woody Allen movie, Love and
Death, is like a spoof on 19th century
Russian novels. So I mean, it was right
up my alley. I could get a lot of the
jokes that most people wouldn't get
because I mean, he's making fun of 19th
century Russian novels.

So I mean, if you're into Dosty or or
Toltoy or whatever, yeah, love and death
is the way to go.

This was back when Woody Allen was still
kind of in his slapstick stage. He got
into like more sophisticated like

comedies of errors, you know, like Annie Hall and then Hannah and her sisters and all that that I didn't appreciate nearly as much as like his his like offthe-wall just kind of almost Monty Pythonesque kind of humor earlier on. Sleeper is another good one.

I mean more people Sleeper is more accessible to people than Love and Death would be. And in order to really appreciate Love and Death, you have to be familiar with 19th century Russian novels, but Sleeper is good.

Sleeper would be my second favorite Woody Allen movie. And that's it. We done. We done.

So, I can uh continue with my Saturday evening. Now, not that I I in any way resent this. I do enjoy doing these Q&As's, so no worries there.

And uh like I always should say at the beginning, I never do except for once.

If you have any questions you think I can answer, especially with regard to early Buddhism or Terravada Buddhism or you know kind of diffusing out from that to some degree, Western philosophy, Woody Allen movies, especially the older ones,

rock and roll, politics to some degree.

I mean, I'm not an authority on these things, but I do have like kind of

educated opinion on these things. And I know it's what I like.

And like and subscribe if you haven't done so already. And be happy. And now I'm going to stop recording.

Okay then I do believe we are recording.

Hail audience.

Welcome to question and answer number
158.

I am your host Ponyo Bosa and one of the
co-hosts just walked away as you can see
back there. This is my beverage
and 158 clearly is not a prime number.

So we don't even have to go there.

Ah,

so we've got the standard middle path of
questions today about this the usual
like 35 or so. So I guess we should just
probably just dive right into this and
start answering questions. So the first
question is from Gnostic Rucker

and Gnostic Rucker says, "I know you like Hume a lot. So the following is hypothetical speculation about similarities and differences in his philosophy and Buddhist philosophy. Given that David Hume was skeptical about a permanent fixed unchanging self, one can assume he'd have appreciated the Buddha's teaching on anatta. But given that Hume also had a skeptical view of the absolute certainty of our understanding of cause and effect in the phenomenal sphere, what do you think he'd have made of Pratītyasamutpāda?

I'm paraphrasing a quote from professor AJ Ayer. Let's go with Ayer.

AJ Ayer's analysis of Hume which states
quote cause and effect unquote considers
Hume's view that the relation of cause
and effect supplies the basis for our
factual beliefs. Observation leads us to
believe in connections between physical
objects and events. The power and force
of these connections are not observable.
Only the changes in spacio tempmporal
relations.

Repeated observations create a habit of
the mind but are insufficient to prove a
general relationship as that would
require observing every instance. This
inductive process of forming
expectations is merely sufficient to

create the generalization that the future will resemble the past. quote again.

Okay. Yeah. David Hume, he was like a radical skeptic and even I think he's like the first philosopher that it occurred to to actually question our certainty of cause and effect. So David Hume says we never really see causation. We just see something followed by something else and just it's like this repeating pattern. And so we say something causes that something else.

You know, you see the axe coming down on the piece of wood. You don't actually see any causative force.

You just see the axe coming down on the piece of wood and the piece of wood splits into two. In fact, Hume even takes that even to our own mental processes.

how you know we have the urge to move our arm and then our arm moves. Still we don't see the causation. We just see the urge and then the moving arm. So he actually using radical skepticism casts doubt on our certainty of cause and effect. It's just an inference.

He doesn't say that cause and effect doesn't really exist. He's just saying that we can't know that. We just have to infer it.

So with regard to Buddhism and dependent core rising,

first of all, dependent core rising

isn't necessarily based on

like physical cause and effect or just

like let's go to Schopenhau.

Schopenhau's first philosophical work of

note, his doctoral thesis when he was at

the university was the four-fold root of

sufficient reason. And reason here it

doesn't mean logic. It just means the

reason for something to happen and like

cause and effect was only one of these

four causes. One was mathematical I

think one was like geometrical. Like for

example, you've got a triangle with

three equal sides necessarily. It's also

going to have three equal angles. You know, it's not any kind of causation of, you know, the the sides causing the angles to be a certain way. It's just like this logical or rational or just it's just the way it is. If if you got a triangle that has three equal sides, it's also going to have three equal angles and vice versa. And then I think the fourth one was like psychological that a person with a certain character is going to react to the same like stimuli in the same way until his character changes.

So

I mean even if we accept Hume's

skepticism with regard to our certainty
of cause and effect still when you're I
mean that's not the only kind of
causation

that that is possible with regard to
dependent core rising. In fact, my
interpretation of dependent core rising
is it's not this temporal sequence of
causes and effects, which is like the
orthodox explanation of it in terraota.
It's more of a kind of a rational thing.
You know, if you've got, you know, if
this exists, then that exists. If this
arises, then that arises. It's not like
Nana Vera famous eccentric
existentialist English monk from the
1950s and 60s said dependent rising

doesn't say this ceasing that arises it means this arising that arises so for Nyanova and a lot of other Buddhists it's all simultaneous which wouldn't be like this temporal cause and effect anyway so there are serious terravada Buddhists who don't even interpret dependent core rising to mean like this temporal sequence of causes and effects. It's like like the fire triangle like I was talking about in the previous Q&A. You've got these three necessary circumstances for fire. Fire is going to be there. It's not like well I guess in that case you could have like a cause, but it's it's it's really

those three those three prerequisites if they're there fire is there. It's you could even argue whether or not those three those three conditions cause the fire. It's just those three conditions together at the same time are the fire. But it's more of a conditional kind of cause and effect in dependent core rising in my opinion. It's just if you assume that this exists then you also have to assume that that exists. A simple example would be if you assume that you know some object exists. You also have to assume that there is like a ground behind that. You got figure and ground. You know you've got this that has like an outline. You know it has

limits has boundaries. And so there has to be something else even if it's just empty space around that. So that that object being singled out causes the background of it.

And it's not that you know this this can of energy drink is causing everything else around it. But nevertheless, this energy drink in my hand causes there to be like this energy drinkshaped space that that isn't the energy drink. if that makes any sense.

But again, Hume wasn't insisting that there is no cause and effect. He was just putting into question our certainty of it. That we don't really experience

cause and effect. We just infer it. And since the Buddha, when he's talking in words, is having to use conventional truth anyway, then I don't really see that there's necessarily a conflict between the Buddha and David Hume on this point.

So,

I'm not sure how well I answered the question. Let's see what Okay, here's the actual question with the question mark at the end. What do you think Hume would have made of Dependent Core Rising? And I don't know. I mean, Hume was anti-Christian. He was uh he was one of the the main characters, one of the most important characters in what is

called the Enlightenment or the Scottish Enlightenment, which is kind of an ironic name because they weren't really going for actual spiritual enlightenment. They were trying to free Western civilization from superstition, which mainly meant Christianity, and replace it with philosophy, which mainly meant science and like objectivity and empiricism and so forth. And I noticed that I'm lagging. And I'm not exactly sure why that is, but I'm sure we'll we'll survive somehow.

[Music]

So Hume was he didn't like Christianity,
but what that would have implied with
regard to his attitude to other
religions like Buddhism,
I don't know.

It may be that he would have preferred
Buddhism to Christianity like many
philosophers have,
but then again, I mean, he lived in 18th
century Scotland, so it's hard to say
what his opinion on Buddhism and
Buddhist philosophy would be.

So,

I think I'm just going to move on to the
next question.

And I hope that this lag will resolve

itself.

Make sure that at least the microphone is working.

Yeah, it is.

Okay.

So, at least

I'm still making noises.

So, next question.

See here. Okay. Next question from Nostic Rocker is as follows. Probably it's far too general a question to ask, but in your experience from all the westerners you met in temples over the years, what are the main motivating factors for Westerners when they choose to become monastics?

And I don't know if you've noticed or not, but it's really hot here in South Carolina today. Very muggy, and I'm a little bit persspiry. And so I'm going to be chugging this this beverage throughout the course of the beginning parts of this Q&A until I've chugged it all and it's gone.

Probably should have chugged one whole before I even started.

So getting back to the question though, let's see. What are the main motivating factors for Westerners when they choose to become monastics? Well, I think there's like a generational change that has occurred and is occurring. Like my generation and the generation before

me, like the hippie generation, the boomers.

I'm kind of at the the cusp between boomers and Gen X.

But like my generation and the monks before me, at least half, it seems like started off with psychedelics. you know, LSD, mushrooms, masculine, that sort of thing. And we experienced heightened levels of consciousness, altered states of consciousness that really caused us to have like a higher perspective with regard to the supposed reality of this world we're living in.

So then we started like getting interested in meditation techniques and

other ways of

um like attaining the same like

heightened consciousness without having
to take the chemicals.

Um, also it was just kind of in fashion
in earlier decades

like Rahm Doss, you know, Rahm Doss is
really the one who started me on a
spiritual path and he was like a guru to
the hippies.

So there's kind of that too. Um, also I
assume there's a lot of like cynicism
with regard to western civilization in
general where if I had been raised in a
different culture that was maybe more
spiritually oriented, I might not have
been inspired to become a monk. But

western civilization is so materialistic and so spiritually bankrupt that it wasn't really fulfilling this need that I had. And so I had to look elsewhere. You know, when I was a teenager, I've told the story before, you know, it's like when you're a kid, you just assume that adults know what's what. By the time I reached 16, it became painfully obvious that adults really don't know what's what, that they were at least as messed up as I was. So, I just went into open rebellion, got into lots of trouble. And then finally, I saw this youth counselor who gave me Rahm Doss books to read. And I mean it was clearly

superior

um sort of renunciation of the mainstream anyway was clearly superior to either just he who dies with the most toys wins or just constant rebellion and getting into trouble. So I assume there are quite a few like that. Um, with regard to later generations though, I think there's an increasing number of people who are just born into Buddhism in the west. You know, they've got maybe boomer or Gen X parents who were already interested in Buddhism and so the kids are learning an interest in Buddhism from their own parents. So, there's there's more of that, I suppose. But with regard to the younger

generations of monks, I'm really not sure what the main reasons for them to become monks are. I mean, my generation and the generation before me, I had a pretty good idea, but I haven't really been talking to young monks lately, and I'm not as sure. Although, I do think that it's just dama is just entering the mainstream more and more. So a lot of them are just being exposed to these ideas and accepting them as good ideas without having to go through the rebellion and the the drug use and all that.

So that's my answer to that question.

I'm just going to move on to Gnostic

Rocker's third question. And I do hope that the sound will catch up to the the video.

We're almost there. We were like maybe less or was less than a second lag and then it went back to lagging again.

So third question. When you returned to America and wandered from city to city in the robes of an ancient aesthetic from India, I'm sure American people reacted to the attire in many different ways.

But were you ever pleasantly surprised by any overtly kind reactions that showed a generosity of the human spirit or revealed a benign side of humanity? Well, that is like one of the main

advantages of living in like a
Democratun area is that you can walk
down the street barefoot with a toga.
And some people will actually
react positively even though they're not
Buddhist or anything just because you're
you're like nonconformist.
You know, you're questioning authority
or something. And it's just they see it
as inclusive
and enlightened and all this to be nice
to someone like that. And so, um, some
place like Bellingham, Washington, you
just get lots of smiles, you know, just
lots of friendly hellos walking down the
street, that sort of thing. The people

that disapprove of you, and of course they're there. You You might get a dirty look, just a silent scowl, but they're not going to go out of their way to insult you, except for just a few cases. I mean, I I probably received more like open contempt in dharma halls in the west than out on the city streets or in like a grocery store or something, which was really striking to me.

You know, it's like the average western Buddhist like 15 years ago in the West, you're more likely to find people who really don't like monks than you're going to find people who really don't like monks just at random walking down a city street.

So, that was kind of ironic to me.

Definitely counterintuitive.

But I mean there have been times when you know somebody would just come over and offer me something you know like um I was waiting for a friend outside a grocery store and somebody came up to me and just said he you know he asked about what I was doing and I told him and he was he just he was inspired to to go into the store and buy me like a it was like a a pint of apple juice or something and came out and offered it to me. And I mean, every every once in a while you meet somebody like that who really reacts positively. You know, it's

just like there's this latent hunger for some sort of spiritual stimuli that they're just not getting. So that when they see a monk, you know, sort of like, you know, the Buddha's fourth sign that finally inspired him to renounce the world was seeing a monk. So it does have like a positive effect on some people. I mean, especially like Thai immigrants, you know, there there was like these two ladies standing in front of a grocery store. I was just walking down the sidewalk in front of the store and up ahead I see like these two ladies just excitedly standing there holding this bag of groceries. They just they they saw me coming or something. They just

ran in, bought some stuff, and ran back out and offered it to me. And they were just all excited. They said they hadn't had a chance to offer anything to monks since they came to America.

So, I mean, there's that kind of thing. But I think the one thing that um this brought to mind

um when I read this question

um would be I was standing in some store and there was this very new age young woman. I had I had actually seen her before and when she saw me in the store, she immediately kicked off her sandals and approached me barefoot, you know, you know, like like this. And I mean,

that was like something that you'd see in Asia. And and she wasn't even Buddhist. I mean, she was new age. But my first my first year in America when I was trying to live as kind of a freerange Buddhist monk in America, at least half my supporters were new age people.

So,

u I mean really I do not like conversing much with new age people because they they they're able to believe anything.

Very soft-headed people. They might have really good heart, but heart is really um their strong point, I guess. You know, it's it's new age is not really a head oriented system.

So, let's see here.

I guess I guess I answered that question. But there is a lot of goodness in people that does get overlooked, I think.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from and I am kind of have this sinking suspicion that this entire video is going to be lagging just between the the video and the audio. And I don't know what causes that. I mean, everything's hooked up the way it's supposed to be. Pretty sure. check the connections on everything. Yeah.

Well, we'll just have to see how it goes. Usually, it catches up after a while.

So, this next question is from and says, "Since we're all potentially in the proverbial block of marble, where does the karma momentum begin or come from?"

Well, this is kind of a a weird trick question. I mean, since everything is already in the block of marble, you're going to have statues that are moving in that block of marble. So, it's the the karma momentum is just what is necessary for a moving statue to exist, at least in our version of reality, our version of samsara.

So in order for anything to exist for more than a trillionth of a second, there has to be some sort of continuity. And in our case, that continuity is like the momentum of our mental states, the momentum of our karma, the momentum of the perceptions that are differentiating imaginary statues from this uncarved block of stone.

So, I guess one way of of saying it or explaining it is in order for there to be a moving statue existing in this block of marble that it's going to have to be there's going to have to be something connecting one moment with the next, one position

with the next. And that connecting principle, at least in our version of reality, is karma.

And I don't know how well I explain that, but when you're dealing with this kind of stuff, it's really difficult to put answers into words. And there are some people who are just head oriented, unlike new age people who just insist upon having rational explanations for things. And I mean, in a way, it's it's just an exercise in futility because you're never going to understand reality by thinking about it.

You can understand certain aspects of virtual reality by thinking about it.

But the highest truth

the words I mean the the name that can be named is not the eternal name.

So let's see here.

Where does the karma momentum begin or come from? Well, I mean, it comes from just the the block of marble and it doesn't really have a beginning or an ending, I suppose, other than just with regard to the illusion because ultimately it is illusory.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on next question. This is from Stfan and Stfan says, "I remember you mentioned you were working on creating a self-sustaining aquarium system.

I'm curious, have you man have you

managed to get it running successfully
and how do you see its development going
forward?

Okay. Well,

I've decided that I should feed my fish.
I was originally going to have that
aquarium back there be completely self-
sustaining in accordance with my my guru
father fish who says you don't I mean if
you've got a well setup aquarium you
should not have to feed your fish but
I've got too much biomass of fish in
there too many fish for them to exist
just on what is naturally arising in the
aquarium so I mean I could stop feeding
that aquarium I stop putting any kind of
food into that aquarium, just let it go,

and

[Music]

um it it wouldn't just completely die.

There would still be fish in there.

There'd probably be a die off of fish

down to like the carrying capacity. So,

there'd be some cherry barbs in there,

some algae eaters because you don't feed

the algae eaters anyway. And I'm not

exactly sure what else,

but probably at least half the fish in

there would die if I stopped feeding

them. On the other hand, I've got

another aquarium over over that way, and

I can't really see what I'm doing

because of the lag, but I've got this

10-gon aquarium that I was going to use as a breeding tank for for the gouramis, and then I put shrimps in there. It was just an invertebrate tank. And I probably should do uh another aquarium video for the updates on this, but at present I've got three fish in there. Three two sparkling gouramis and and a female dwarf gourami. They're there only three fish in that aquarium. And probably that 10-gon tank, I could just completely stop feeding it and all three fish would survive. That they'd be probably be fine. There would be probably a die off of snails and shrimps because those are like the two main kinds of of creatures in that 10gon tank

is ram's horn snails and neocaradina shrimp. And so probably there'd be a die off of those down to the carrying capacity of of the system.

But the the snails and the shrimp mainly can survive on just like the slippery stuff that grows in water on surfaces. the the biofilm, which is mainly like bacteria and that sort of thing, microbes.

So,

yeah, I mean, I could do it, but at present, I like to have more fish and more shrimps, so I'm feeding them, but it is relatively well balanced. I really don't have to um like do water changes

all that much. Sometimes I do just for the heck of it just to make sure, but really, it's it's a well balanced system that's going on. like back there. It looks pretty jungly right now.

It took

one the one female dwarf gourami that is now in the 10gon tank I had back there and just taking that one female fish out of the out of that aquarium and putting it in a different different aquarium noticeably has changed the ecological balance of that 32gallon tank back there. For one thing, there's lots of duckweed growing in there now and lots of hair, green hair algae that just wasn't there when the female dwarf

Gourami was in there just foraging and getting most of her food just from from foraging and not eating the food that I was putting into the tank.

But I guess all this is material for an aquarium video. So,

um, yeah, I guess the the short answer, which it's now too late for, is that I could stop feeding both of my aquariums, and they would kind of have like a die off, like a population crash of of fish and like shrimps and snails down till you had just a few of them that were able to survive off the plants and the the microbes and so forth. that that are just living naturally in the tanks. But

I don't want to do that. I don't want to cause a population crash. So, I continue to put food into their tanks, you know, small amounts, maybe five times a week, and then just take out the extra plant stuff like like duckweed and so forth.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Maxim.

And Maxim says, "Did you meet your wife or at least know of her while still in robes?" Yeah, I knew her for years before I stopped being a monk.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from RFS.

And RFS says, "In your experience, would most monks try harder during the reigns retreat?" Well, I think it is a

tradition in Theravada Buddhism that during the rains retreat, the three months of the rains retreat, monks are supposed to stay in one place and do like more serious intensive practice.

So, in Burma, yeah, there'd be at least, you know, five or 10% increase in serious practice during the three months of the rains retreat. I mean, for me, it didn't really have much of an effect. you know, I was just doing what I do, you know, day after day regardless of what month it was or anything like that. But yeah, I do think that most monks do try at least a little bit harder during the rains retreat.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Master Poe. Master Po says, "If I ever wrote an autobiography, I'd probably title it learning to laugh mostly at myself as the proverbial block of marble calls me back."

If you, Ponyobasa, decided to write an autobiography, what title do you give it? Well, I haven't really given much thought to it since I was a monk. When I was a monk, I was thinking if I wrote an autobiography, I'd call it change and separation. And then there'd be like a a colon and then some subtitle. I guess it'd be called a subtitle, wouldn't it?

Subtitle,

but I don't know what the subtitle would be. But I was thinking as the main title of my autobiography back when I was a monk would be change and separation.

Going from the the Buddhist statement in the text that with regard to all things near and dear to us, there is change and separation.

So, my autobiography would just be like a a chronicle of the changes and separations of my life

as I just move through one situation to another.

But what I would call it now, if I wrote it now, it might have a different title

and I haven't really given it much thought. So, I mean, I'm not planning on sitting down and writing any anytime soon. I'd have to be retired. I'd have to be a member of the leisure class again before I could sit down and write much of anything at this point.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from GameFap and GameFap says, "How common are immoral monks? Have you come across them often?"

I just how the Chinese head monk of the kung fu has 50 or so mistresses and is a billionaire and is now under official investigation.

This seems to be a slap in the face of

what Buddhism stands for. I mean, what
what would anybody do with 50
mistresses?

I I don't I mean that seems rather
excessive

but I mean how common are immoral
amongst it? Me it would depend on your
definition of immoral.

I mean anyone who isn't fully
enlightened is going to have at least a
little bit of immorality. I mean from
the Buddhist point of view it doesn't
take much to be immoral. You know to get
angry is immoral for example.

To get lonely is immoral. I mean, for
that matter, just being unhappy is

pretty much immoral from a Buddhist point of view. And then there's the rules. And most monks, even serious, conscientious monks, will break a rule every now and then, even if it's just by accident.

So,

how common are immoral monks? I mean, you you'd I'd have to know what you mean by immoral.

just uh

I mean having 50 or so mistresses, they wouldn't even be monks anymore. I mean, you just have one mistress. I mean, if you have sex, then you're just not a monk anymore. You're automatically excommunicated. You are parajika.

So,

yeah. I mean, it's just a hard question to answer because I don't know where Gamefact would draw the line between moral and immoral.

I mean telling lies is immoral. Just going with like the five precepts but I mean a monk who makes confession almost every monk who's making confession is telling a lie.

Most confessions are like bogus confessions

like you know the monks says you know I I committed you know so and so offenses of various types and then the person that you're making

confession to says do you see them and then and then the monk says yes I see them but generally you don't see them at least like in Thailand the the official way the traditional way of making confession is you just confess to every single category of offense whether you've broken any rules or not which I mean when they say do you see them and you say yes I see them well obviously that's not true because you're confessing offenses that you probably didn't even commit like pyania offenses nobody breaks pyania rules anymore there's only four of them and they're very obscure but in Thailand Thai monks make confession they they admit they

confess to breaking pyania rules. And then they're asked, "Do you see them? Do you see your offenses? Yes, I see them." But really, they don't. And then you continue, you say, the other monk says, "Well, in future, you should restrain yourself." And then in Burma at least, the monk says, "Yes, sir. Very good, sir. I will restrain myself." When really, they're just going to go out and keep breaking the same rule. It's like if they're handling money, they're still breaking the rule because they haven't gotten rid of it.

So, I mean, if you consider that sort of like essentially saying what isn't true

deliberately,

I mean, in a way, it maybe it would pass as not lying simply because you're not really trying to deceive anybody because the monk you're making confession to probably does exactly the same thing. He knows the score,

but still just like idol chatter, that kind of thing. I mean, that's immoral. That's in violation of the the five precepts.

So, I mean, how common are immoral monks? They're extremely common, but so long as you have like a very stringent idea of Buddhist morality. But when you get to like monks that are part of Jica that are not even real monks anymore,

they're just pretending to be monks, you know, they're still wearing monks robes even though they've, you know, done something that got them excommunicated.

Then

uh you know, there there's still I mean I hope it's less than 1%.

But still it's it's not really a large amount like monks that are like seducing women and so forth. I've heard more about that sort of thing in Thailand than in Burma. Partly because the Thai are more they're a more sensual kind of people than Bur the Burmese are just very Spartan, very stoic, you know, they they really even the lay

people don't have an extremely high regard for sensual pleasure. It seems like

so

I mean if you consider monks that handle money to be immoral it's against the rules definitely you know there's in the official story of the second council when one of the main issues debated it the second great council was whether monks should be allowed to handle money and in the story there's the monk who was one of the people that was insisting that monks shouldn't handle money and he he's getting into trouble because the other monks are trying to punish him because they want

to handle money and all this. He he actually quotes some saying of the Buddha that I don't know if it's even in the Depitica right now other than this one, you know, canonical quote of what he was saying. He was saying that monks who handle money are, you know, they're like completely delusional. They're just bound with the chains of their own greed. They're no better than animals, etc. Well, I mean, you could call that immoral. I guess if they're like wallowing in darkness and bound by the chains of their own greed and no better than animals. I mean, is that immoral? If so, all monks who handle money, which

is most of them, would be immoral.

So, GameFap really needs to uh be more precise in his questioning with regard to immoral monks, like where do you draw the line?

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "I realize that Buddhism prescribes emotional detachment, but I'm wondering to what extent this may be unhealthy or even inhuman. After all, isn't experiencing emotional pain in the depth that it engenders part of what makes us human and which sets us apart from AI, androids, and such? Or what differentiates a normal person from a psychopath?"

Well,

whether

practicing intensive dharma is unhealthy or not is debatable. I mean, in some ways it is unhealthy. Like you're I mean, you're just living alone out in a forest being bitten by parasites and so forth, just enduring hunger and thirst and heat and cold and sickness and all that. That could be considered unhealthy.

Um but then again spiritually it's healthy.

So it might be physically when to some degree even like psychologically unhealthy at lower levels like the

emotional level or something but
spiritually it's more healthy than
wallowing in delusion like most people
are doing. But when you get to inhuman,
then certainly if you're going to be
practicing dhamma at the highest level,
you're going to be inhuman. At least
you're going to transcend your humanity
even if you don't abandon it altogether.
That being human and just kind of
wallowing in samsara, then yeah, I mean,
if if part of being human is suffering,
for example, then yeah, you that's you
want to stop being human.

which is kind of a a difficult issue for
a lot of people who like being human or
have respect for humanity.

But I mean that's just the ancient Indian approach to live in this world is not so good. So you want to get out and in order to get out of samsara you have to get out of humanity.

So,

let's see. I mean, a monk practicing intensive dharma is not going to be the same as an android, and he's certainly not going to be a psychopath. Or if he is a psychopath, he's going to be a benevolent psychopath. You know, not all sociopaths are evil.

You know, there are some sociopaths like just really successful worldly people.

I've read that there's a relatively high

percentage of like sociopaths who are surgeons, a lot of a relatively large number of sociopaths that are very successful in business, that kind of thing. And they're not necessarily going to be, you know, killing and torturing and all this kind of stuff.

But I think a sociopath is someone who really has no empathy. And like a Buddhist, like a monk who's practicing at a high level, he's certainly going to have empathy.

And I don't think an android would have empathy either. I mean, you're just kind of transcending your own boundaries so that you're kind of getting into a more of a group mind kind of a situation so

that if you hurt someone, you can feel
that you're hurting yourself
in a sense.

So, let's see here.

Did I answer the question?

Let's see. After all, isn't experiencing
emotional pain and the depth that it
engenders part of what makes us human?

Yeah, but who says being human is all
that great? I mean, that's certainly
from a Buddhist point of view, being
human really isn't all that great. To
exist in samsara is suffering. And if
you want to stop that,
then you're going to have to stop being
a human being.

So, I'm just going to move on to Romeo's next question.

which is as follows. I'm also wondering to what extent should the practice of mindfulness bleed into the experiencing of emotions that come up in everyday life. Take for example the emotion of sadness or sorrow when you as a Buddhist hear a nostalgic song that triggers a fond sentimental memory or watch a tearjerker movie with your sweetheart or just feel deep sadness for whatever reason.

Do you viscerally let yourself have a deep cry

or do you note sadness arising and let it go in a detached way

as you would during a mindfulness meditation?

Well, I mean, in a way that's kind of a false dichotomy. There's more of a spectrum involved.

Um, but it reminds me of something that Paul O said once. It's in one of his books. He said essentially I mean he's he's referring to the the mind body system.

So he says if the system wants to cry let it cry. It is not you. There is no need to get involved. If the system wants to laugh let it laugh. And so I mean you can still go through all the motions of being a human while at the

same time not really being primarily identified at that level. You could be I mean you could still be observing it while it's still going on.

So

what's the actual question here? Do I viscerally let myself have a deep cry?

No, I haven't I haven't really wept in a long time. I think the last time I really just cried was the day I I got rid of my dog Genghis

cuz we were moving to a different house and he just it just wasn't going to work out there.

So that's been a couple years I think.

Let's see. Or do I note sadness arising and let it go? Um

yeah. I mean, just because you're being mindful of it doesn't mean that it stops. And just kind of letting it go doesn't mean that it stops. I mean I mean once once you've got some momentum going, you know, you got like the the adrenaline or whatever it is going through your system, then you know it's your body is just going to go with it. You know, your body mind system is just going to go with that. And so you can just kind of watch while it's happening. You know there's a one aspect of your mind that's a dispassionate observer while this other part of you is yelling or crying or whatever it is.

So in a way it's kind of a it's a it's a spectrum you know it's not just robotic aurahant or you know person just completely wallowing in samsara. There is a spectrum.

So,

not that I'm saying an arroant would not really be robotic.

Yeah. I mean, it's just kind of built into me that like yesterday at work, I was having a bad day at work is just just this hectic cluster [__] going on, which is often the case. And I was just driving my forklift to go find something. And I'm just kind of just letting myself breathe and calming down. I'm away from the cluster [__] of this

trailer I'm trying to load. Just driving off, you know, to some other place to get get some freight.

And I'm just kind of kind of watching, you know, the state that my body was in, the state that my mind was in, just kind of observing it. And I mean that's really the best you can do sometimes, especially if it's not immediate. You know, it's not you're catching it as soon as it arises. It's like already been going on for, you know, x number of minutes. And then, you know, you're kind of like, all right, let's just let's just get back to the center here. Let's try and ground oursel here now. And then

you just start noticing, you know, this human unhappiness or agitation, aggravation, that kind of thing. I mean, it's it's so what if it makes you human? I mean, it's it's it's not a good situation.

So, I mean, you're better off rising above it. You're better off just detaching from it and observing it. And also, just by detaching from it and observing it, then it helps it to subside.

I mean, just because you're having a bad day doesn't mean you should wallow in a bad day because you're a member of the species homo sapiens.

That's just silly.

So, I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Austin. And

Austin says, "How do you respond to a

Hindu saying atman is eternal and

absolute?" And we're still lagging.

We've been going at this for 47 minutes,

it seems. and it could be this entire

video is just going to be lagging. I'm

sorry about that. I don't know what to

do. I'm not going to just start over at

this point.

So, getting back to Austin's question

though, I mean, for the most part, if a

Hindu is saying is eternal and absolute,

in most cases, I wouldn't even bother to

respond. I mean, if I see something

like that, it's going to be on the internet anyway. I don't really hang out with Hindus all that much.

And even if I did hang out with a Hindu, I doubt that he's just going to look me right in the eye and say atman is eternal and absolute.

So

yeah, for the most part, I just wouldn't respond. But if I were required to respond to saying

to a Hindu saying atman is eternal and absolute, I'd probably have to get into you know like reifying the absolute and how really the absolute cannot be put into words and any kind of statement you'll make about it is going to be

invalid. Even you know the Hindus talk about near Brahman as the absolute which means essentially ultimate reality which has no discernable qualities. So you can't really make a positive statement about it. Even to call it nearona is already making some kind of assertion.

So

yeah, I guess we'd have to go down that that route. I guess you know, we'd have to first talk about how the absolute is beyond words, but because we're humans, we try to explain things in words. And so then you have to stray into like what is ultimately untrue or just invalid.

And and then it just it's a matter of

convenience whether you're going to say, you know, whether the absolute exists or doesn't exist, you know, whether it has this quality or that quality. And I've got a dog staring at me trying to get my attention down there.

And so I mean yeah I mean it'll eventually just get to the point of the the issue of reifying the absolute and uh try to convey to this Hindu this theoretical Hindu that not reifying the absolute is probably more valid of an approach to the absolute you know just apenatism being apenatic just not trying to explain it in words because words won't touch it

That approach is probably wiser than

making these assertions about how something is eternal and absolute and so forth.

But it probably wouldn't be worth the effort unless maybe I had some Hindu that was just really wanting to discuss this with me which thus far in my life has not happened.

And so I'm going to move on to Austin's next question

which is Buddhism holds to the idea of the impermanence of all things but is padicha samuupata the law of change a constant permanency well I mean that's just like

the Pythagorean theorem or $2 + 2$

equaling three or even just the number three or anything like that. You know, a triangle if it has three equal sides will also have three equal angles.

I mean, is that eternal? I mean, it only exists if someone's thinking about it.

And so, this person will think about it in this way and then maybe tomorrow another person will be, you know, in some other part of the world thinking about it in some other way. You know, it's it's not the same thing. It's just like

I don't know how to to exist is to be perceived as Barkley used to say sas perkipi and if nobody's perceiving it then

I mean it's just doesn't exist so it's
it's not really permanent and even so if
you got even if there's like somebody
thinking about all the time like the
number three you know in all likelihood
that there's always people you know 24/7
seven thinking of the number three
somewhere in this world.

So that doesn't mean that three is
eternal and that is it exists as some
universal or platonic ideal up in
heaven.

This just that you've got a particular
instance of somebody thinking about
three. You've got a different particular
instance of somebody thinking about like

a slightly different kind of three. and
and it's there's no really underlying
essence

that's unifying all that.

So the same applies to dependent core
rising picha samop or or whatever it is
some law of physics maybe
that

I mean it's like individual cases
that are all like conveniently
classified under this general category
of dependent coarising or whatever the
general category is going to be. And the
general category isn't permanent because
that's just a mental construction.

So yeah, I would not say that dependent
core rising or padopa

is a constant permanency.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Sedarta Lohachita.

And Sedar Lohachita says, "Do you know the Aristotilian hypothesis from the pure act or actis purist in Latin developed later by philosophic Catholicism?" Well, I'm not not real familiar with it. No. But then Sedartha lohita continues here with an explanation. I think if everything in the world arises and depends on causes and conditions, is there in your view something that is completely independent of these conditions? something that is

pure in the sense of having no
potentiality or change that for the
Christians the act is purest it's God or
the ultimate reality according to
Aristotle act is what that which is
fully real and is not in the process of
change or development well you could say
that like the absolute in Buddhism is
like that you could say nibbana is like
that especially or nirvana especially if
you're a Mahayana Buddhist or the one
mind. The Mahayana Buddhists have a
number of um synonyms for the absolute.
Um so yeah, I mean you could say that
you know Nirvana is eternal. I mean if
you're going to be putting it into words
it has no potentiality or change that

kind of thing. So I mean you could say that that Nirvana is just the absolute like the essence of all things. It's like the uncarved block of stone and Samsara is all the potential conditional virtual statues that exist in that uncarved block of stone. But I mean you're still wallowing in some sorrow talking in those terms because I mean it's just beyond that. It's beyond conception.

So, I mean, you could say that the absolute in Buddhism, assuming that you consent to there even being an absolute in Buddhism, that it would be like that,

just kind of pure and and just
unchanging and in a way kind of the
foundation
or ultimate cause of the world.

But still Buddhists wisely
had this tradition of not reifying the
absolute. So you just get to the cliff's
edge and you got to stop.

So

on this moving on to Sedart Loha's next
question

which is along the same vein here. Both
the aristotelian actus purists and the
unmoved mover concepts in Thomas

Aquinas's philosophy as well as Buddha's
Padiccha Samupata are profound and
coherent philosophical frameworks.

However, they rest on very different assumptions. The unmoved mover serves as the first cause of motion. While the actus purist describes God as pure actuality without potentiality from which our world emanates, ultimately neither framework can conclusively prove itself as the absolute truth for everyone. Given this, how can we evaluate or reconcile these different worldviews? Well, I think the Actus purist is a wiser, more sophisticated theory than the unmoved mover serving as the first cause.

From a Buddhist point of view, there is no first cause.

It's just been like an eternal illusion
based on ignorance
which has no beginning. And the
ignorance itself isn't eternal because
it's a different ignorance from one
moment to the next.

So

I mean dependent core rising picha
samada I mean that's in a way it's diff
different because picha samata is not
the absolute you know that's just what
causes you know things in samsara to
occur
but it's all within the context of
illusion or delusion ignorance
so petita samapata doesn't apply to the
absolute it only applies to this worldly

phenomenon.

So,

see, how can we evaluate or reconcile these different world views? Well, I mean, you're probably better off not even bothering.

And it looks like we got still like a two or three second lag.

Damn.

This is This is what happens when you have technology.

I mean, back in the old days, you'd use like a a camcorder or something and it wouldn't lag. It was just that's the way it was. It worked. While I'm on that subject, 50 years ago,

onegon milk containers were better designed than they are now. Especially that thing on the top. You got to pull the thing off the top. You open a a new gallon of milk. There's like that little circular thing on top of the plastic hole.

Half the time it doesn't come off. You got to like cut it with a knife to get the thing off.

Worked better 50 years ago.

So, let's see here.

Yeah, I mean, how can we evaluate or reconcile these different world views?

Well, the unmoved mover, I don't think that's really a good theory. You you like the act as pure so long as you want

to reify the absolute, then that kind of works. And dependent core rising doesn't even apply to the absolute. That's just how some sorrow works. How the illusion works.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Phil Lees.

And Phil Leys says, "In this video, you implied that being too connected, he's referring to the previous Q&A video. In the previous Q&A video, you implied that being too connected to the internet destroys Dhamma practice. Well, kind of. What other such concrete advice do you have for becoming Dharma oriented as a lay westerner? Well, I mean, I didn't

specifically

um like single out the internet as

destroying Dharma practice. I was just

saying simplify

that the more complexity you've got in

your world, the more your mind is going

to be like

diffused to deal with all these

different complications. Whereas if you

reduce the number of complications, you

simplify your life, then you've got more

mental capital to deal with these things

in a more wholehearted or single-minded

manner.

So, it's not just the internet. I mean,

it's it's anything. I mean, you want to

like really practice dhamma as a lay

person, then you're better off just getting like a small apartment, not a lot of stuff in that apartment or a cabin out in the woods would be even better,

and just live a simple life.

that that would be the best way to do it or or a good way of doing it. Anyhow, I mean different people are different.

Different people have like different tolerances of complexity as you know whether it's going to just completely distract them so that they have no depth left.

But there is a reason why like the great philosophers are generally people that

don't have to work for a living. You know, they're like independently wealthy people. Just traditionally, you look at all the great philosophers, most of them, I mean, a few of them might be college professors, but most of them were just independently wealthy, did not have to work for a living, and so they could just sit around. And this is back before internet and all that. And so, you know, they're just sitting alone in in a room full of books and some paper and pens and that kind of thing.

But

yeah, I mean it's just too much complication is really going to just

diffuse out your mental energy. And if you want it like stronger and more centered, more focused, you've got to reduce the the distractions. And the best way of doing that is just live a very spartan simple existence.

So let's see here.

Yeah, I guess I guess that's I just pretty much repeated the same thing I said last time.

See?

Okay, I'm just going to move on to Phil Lee's second question. What is your own favorite episode of all the Q&As's I've done? Well, I mean, I've done this is the 158th

Q&A and they all just kind of blend together. I mean, I really don't have a memorable one. I mean, I kind of remember one. It was around Christmas time a few years ago when we had two whippets, kind of a cream colored one, plus the the spotted one we've got now that I just had it had like a good vibe to it with like Christmas tree behind me and stuff. It was just sort of a cozy sort of happy vibe going in that one.

But I mean, I've I can't really I I guess my favorite episode would be the one where I was most sort of channeling and that's I do that sometimes. It just sometimes I'm surprised by my own answers because I haven't really thought

out in advance what I'm going to say. So sometimes I'll just sort of get into this this mode where I'm I'm just kind of like almost channeling information. And so that kind of episode is generally my favorite, most satisfying to me, but there's been more than one and I can't really single out like one in particular.

And so I'm just going to move on to Phil Lee's third question. So what I'm going to do

and his third question is, if you had to, how would you convince someone who is considering becoming a Zen monk to choose terraada or EBT? I assume that

means early Buddhist texts. It's not like food stamps or something. Instead of if he does not care for isolating the original words of the Buddha, assume you had to do it solely on the basis of philosophy,

solely on the basis of philosophy. Well, this is sort of like that Hindu question above. Like if I had to convince a Hindu that the atman is not like absolute and eternal I mean as a general rule I wouldn't bother and in this case I mean if someone really has their heart set on becoming a Zen monk I don't think I even want to talk them out of it which is probably why I feel atheist starts with the words if you had to. So, let's say

somebody's pointing a gun at my my
sweetheart saying, "If you don't
persuade this person who wants to become
a Zen monk to become a terrau instead,
then she's going to get it." Well,
gosh. I mean

it's it's just kind of like being a nosy
Karen sort of person to try and talk a
person out of especially if I mean one
of the implications that philies throws
at me is that this person doesn't even
care about what the Buddha actually
taught.

So I mean if he doesn't even care what
the Buddha really taught he might be
better off as a Zen monk.

But again, you've got the the psycho pointing gun.

So ba pure solely on the b basis of philosophy. Well, I might start off just by pointing out that a lot of pure land stuff has infiltrated Zen Buddhism. So I might emphasize the silliness of pure land Buddhism just for starters. See if I strike any traction with that. So he maybe he doesn't care about pure land Buddhism either. He just he doesn't care if if what he's following was really taught by the historical Gorama Buddha or not. Then I mean I mean what do you say to this kind of person if if they're like considering themselves to be a Buddhist?

Um

really I mean just if you take the pure
land stuff out of Zen and some of the
some of the other mah Mahayana like
mythology stuff out of Zen, it's really
a pretty good system. You know, it's my
second choice after Terravada. I was
orig myself I originally was planning on
becoming a Zen monk up until I realized
that Terravada came closer to what the
Buddha originally taught. But this
hypothetical person doesn't give a [_]
if the Buddha originally taught it or
not.

So this is a tough question just solely
on the basis of philosophy that

I think Zen in some respects might even
be better

just because

well first of all really early Buddhism
didn't really have a philosophy. So I
mean it was sort of like the atikawaga
is just telling you stay away from
philosophy. You know monk does not the
the holy man does not go by
philosophies.

So but then Terravada just kind of
ignored this sort of thing or just
redefined it. So then they started
cooking up this elaborate Abidama
philosophy which is in my opinion
inferior to the iconoclasm of Zen.

So, I'm really in a bind here. How do I

talk somebody into preferring Terravada over Zen if they don't even care what the Buddha really taught?

So yeah, I might I might start my first attempt would be just to point out like a lot of pure land elements that have gotten into Zen that um like it might be for all I know that most Zen isn't like the what you read in the the texts, you know, like the the Blue Cliff Blue Cliff records or the Mumon Khan, you know, you've got these these enigmatic monks standing around wearing black probably talking in riddles and hitting each other with sticks. You know, it's re a real Zen monastery doesn't really

resemble that very much. At least not the real Zen monastery that I spent some time at before I decided on becoming a Terra monk.

So

yeah, I mean the basis of philosophy trying just trying to show the sort of the the logical flaws in the bodhicattva concept.

So that might be my second attempt after kind of feeling out the person on the pure land elements that have infiltrated Zen Buddhism. Then I might start talking about the bodhicattva concept. You know how it's clearly a bad idea to postpone your own enlightenment indefinitely until all other beings are saved because

all other beings aren't going to be saved. I mean, there's the samsara has been around for an infinite length of time already and there's still an infinite number of suffering beings, which is a pretty good indication that there's always going to be an infinite number of suffering beings in this illusion that isn't even real.

There's always going to be an infinite number of statues in the uncarved block of marble in a virtual state or conditional state.

So that might be my second angle just to see if I strike any traction with that.

And then if not, then I just have to

kind of feel him out. I'd have to question him about his own philosophical views and so forth and maybe just try and point out that like early Buddhism like the Atakawaga is superior to that. You know the name that can't be named is not the eternal name and Zen has a reputation for adopting that attitude. But the atakawaga which is early Buddhist text very early Buddhist text it's VBT not just EBT that I mean that's sort of like the the the the OG of that whole point of view. So the best of what is in Zen is already existent in terra or early poly texts. So I could use that angle also I suppose but that would not be a philosophical argument.

I just hope my sweetie doesn't get shot
because

this situation is is really a
problematic one.

I'm just going to move on to the next
question, I guess. Just let him be a Zen
monk. I mean, that's

I'll just try and rescue my woman. Just
wrestle the gun out of his hands or
something and just let the guy be a Zen
monk for all I care.

So the next question is from the
protoseud

and the protose pseudomonk has dispensed
with uh headings for his questions in
this particular episode but he's he has

still persisted in in essay questions.

So the protose pseudo monk's first

question is you say there are no

guarantees for enlightenment in

Buddhism. What about in that suta

sipatana I think doesn't it say that if

one practices diligently

one is guaranteed enlightenment and then

he has the quote here

let alone seven years one year 7 months

half a month if practiced in this way

for seven days one or two fruits may be

expected either arahantship here or now

here and now or the state of

non-returning

I interpret that as an exclusive or

enlightenment or enlightenment

because nibbana doesn't have a cause and there are no guarantees then why follow the strict austere terra path and not follow the tantric path instead I don't understand your heretical interpretation of attaining nibbana as through the grace of god it's a bit discouraging well becoming a non- returnturner in this suta in the sipatana suta also So the the mahasari patanos suta I mean being a non- returnturner is not the same as enlightenment. It's just like you're either going to become enlightened or you're going to become very close to enlightenment. So I mean it's it reminds me of what Jay

Krishna Murdy used to say where I mean you can open the window but you can't cause the breeze to blow in. You know sort of like becoming enlightened. I mean, the breeze blowing in would be like liberating insight or something or, you know, essentially enlightenment. But obviously, the breeze isn't going to blow in if the window isn't open. So, at least you have to make yourself receptive or prepare yourself for enlightenment even though you can't make yourself be enlightened because that's just more karma. Karma leads to more karma.

that enlightenment cannot be the cause of it cannot be the the effect of a

cause because then it would be
impermanent and conducive to suffering.

So it is a paradox and when you're
getting when you get to the absolute
it's always going to be paradoxical.

Infinity is I mean there's paradox is
always lurking in the shadows whenever
you start dealing with infinity.

So this question here, what why follow
the strict austere terraota path and not
follow the tandric path instead? Well,
the the strict austere terraata path may
be more conducive get to getting that
window open and making yourself like
receptive to the possibility of
enlightenment.

like the tantric path. You might just be making more and more bad karma for yourself, just muddying your own waters, so to speak, making complications for yourself by thinking that you're being tantric when really you're just wallowing in samsara.

Selfdeception, I am sure, is very common among tandric practitioners.

Whereas in the strict auster terra path, I mean, still you can delude yourself.

You can just have this egoistic pride in how shabby you are, that kind of thing.

I mean, there's always stumbling blocks and obstructions and so forth, mainly self-imposed,

but it seems like the strict austere

terraota path is just more straightforward in getting that window open than the taric path, for example. You can't make the wind blow in, but at least you could open the window. And it's not going to blow in unless that window is open.

So following Saudi Batana strictly for 7 days or more, I mean that opens the window,

but it cannot cause the wind to blow the wind to blow in or the breeze to blow in.

And it's just it's like this paradox.

Mahayana Buddhists play up the paradox um just because they like to play up the

idea that you can't really understand the highest truth by thinking about it. In Terraana they they sort of at first just ignored the problem. You know it's just more problems that are just going to cause more just wallowing in like cerebral samsara.

and then they uh just kind of backed away from it. Even though I don't think Terravada I mean it has to admit that you can't just force yourself to become enlightened. You cannot make yourself be enlightened.

But

um as a general rule in in traditional orthodox terraovvada they just kind of sidestep that that particular issue. it

still happens and so they couldn't really think of a good intellectual like plausible explanation for it. So they probably wisely just left it alone. And I guess I'll just move on. Next question here also from the protose monk who used to call himself cool whip. He says, "I find myself in a paradox. I am seeking conditions with the hope of seeking the unconditioned. Can you please advise how must one work with conditions i.e. the wise relationship to them while pursuing nibbana? How is the paradox resolved? We inhabit this conditional reality. Monkhoo with the support of lay people is the closest

exception to independence from conditions. The rest of us must navigate this messy conventional reality. I have about two years left till I can even begin the ordination process. Sona, novice, etc. Until then, careful consideration of conditions must be made. Seeing Nibana in this state seems impossible. For instance, if I saw the unconditioned now, my karma is such that I still couldn't escape my conditions unless I died. Mindfulness isn't enough to escape the paradox. Like imagine you became fully enlightened as a lay person with no monasteries nearby. Suddenly you would need money to buy a flight and get a visa to find a more suitable form.

Many subsequent moments after attaining Nibbana. The unconditioned still needs conditions to continue in the unconditioned. Nibbana has no place in conditioned lay life.

Well, I mean they're not mutually exclusive.

like reality and illusion. You know, Nibbana and Samsara. And again, the Mahayana Buddhists play this up. They talk about a lot more than the Terraadins do. I mean, the Terraodans just think they're they're just qualitatively different that some Sams Sara and Nibbana are just qualitatively different even though

strangely the Abhidharma scholars place them at the same level of reality.

But it's like the the uncarved block of stone is always there so long as you got the so long as you're dealing with these virtual statues that are inside the uncarved block of stone. So Nirvana and Samsara are simultaneous.

You know they occur if you can say the nirvana occurs the same place the same time simultaneous.

So it's just a matter of of like perspective. An enlightened person living on samsara, they look around, they see some they see nirvana.

I mean

I mean I'm not exactly sure how to

explain this, but the two are not mutually exclusive.

Like you're not eliminating conditions, you're just transcending them. Like you start realizing the the existence of the uncarved block of marble. That doesn't mean that every single possible statue or just one statue of this person that's that's in question just disappears. It stops existing. It's still going to be there.

All possible statues are going to be inside that block of marble.

And so once you stop identifying with those statues, that's fine. Still, it's like it may be that the perceptions or

karma of the people around you are going to kind of help to maintain that physical body that that you used to identify with.

Man, there's there's some tough questions here. Or maybe it's just my mental state in my persspiry, muggy South Carolina summer state that's uh making answering questions a little more difficult tonight.

So

yeah, I mean the conditioned and the unconditioned, they're not mutually exclusive and they're both simultaneous and it's just a matter of your perspective.

Let's see here.

How is the paradox resolved? No, there's
there's no resolution. Let's see. I
mean, you can live in a cell which
simplifies
simplifies samsara, makes it easier not
to be distracted by it. I mean, makes it
easier to see through it. But once
you're fully enlightened, you're going
to see through it. I mean, there's no
falling back. That was one of the first
arguments. I think some of the Mahayana
chroniclers actually had the second
council be based on this argument rather
than on vineia matters like the
terraodins say is that there were some
philosophers who were saying that you

could be after you become enlightened
you can like backslide and become
unenlightened again terraod say no and
some of the earliest texts you know one
who has become such does not fall back
you know that's that's like in the
atakawaga

so I mean once Once you've become fully
enlightened,
then it's like zen in the marketplace
and there's no worries. I mean, there's
no problem.

So, golly.

Yeah. I think largely this is a sort of
a an artificial problem.

But I mean there's always going to be a
paradox so long as you're using a like a

perceiving mind trying to deal with
infinity and infinity cannot be
perceived. You can have this idea of
infinity but that idea will not itself
be infinite

except for like in the the Blakeian
sense of infinity in a grain of sand or
whatever eternity in an hour.

Yeah. The hopes of seeking the
unconditioned. I mean the you're you're
wallowing in I mean you're you're
pervaded by the unconditioned at this
very moment. How far away is the
unconditioned? The unconditioned is
right here right now always.

So

we inhabit this uncondition we inhabit
this conditioned reality which isn't
ultimately real.

See,

monkhood with the support of lay people
is the closest exception to independence
from conditions. Well, maybe. I mean,
like being in a sensory deprivation
booth

of some sort might come a little closer.
Prison cell even. Maybe the rest of us
must navigate this messy conventional
reality. Yeah. Well, I mean, even for
monks, even for monks, samsara is still
samsara.

See,

let's see. I saw the end condition. Now,

my karma is such that I still couldn't
escape my conditions
unless I died. Well, you don't know
that.

I mean, if you saw the unconditioned to
the point of becoming enlightened, then
I mean, you could be in the middle of a
carnival. You could be on a roller
coaster ride or something and still, I
mean, it wouldn't make you any less
enlightened.

So

like I like imagine you become fully
enlightened as a lay person
with no monasteries nearby. Suddenly you
would need money to buy a flight and get

a visa to find a more suitable form. Not necessarily at all. I mean according to Terravada Orthodox Terravada if you become enlightened and you're not a monk yet you've got like 24 to 48 hours to be ordained or you're going to die.

But I personally doubt it. I do not personally think that you absolutely have to be some kind of monastic renunciant after you are enlightened.

It might help you to become enlightened, but after you become enlightened, it's it's largely irrelevant. It seems to me, I mean, the purpose of becoming a monk is to become enlightened, not to maintain enlightenment somehow.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Yugu.

And Yugo says, and we're still lagging, which is not good. Yugoo says, "I have read the first two books from the book of the new son. I don't get it. What makes it that special in your mind?"

Well, I mean, the book of the new son, I do consider it to be one of the greatest literary fictional works in American literature.

And partly it's because of the scope of it. I mean he deals with like just about the entire human condition. Like I've there have been statements for over a hundred years I'm sure that Dostki's the brothers Karam Mazov just all questions

concerning the human condition are contained in that one book. But I think the book of the new son even has a greater scope than like the brothers karma or even Moby Dick that it's just all over you know it's just everything and also I mean it's just the whole setting of it is the earth is dying I mean this is hundreds of millions of years in the future you know after the human race has colonized thousands of other worlds and the earth itself is just sort of burned out. You know, it's like the like the the center of human like civilization or whatever is is now not even on the earth anymore. Just humanity has largely left

it behind partly just because it's run out of it's run out of resources and so forth. So I mean just sort of a contemplation of the death of the earth the you know the dying of the world is also a kind of profound element of the story but it's a very complicated story and it's you know some things that happen at the end are like um foreshadowed towards the beginning like the the weird dream that that Searian has when he's sleeping on the bed with with uh what's his name? Gosh, can't remember his name now. The the giant scientist, the the giant sociopathic scientist.

So, let's see here.

And it's just well written. That's another another aspect of it. But it was just sort of such a tour to force with regard to the imagination. you know, it's just this whole different world that is is taking place. And so, yeah, I mean, it's just like a a really good exercise of imagination. It's good writing and it's dealing with all these different ideas that I don't know, it just makes it like practically scripture in my opinion. I think that the book of the new son by Gene Wolf is has more profundity in it than I mean certainly than the Old Testament or the Quran for that matter.

So let's see here.

I guess I guess that's good enough.

And Yugu did ask four questions here.

Although one of the questions is so easily answered that I'll let it slide this time and his name will just go on like a provisional list of possible additions to the actual list of people that ask too many questions. So you go the second question is what is your opinion on Cervantes's Doniote? And I did read Donkeote in my 20s and I read a lot of it while working on fishing boats like in between halls and the whole boat is like rocking back and forth. It's messing up like your inner ear and

everything and and so I'm not sure how deeply it sunk in when I read Don Kiote.

Um I like Don Kiote. I mean, the character

I really, you know, you can't help but kind of feel sorry for him, sympathize with him. Um,

I mean, some some of it's awful. Like there's that story that's told. I don't even remember who tells the story, but I do remember in in Doniote, there's this one story of this man who has this beautiful wife who adores him and is completely faithful to him, but then he decides he's going to test her. And so he pays some friend of his to just do his utmost to seduce this guy's wife,

you know, his own wife. And the and
she's resisting and resisting and
resisting. But of course, she's human.
So finally, you know, after lots and
lots of effort, paid for by her own
husband, his friend finally succeeds in
seducing her. And then it's like the
hammer comes down on her. And you know,
I don't remember if he kills her or
what, but I mean, it's it's really just
a stupid awful story, but what do you
expect from like
late Renaissance Spain?
I'm not exactly sure when Don Cote was
written. I assume it'd be like 16th or
17th century Spain.

So, yeah. I mean,
Doniote, he was um like Dostki read
about Doniote. It's like when Dos Dossi
wrote his novel, The Idiot, he really
wanted to portray like a genuinely
Christlike good person. And in one of
his letters that I read an excerpt from,
he's talking about how there's really
not much of that that you can find in
Western fiction. like Don Cote. He was
one of the the best examples of a a good
person. Although at the same time he was
like delusional, you know, he was just
sort of kind of got unhinged from
reading too many um like books on
chivalry, you know, romantic novels
about chivalry and so forth. And also

another example that

um Doski gives is uh Pwick and the Pwick

papers which is a

sort of a what do you call it episodic

sort of novel pickaresque

novel by uh

Charles Dickens.

So I mean Doniote is definitely a

sympathetic character. You feel sorry

for him.

Um, and he's got a lot of goodness in

him, but I really don't have much of an

opinion on him. Partly because I read

the the novel a very long time ago,

never watched any movie versions to

refresh my memory. And I did read it

while working on a fishing boat where there was all these distractions and so forth going on. I didn't really get very deep into the novel. And so I'm just going to move on to Yugu's third question, which could qualify as a transgressional question, but it's so short that I guess I'll let it slide this time, is have you read Erasmus Rotterdam in Praise of Folly? Opinion if yes. When I was taking a a western civ class in college, I read excerpts from In Praise of Folly and that was it. So yeah, and I I forget everything in it.

I just remember that I read like excerpts from it. So yeah, I have read

part of it and uh I've forgotten what I read and so I have no opinion on the matter. And this is sort of the one of four questions anyway. So I'm just moving on to Yugahoo's fourth question. He says, "I'm deeply sorry about this transgression, but lately I wake up in the middle of the night filled with fear and dread about dying. I note it and go back to sleep. My question is why is that happening?" Well, I mean, this is all I know about the situation. So, exactly why that is happening? I mean, what events are going on in your life that might be causing this to happen? I have

no clue. I mean, the fear and dread about dying, that's just animal instinct. So, there's something that's causing you to feel, you know, like insecure about your own security. So, that you know, something is, you know, somehow you have this feeling that something big can happen that you are sort of at a subconscious level are equating with death. And then it's like your the animal instinct, the animal survival instinct kicks in and there's this fear and dread about it. But what that actually is happening, I mean, I have no clue because this is all I know about the situation. So you wake up in the middle of the

night filled with fear and dread about dying. Well, that's just animal instinct right there. And whether it's actual literal dying or just some kind of major change, like in the tarot deck, tarot cards, the death card really isn't as bad of a card as people think it is. I mean, it's nowhere near the worst card. It's like the tower, I think, is the worst card in the deck. Not the death card. Death card just means some sort of major change, like the major ending of something.

So even that can inspire some kind of insecurity which can then cause you to jerk awake in the middle of the night

with uh fear and dread. But the actual
fear and dread is it's like an animal
survival instinct
cuz we humans
are animals.

But I mean the actual causes I mean I
have no clue.

So I'm just going to move on to xenoid's
next question. No, this is Xenoid's
first question. Excuse me. Now, I'm just
going to move on to Xenoid's first
question. How do Buddhist funerals work?
I heard Ajan Punadamo mentioned that in
Buddhist funeral services there is more
focus on reminding the living that they
will die too someday as opposed to
simple mourning. Can you elaborate on

this? Yeah, like a Buddhist funeral doesn't work the way a Christian funeral does. Christian funeral is, you know, you've got the person embalmed wearing like a suit in an open casket. They look better than they did when they were alive. And then you have people giving eulogies, which a lot of the time is just very one-sided, not particularly realistic accounts of what this person was like, but how what a wonderful, glorious person they were, whether they really were that way or not. I mean really I mean if you're you know somebody close to you dies you love them you know you're going to remember the

best stuff and not talk about anything but the best stuff. It makes kind of sense I guess but in a Buddhist funeral I've only attended two that I can remember. No wait three.

Um two were for monks and one was for some Chinese Burmese person in America that I didn't know. I just the monks got invited to attend this funeral so I went. Um but my teacher Poku and also my friend uh Unandia I I attended their funerals and cremations and really it's the monks who are there one monk in particular will give a sermon on impermanence you know it's all impermanent and then like if you got more than that you have

monks that might be chanting about
impermanence or just chanting protection
chants that kind of thing and
often there's um like a cremation
afterwards and it was kind of surprising
to me that
um a lot of people would leave before
the cremation even starts. It seems like
that would be like one of the main
things of the funeral is the cremation.
But a lot of people just don't want to
see that kind of thing. They just make
offerings to the monks and you know pay
their last respects you know because
they are human. I mean, they're not just
completely Buddhist and just, oh, it's

all impermanent and I'm going to die too someday. It's like, you know, they want to say goodbye to their their friend or, you know, this venerable monk or whatever, pay their respects one last time in his presence or at least in the presence of his physical body.

But yeah, I mean, the whole theme of a Buddhist funeral is impermanence. You know, it happens to all of us. It's his turn this time. Who knows whose turn it's going to be next?

Just keep that in mind because that's one of the great protectors.

So

let's see. Did I answer the question?

Can I elaborate? Yeah, I did elaborate a

little bit. Yeah, I mean you don't have eulogies really. It's just the monk gives a speech or whoever does this mainly just on Buddhist impermanence or the Buddhist idea of impermanence.

And the monks will be chanting certain verses about impermanence. There's enough monks together to do that. And then you have the cremation and then everybody goes home.

So yeah, I think I elaborated. So I'm going to move on to Xenithoid's next question. Did you go to Ajan Cha's funeral? I've heard that somewhere around a million people attended. Now I didn't hear about Ajan Cha dying. I was

probably in Burma at the time.

And Burmese Buddhist lay people generally are not keeping track of what's going on with Thai aons. A lot of Burmese lay people just think Thai Thailand is Mahayana Buddhist. They don't they they have no clue.

So yeah, I did not go to Ajan Cha's funeral.

So let's just move on to Ruie here. Did you keep a Buddha Rupa during your anchorite Burma days? And the only Buddha statue I have I owned when I was a monk is right up there on the I can't really I can't really uh let's see see if I can do this right. No, this is not easy because of

the lag. I think it's right around here.
Right there. That little statue. It was
uh I was living in a cave in Burma and
some lay person offered it to me. I went
into the village for alms one day and
somebody just handed me this little
marble statue and it's in the Janna
mudra which is my favorite um Buddha
mudra you know it's like the hand
positions different Buddhas will have
different positions in in Terravada
there are four main mudras
that are symbolic of you know four of
the most important moments in in the
Buddha's life the Janna mudra where his
hands is like like this you He's just

like sitting in meditation. It's Janna means meditation. He's in meditation pose. And that's symbolic of like the night of his enlightenment. And then you've got the the bumi pasa mudra, which is the most common mudra in Burma, which is ironic, where he's got one hand in his lap like this, and the other hand is reaching down and and touching the earth. And technically speaking, he wasn't even the Buddha yet. That was the eve of his enlightenment where Mara is challenging his right to sit there and he he calls upon the earth as his witness that he has the right to sit there under that bodhic tree and he wasn't even enlightened yet which is

weird that that would be the mudra that is favored in Burma. Then you've got the the mudra where the Buddha is going like this, which is not so common partly just because I assume it's hard to carve. And that's symbolic of the Buddha giving his first sermon. You know, he's he's counting off on his fingers the four noble truths. And then then you've got the uh the part in Nirvana Mudra where he's lying on his right side. When you see the Buddha lying down on his right side, you know, full length with his toes all lined up, then that is symbolic of his death.

That's the pari nirvana mudra. So that's

dying Buddha there. Um, but yeah, this this one little marble statue that is on the bookshelf right behind me. I got that when I was living in living in a cave in Burma and I just walked for alms one day and somebody handed it to me because I mean it was in the Janna Mudra. They knew that I like the Janna Mudra. I mentioned to lay people that that's my favorite like posture or hand position for a Buddha statue. Yeah, I really didn't like the boommy pasa where he's touching the ground because he's not even the Buddha yet.

So yeah, that was the only time I I got a Buddha statue when I was a monk. Oh wait, no, actually I had another one

very briefly, but I got rid of it. It was just a tiny little one like this carved out of some kind of stone.

But for the most part, I mean, I didn't ask for the one that I the first one the main one that I had. It was just given to me, which is fine and I still have it. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Robert.

Robert says, "Do you have any opinions on George Barkley and his idealist philosophy or rather his immaterialist philosophy?" I think that's what he called it. Um, George Barkley. Well, I mean, George Barkley, I mean, I've I've discussed all of this before in in

previous videos that George Barkley pretty much just shot his entire wad on this one one philosophical point that you cannot really know or prove the existence of physical matter.

That I mean, that was his contribution to Western philosophy. this one idea that he just hammered away at.

So

I mean I agree with that. I mean you you cannot prove the existence of physical matter. You can infer it. You know, it's definitely a very convenient working hypothesis,

but I mean, he had his influence on like the French philosopher Malibbrange who had his influence on David Hume who was

skeptical of the existence of physical matter who then influenced Emanuel Kant. Emanuel Kant said that reading Hume is what awoke him from his dogmatic slumbers. And then Emanuel Kant inspired the entire German idealist philosophical movement with like Hegel and so forth and Schopenhauer who just dismissed the idea of physical matter.

So he definitely had a significant effect on Buddhist or on western philosophy.

But I mean when you get into like how he describes how it works, how all that exists are minds and perceptions and then you've got this one central mind

that is coordinating the perceptions of all the other minds and that central mind is God. So that when you see an apple on the table, you're not really seeing a physical apple on a physical table. It's just that God is implanting into your mind the semblance of an apple on a table. It's like he's coordinating all of everybody's dreams to to be like harmonious with each other so we can all seemingly be interacting in this one like objective universe when really it's just God is implanting these perceptions in everybody's mind as though they're participating in this physical phenomenal universe. And I really don't believe that. I can't prove that he's

wrong, but I'd rather doubt that you've got this central scrutinizing mind that is coordinating the perceptions of everybody else.

So, I do bring up Barclay a lot though, just because there are a lot of people who just assume that physical matter obviously exists. You know, they just accept it. You know, it's just that's just the way it is. They think that they know that it physically exists. I mean, most people do. Dogs and chickens are the same. They just assume physical matter exists.

So, George Barkley was good for challenging that one point of view. And

he's got two books on it. One is the three dialogues, and I can't remember what the the other one is, but they're worth reading if you if you really want to get into that.

And so I'm just going to move on to Robert's second question.

He says based on a question in previous Q&A.

He says by gladdening the mind I mean I meant becoming satisfied with how things are right now.

Then when a thought of craving or clinging arises, one drops it and returns to being satisfied right now and sustaining the state of satisfaction.

Right effort. And if py arises, enjoy

the pey. And I think we're not I think we're not lagging right now. That's nice. Joy is good and equanimity is also good. The idea is just that we are not victims of the world. We can be okay with how things are. I.e. everything is already okay. Nothing to fix, nowhere to go. By everything is okay, I don't mean dooka denial. It's saying as things are right now, I cannot fix the world.

Things are already okay as they are. We can be safe, secure and comfortable right now. Nothing has to change in the world in order for me to be satisfied. I can already be satisfied. Given this, do you still think it is not Dharma

practice as outlined in early Buddhism?

I think the emphasis would be somewhat different.

Again, joy is good and equanimity is also good. But I mean ultimately equanimity isn't good. Equanimity is neutral. It's neither good nor bad. And that's really what like the early Buddhist point of view was going for is neutrality. Not I mean certainly not negativity but not positivity either.

I mean because positive joy has an opposite. I mean it's all going to balance out in the long run. I mean that's not really not the Buddhist explanation for that's more of a Dawist explanation. But that's the way it is

really. I mean you can't just have a coin with one side. You can't have a coin with one side being heads and no other side. You have positive, you're going to have negative. It's closest Orthodox tier comes to that idea is the locama. You know, the ways of the world where there's these pairs of opposites that are always going to be balancing out.

So,

so if PT arises, enjoy the PT. Now, if PT arises, you just accept that. Be mindful of it. Do not wallow in it. Do not get attached to it. Because when you enjoy things, that that is conducive to

being attached to those things and
wanting more of them and being unhappy
when they don't happen and so on and so
forth.

But I am glad that finally after over an
hour and a half, we're not lagging
anymore.

See here.

So it's like everything is already o
it's it's really not Buddhist language
here. I mean it's it's very similar. I
think there are some slight differences
in in like emphasis and also you do not
want to be accentuating the positive.

Whatever occurs accept it with
mindfulness and as neutral of a
mindfulness as you can manage.

But again you should be able to accept whatever happens. So it's it's you know there's a lot of this in the text. I mean if you're don't have any food you're okay with that. If you're just sweltering hot, drenched in sweat, you're okay with that. If you're freezing cold and shivering, you're okay with that. If you're sick, you're okay with that. You accept whatever it is. You're not fighting against the way things are.

I mean, that's that's dooka. Not accepting the way things are is dooka.

And you don't want dooka.

I mean, you don't ne necessarily want to

be overjoyed either,
but just being okay with whatever
happens. Yeah, that's definitely like
early Buddhist yoga.

I mean, that's one reason why monks
would be wandering alone out in forests
and so forth, just expose themselves to
all this stuff that most people can't
tolerate, but they learn to be okay with
it.

in order to be okay with anything.

Whatever life throws at you, you accept
it with equanimity.

So yeah, I mean to that extent this
explanation

of dharma given by Robert would be fine.

It's just any kind of positivity.

I mean you don't want positivity any more than you want negativity. You want neutrality.

So, I mean, everything's fine. You you can just accept it. I mean, that's that's okay. But if you if you're like liking it, you know, you're like rejoicing in it, then you're you're you're like veering away from the middle path of neutrality.

Okay. Satisfied. That's it would it would depend on the actual meaning of satisfied or satisfaction.

But satisfied songs, I mean, it's just you're okay with it, you know, no struggles, no resistance, no friction,

that's good. But if it becomes like a positive attraction, it's not good. Or like satisfied in the sense of just this glow of of like well-being. So long as it's positive and not neutral, then you've you've veered off the middle path of of like neutral acceptance.

Which is one reason why in terara

Buddhism of the four Brahma

which is

meta, karuna, muda and upka only upka or

equanimity can get you to fourth janna

which traditionally at least in some

traditions in early terravada was like

the jumping off point to enlightenment.

So,

all right. I'm just going to move on to

Robert's next question, which is, "Your metaphysical views have been hard for me to place. Your reference, you reference the brain in regards to human action as well as evolution. However, ultimately, samsaric reality is an illusion. Yeah. belief in certain things like rebirth and comma requires at least some basic metaphysics. However, it seems as though you don't want to make any definite claims about reality as ultimate reality is beyond words and the intellect generally. Do you think you could maybe give a rough summary of your metaphysical views and how they tie in together? Um gosh.

Oh, I'm lagging again. Damn. At least we were not lagging for a few minutes.

Um, at the end of my cave journal.

Gosh, I I forgot all about this. Just a minute. I'm doing How you guys doing?

Where is it? Right here.

Donald Trump fell to the floor.

I remember when I was living in a cave, I was keeping a journal and I just I had never done it before, but I I just wrote down like a synopsis of my metaphysical views just as a way of filling in the last pages before moving on to the next volume of the journal. And unfortunately, let's see, just bear with me here.

Yeah.

Well, never mind. I won't I won't try
and find it because it would involve me
trying to make sense out of this um
journal that was soaking in a flood for
20 it was like at least 24 hours and the
the ink is all smeared and everything.

And this dog wants to say hello. So
there she is. She's saying hello. And
come on, wave. There you go. She's a
good dog. She's a sociopath, but still
good. Okay,

there's another one, but I won't I won't
lift her up because she's too heavy.

So, let's see here.

Oh, after that five minute,

what do you call it? Five minute red
herring wild goose chase.

I suppose I should try to give a rough
summary of my metaphysical views. Well,
I mean, ultimately, you've got I mean,
the uncarved block of marble.

I mean, I' I talk about that all the
time. The uncarved block is like the
absolute, the Dao, whatever you want to
call that. But you don't want to reify
it. I mean, you you kind of specify that
this is just a convenient way of
talking.

But, I mean, it's it's mysticism
essentially mysticism that you want to
know reality, you have to penetrate
through perception.

You have to transcend or penetrate perception in order to understand the highest truth which you can say is eternal and unchanging infinite you know infinite formless consciousness or whatever you want to say although it's all going to fall short and then the rest of it this the phenomenal universe is caused by dependent core rising which cause an infinite number of virtual statues to appear real.

But I mean, which would include like evolution and brains and DNA and all this. I mean, that is part of our reality. I'm sure that there are an

infinite number of other versions of
Samsara that have
no evolution, no DNA, that kind of
thing, no brains.

So

golly,

I mean I don't I really I'm I'm talking
about my metaphysical views all the
time. And if Robert is having a
difficulty in pinpointing what kind of
label to give to my metaphysical views,
then maybe that's a good thing
because like in the articaga, I mean,
you shouldn't be having philosophical
views anyway. You should certainly
shouldn't be attaching to them,
shouldn't be identifying with them,

anything like that. You shouldn't be emotionally invested in them.

But golly, I mean, I'm certainly not a materialist. So, you got that. I am a mystic. I do consider rational rationalism to be a a good approach within the context of samsara, but it's not going to get you beyond samsara unless you use it in this ruthless like self-attacking mode like majamica does which just destroys itself really leaving emptiness behind.

Let's see.

Yeah, I mean I really don't bother trying to categorize my own point of

view other than not a materialist and certainly more mystical than rationalistic. I mean empiricism is like the best approach to take within the the realm of illusion. You know the samsaric phenomenal world. Empiricism is about your best bet for navigating samsara which includes rationality. But I mean, you want to start with empiricism and add rationality to that rather than start with rationality and then try to build an entire world view just from like logical axioms or something.

But it's I mean

how how you want to categorize that is is up to you. And and really I don't I mean you shouldn't really be too much

invested in this sort of thing anyway.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

And that's probably not a satisfying answer that I just gave, but it may be that any truthful answer would not be particularly satisfying.

Mainly because I don't even categorize my own point of view. I mean, I used to consider myself a monist. So, I guess there's that

certainly certainly u mystic with regard to understanding reality. and an empiricist with regard to navigating samsara

with some Buddhist dogma thrown in. So,

I'm a Buddhist, too. So, let's just move on to Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Liberlam. And his question is, could you point out some tendencies you see in new age spirituality and occultism where people reify the ultimate and get sidetracked by Mara?

Well, first of all, there's a certain ambiguity here with regard to new age spirituality and occultism. Is that new age spirituality and new age occultism or is that new age spirituality, and occultism as two entirely separate things with the occultism not being new age occultism? So, that is kind of an ambiguity that I find difficult for me to navigate.

But could I point out some tendencies I see in new age spirituality and occultism where people reify the ultimate and get sidetracked by Mara?

Well, with regard to new age, um, my dealings with new age people was sort of like I mean, they're kind of like hippies and I mean they're not reifying the ultimate as a for the most part. You know, they might have this vague or you know, kind of like this Hindu kind of idea of, you know, God as the ultimate, whatever they're going to define God as.

But it's it's going to be just an idea. So that's being sidetracked by Mara

Oultism. Yeah, I think the occultists are much more inclined than the spiritual like the new age people to really reify the ultimate because most of the new age people are really they're not they don't even get as far as reifying the ultimate other than just calling it God or whatever and then just not thinking about it much because they're mostly like dealing at an emotional level, you know, sort of a a feminine stereotypically feminine heartbased kind kind of level and stuff like reifying the ultimate is more of a a head thing than a heart thing. But with regard to like occultism, you know, like Alistister Crowley or something

like that, I'm really not that familiar with

Western occultism.

Some of the people I know are much more conversant with regard to occultism than

I am. I never read a single book by

Alistister Crowley. Somebody sent me

one, but I never got around to reading

it. And like I said, a long time ago,

uh, I saw a book by Crowley in a

bookstore once and very briefly

considered buying it. And then I just

kind of chickenened out with the idea

that Crowley was was such a person that

he might have just like put a a blanket

curse on anybody who read the book.

Who knows?

So yeah, occultism for the most part is not really an enlightened system or I mean in general I mean it's certainly not just one system, but occultism in general is mainly samsara oriented and I mean that is certainly being sidetracked by Mara. That's entirely within the realm of Mara. Um I don't know. I I assume there's occultists who are trying to transcend samsara in a more or less Buddhistic sense.

But I really don't know enough about it to know which particular schools of occultism are more spiritually advanced to the point of actually trying to transcend samsara. not just master

samsara,

you know, in a kind of a nichian sense,
you know, not just trying to manipulate
samsara through magic or whatever, but
actually just trying to bail out of the
system, trying to transcend it, not just
rise above it as some kind of super
archon or something, but just completely
transcend it as an illusion to be
transcended.

Um, I'm really not familiar with any
so-called occultism that goes that far.

My my understanding of occultism is more
like methods of manipulating samsara and
gaining mastery of samsara so that you
can like become some higher power within

the context of samsara which is entirely Mara's realm. And I don't know to what extent they reify the ultimate if they even bother.

I mean they might not even get to the ultimate. I I assume a lot of occultist schools don't even have a concept of the ultimate you know they might just be completely like some sorrow oriented where there's just like an an infinite um like infinite number of levels or it may be that you just reach this highest level and that's as high as you can go. I mean there's there's no way out of samsara. I assume there's a cultist schools that are like that. They don't even have a concept of the ultimate. You

know, they might just say that there isn't there isn't one.

So

yeah, but with regard to new age, I mean it's pretty soft-headed as a system in general. I assume that there were like formulators like new age philosophers, you know, sort of like um the formulators of like the beat movement, you know, like like Carowak and Ginsburgg and and oh J Ryder, Gary Snyder, you know, they actually have a philosophy that they're applying this whole movement towards that. I assume there's that. I mean, I've even read that Evola is studied by some uh new age

people because of his sex magic and so forth. But it's as a general rule, it's very thisworldoriented

that new age is more of a lifestyle than any kind of spiritual movement. It seems to me, you know, it's it's sort of like being like neo hippies.

So

yeah, I that's about that's about my answer to that one. And so I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Priapistic Monk. And he says, "What makes a monk?"

And technically what makes a monk is an ordination ceremony, a valid ordination ceremony into a monastic order. That's what makes a monk. that like from a

Burmese point of view, let's say you've got someone who lives like a monk, they look like a monk, you know, they go for alms round, they wear brown robes and so forth, but they've never been ordained into the Buddhist sa then they're not a monk, they're a yate. They go by the name of a yate. I knew a yate once. And strangely yate is like the Burmese corruption of the word rishi or what in English is what is corrupted into English as rishi.

So technically technically a monk would be a member of a an ordained member of a monastic order especially if they have taken higher orders and aren't just a

novice

and they have to be male.

But if you want to say that so anyone

who lives like a you know

monastic life they live like a monk then

they're like an unofficial monk. I mean

you could say that too but technically

which is the easiest way to answer this

question so that there's no you know

there's there's no ambiguity

then a monk is a man who has been

validly ordained into a monastic order

fully ordained

so it's vineia it's I've read that what

separates a monk from a lay people is

vineia or the rules of monastic

discipline

And if you just want to just renounce
the world and go eclectic or whatever
non-denominational, you don't get
ordained,

then I mean you can live like a monk,
but you're not really a monk.

So I'm just going to move on to the next
question. This is from Fred and Fred
says, "If one can't reach Nibbana by
works and Janna, what is the role of
wisdom?" Well, the role of wisdom is to
make it easier to become enlightened
even though it can't make you be
enlightened. It's like I was saying
earlier you can open the window but you
can't force the breeze to blow in. So

wisdom is opening the window. Maybe
clearing away the the rubbish the derbus
from from before you get to the window
so you can even get to it. And some
people might have to use like like you
know like razor blades or or
screwdrivers, crowbars because the the
window has been like painted shut for
decades
or who knows how long.

But I mean going with my just getting
away from the whole window. I mean it's
like reality is always here. It's just
that we are distracted by all these
perceptions in our mind. So what wisdom
does is it makes the perceptions more
subtle and easier to stop believing that

they're reality.

You know, it's like making

let's see just reducing

let's see I'm trying to decide which

metaphor to go with or like here's

here's one that I've used before that

let's say consciousness is like water

and mental states like perceptions and

valitions are like the waves and ripples

on the surface of the water and most

people are completely in wave mode. They

they don't even have a concept of water.

It's just this wave and that wave and I

like this wave and I hate that wave and

this wave is better than that wave and

those two waves are beautiful and those

waves over there are ugly and just the whole world is just wave phenomena and then they don't even have a concept of water.

So what you do is by making the waves less like through meditation more subtle you don't have like choppy seas all the time and when you have a flat calm it's way easier to stop identifying reality with waves.

So one of the main roles of wisdom, not the only role, but one of the main like roles of wisdom at the highest level is just to make the the samsaric world of perception more subtle through detaching from it or through using like yogic techniques to just turn the the waves

into a flat calm so that you see water as water instead of as this wave versus that wave.

But before you get to that level, wisdom is, I mean, causing you to choose good actions instead of evil actions, for example. Causes you to have a certain sensitivity so that you realize that by hurting another being, you're also hurting yourself. That kind of thing. So wisdom early on is driving morality and the search for more wisdom. Whereas at the highest level, wisdom is getting you as ready as you can be for full enlightenment. I mean, perfection of wisdom would be enlightenment where

you're no longer identifying with wave phenomena. You're no longer considering wave phenomena to be the highest reality or the only reality.

You're seeing through that. You're seeing through the veil.

But we you can't really reach nibbana by works and janna you know by morality and meditation sila and samadei but those are in a way prerequisites or it's just the more you do spiritual practice the more likely it is the more statistically likely it is that you're going to become enlightened.

That doesn't mean that monks or even like seriously conscientiously practicing monks and nuns are going to

become enlightened. Still, the odds are very low for that. But still, it's way higher than the average normie who's working a 40 or 50 hour job with bills to pay and a family to take care of and so forth, lawns to mow, all that stuff.

So

works and and John Oila and samadei which leads to pa I mean all of those are just increasing the odds of you becoming enlightened

and and also helping you to detach from samsara to like rise above or transcend samsara to some degree.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Kundrew

and Kundrew says, "I've seen the Buddha being referenced as the kinsman of the sons several times in the sutas. What does this name mean?" And that is a good question and it reminded me that in the Touka Suta of the Atawaga, which is very old text, it begins puchami adichaandu. Those are the first words of the turka suta of the atakawaga which translates into English as I ask that kinsman of the sun or a relative of the sun or a relative of adicha.

And when I was a monk you see it sometimes and you figure well it's some sort of mythological reference or just some honorific title that was given to people in ancient India that we've just

lost the meaning of it. Even some some statements in Shakespeare, you know, Shakespeare will make some reference to like current events that it's just lost to us now. We have no idea what he's referring to. And it could be something like that in in in Pali with regard to the word adicha bondu. Adicha is a word for the sun. It's not the usual word for the sun, but it it's derived from Vadic Sanskrit

and bondu just means like relative.

So it may be that or like a relative of the son the adicha bondu that adicha was actually was like the name of some clan or some lineage that uh like I think in

the commentaries it refers to gorras
which are like a clan that is bigger
than just your family name you know it's
it's like a collection of family names
it's almost like a cast a subcast like
kan A I think was one of the the Goras
in the Buddha's time and Adicha
according to this commentary was another
one of these Goras or clans or just
lineage familial lineages that that spun
off different you know uh like family
names like Godm.

So uh it was probably something along
those lines. It's still controversial. I
don't think that anyone really has
nailed down some definitive explanation
of it. In fact, I think there's one

person recently who wrote a book who was trying to use kinsmen of the sun or Adicha Bandu as evidence that the Buddha himself uh was Persian and um he was sort of it was it was like an influence of of Zoroastrianism that was more into sun worship than any of the systems in in India. thought um I think I remember reading somewhere that there was like two main lineages like the the moon lineage and the sun lineage and the the Buddha was like of the sun lineage instead of the moon lineage with regard to his family his his like what would you say his ancestors

but still I do not know exactly it
apparently was like some kind of lineage
like a a family lineage that he was
called that but I don't know for sure
and it could just be the some honorific
that was used in ancient India like who
knows maybe if somebody did a search
like in the rig veda there might be you
know this the like the vedic Sanskrit
version of this same this same word that
is found there or some of the older like
vedic vedic texts like prebuddhist texts
or even like around the same time
contemporaneous like you know protohindu
texts might have the same word that
might give more insight into its actual
meaning

but he is referred to as kinsman of the
sun or adicha bondu

and I guess I'm just going to move on to
the next question we're getting towards
the end here next question is from

dhamma river and I am sorry that I don't
know for sure what adichaandu

uh originally meant that you look it up
in like the Poly English dictionary, it
just says kinsman of the sun with no
more explanation than that. Adicha is
the son, Adicha Bondu, kinsman of the
sun. Period. That's that's all the
explanation that that is given. And you
can look it up on the internet and
you're not going to find much.

So listen, let's get back to Domin River here. Dama River says, "What are your thoughts on the Mid program?" And we are not lagging right now. We might have like five minutes of non-lagging in this whole [__] video.

Dama River says, "What are your thoughts on the Mid program in Canada from a moral and karmic perspective? It stands for medical assistance in dying. The government is helping people die. It's very controversial because it appears that people are getting this done without being terminally ill. Yeah. It reminds me of Soilent Green. And remember that movie Soilent Green, Edward G. Robinson's last movie,

Charlton H was in it where you could just go and and commit selfdeion.

And of course according in the movie they take the bodies from the selfdeletion process and make these like wafers called soilent green that were then distributed to people in a socialistic dystopia as food. But I don't think Canada's quite to that stage yet. I mean, it's certainly getting into the realm of dystopia, but I don't think it's it's recycling the bodies of the Mid program as some kind of new serial, for example.

So, what are my thoughts on this assistant, assisted dying, medical

assistance in dying? Well, I do think that people should have the right to self-deed. I mean, it's your own life. I mean, it was it was mainly Christianity that put a taboo on that. You know, in ancient Rome, sometimes it was the honorable thing to do. If if you were a soldier who disgraced your legion, then you fall on your own sword.

Unfortunately, Mark Anthony botched falling on his own sword and didn't hit any vital organs, and it took him a while to finally die.

But still, I mean, it was like Kato the Younger, you know? He he just I I think he uh either had a doctor do it or did it himself. But you know he he opened

his veins was the term uh when he found out that Julius Caesar had won the civil war and was going to become dictator for life after defeating Pompey's forces Pompeus Magnus.

But then along came Christianity and life was considered to be something sacred. It was like a sacred gift of God. So that any that committing suicide was a sin and you couldn't be absolved of that sin either because you're dead after you do it. So like in Dante's Inferno, there's that a special circle of hell just for people who selfdeleted. I think you became a kind of tree in in in hell that would bleed human

blood instead of sap.

Um, but yeah, I mean it is a dystopian development in Canada. It seems to me it's like I mean there's memes about it now. It's like well we got socialized medicine but you've got this this condition then maybe we can fit you in for a doctor's appointment a year from next Wednesday, but have you ever considered selfdeletion? We can fit you in real soon on that one.

So I mean from a moral and karmic perspective the people who are participating in this not the ones who want to selfdee but the people who are helping them to selfdelete maybe even like suggesting it. Yeah. I mean they

are killing from from the Buddhist point of view.

I mean even euthanasia from the Buddhist point of view is is still killing. I mean it might not be as bad as you know being like an axe murderer or something but still it is morally unh wholesome to do that.

So the the people who are participating in are definitely making karma and not the best kind of karma. And yeah I mean from the Buddhist point of view karma and morals go hand in hand.

So, let's see here. Government is helping people die. It's very controversial because it appears that

people are getting this done without being terminally ill. Well, in a way, it's kind of purging the misfits, which I mean, from a moral point of view would be unwholesome, unskillful, but maybe from a political point of view, it might actually be beneficial because you're purging misfits. I mean, the misfits are purging themselves.

Um, not I mean I'm not saying that someone who's got terminal cancer or something is a misfit. It's just the people that are so maladjusted that they want to self-terminate even though they're not terminally ill. That's the kind of people I was referring to. And I mean they have the right to do it. I

mean, individually, it seems to me
from a larger like political point of
view, I mean, it could be good for
society, for people that are
self-destructive
to just sort of not be in society.

But,

I mean, it I really don't have a dog in
this fight. Speaking of dogs,
there she is again. Okay,
there you go. Oh, Tater always wants to
be picked up, too.

So, let's see. My thoughts on the Mid
program in Canada.

Yeah, Canada se definitely I mean most
of the anglosphere is like drifting

towards dystopia more and more cyberpunk
dystopia

like the election of Donald Trump is one
of the main breaks just hitting the

brakes in America and even starting to

like move in a different direction but

like the UK, Canada,

Australia, New Zealand,

South Africa I mean they're they're all

moving in a dystopian direction which

America would be moving in if the

Democrats had won the election. It's all

moving towards this culturally castrated

feminized quasi Marxism

with purging of misfits through

euthanasia

or I mean I if if they're not even

terminally ill I don't even know if it would be euthanasia or not.

So

yeah, I mean there's worse things than medical medical assistance in dying. I think abortion would probably be worse than somebody just opting to end their own life.

But

I guess I answered that question and I'm just going to move on to the last question which is from

Arain says and and I'm not I'm not lagging. Look it, I'm moving my mouth and the words are coming out as as I move my mouth. Oh, it started lagging

again a little bit.

Anyways, Arin says, "According to Stfan Molyneu, noted philosopher Stfan Molyneu, a person has no moral obligation to tell the truth to a compulsive liar." What does Buddhist philosophy say about this?

Well, I did actually hear some of that video with Stfan Molyneu and he was saying that lying is only bad if you deceive someone in a way that harms them. And I don't know what he's basing his ethics on. I think because he's like an anarchist, I think he's just basing his ethics on the non-harming principle or whatever it's called. I'm really not into anarchist philosophy, but I know

that anarchist philosophy is largely based on like a himsa, not harming others. So apparently he's got it worked out so that the morals or ethics of anything is based on harming of others, which is very different from Buddhist ethics which are based on your own psychology, the effects that the action has not on somebody else but on your own mind.

So Stefan Malu saying that lying is only unh wholesome if it harms somebody else.

I mean certainly that's not Buddhist.

What happens this this hypothetical scenario here where someone is trying to rip you off. They're trying let's say

they're trying to lure some kid into their car so they can kidnap that child for nefarious reasons.

Well, the kid has been warned by his parents when strangers do that, don't get in the car. So, the kid just runs away. So, did that person, this this predator

just did he not do anything wrong because he didn't harm the kid? No. He obviously was trying to harm the kid and failed. It's like attempted murder.

According to Stfan Molyneu, I assume going with this kind of reasoning, you you're trying to murder someone, you shoot at them and miss, you haven't done anything wrong because you didn't harm

anybody.

But from a Buddhist point of view, I mean, you make you have the intention and you make the effort, you're already doing something wrong. actually succeeding is like the clincher where I mean that pretty much locks you into the like the deepest level of doing something wrong in that category but still if you're trying to harm somebody and fail still you've done something wrong.

So Buddhist philosophy says that ethics are subjective. They're they're based on the effects your own actions have on your own welfare. If they're taking you

farther away from from enlightenment,
taking you farther away from purity or
wisdom or whatever it is,
from the possibility of enlightenment,
then that's bad. Even if you don't harm
anybody other than yourself.

I don't know what Stfan Molyneu would
think about someone like selfdeception
or just like someone who's got like this
weird fetish where they they want to
hurt themselves or they want other
people to hurt them.

I remember there's a kid like that in
school.

I won't say his name, but when I was in
grade school, there was this one kid. He
was an unpopular kind of shy, awkward

kind of kid who would just antagonize bullies until they would beat him up.

He He did it repeatedly. He would just like pester them, just like follow them along just saying this stuff and they'd tell him to shut up and he wouldn't.

He'd just keep following them around saying this whatever it was that was bugging them until finally they just start hitting him and that was the whole point.

I'm not exactly sure what the connection is here,

but I mean obviously this this kid, he wasn't harming anyone really, not from the Stefan Mulluse kind of attitude. He

was in a way kind of harming himself through the agency of just antagonizing bullies until they beat him up.

So I mean, I wonder what Molyneu would say about someone who wanted to get beat up. I mean, would the bully be doing anything wrong by satisfying this guy's desires to get beaten up? So, I mean, Stefan Molyneu in his nonharming principle because he's like an anarchist and uses the non-harming principle as some sort of axiomatic guiding law, I guess.

I assume.

Um, yeah. I mean, he's just I think that his basis for ethics is far inferior to the Buddhist basis of ethics, which is

it's it's subjective. Whether something is wholesome or unwholesome depends on your mental states and whether those mental states are taking you closer or farther away from like enlightenment, taking you closer or farther away from reality.

But Malin I mean he might be a materialist or something along the lines of a materialist just fully invested in samsara who doesn't really think that there is a transcendence of samsara in which case that the Buddhist ethic would be almost nonsensical to him but I mean from the Buddhist point of view like I mentioned earlier just being

pissed off is immoral

or self-loathing is immoral any kind of

unhappiness I mean it's weird in

Buddhism unhappiness is immoral.

I mean, wallowing in certain kinds of

happiness also is immoral.

I mean, Buddhist ethics are about as

finely tuned as ethics get.

Just wanting to put salt and pepper on

your food to make it taste better is

just sort of borderline immoral.

So yeah, I'm assuming that Stefan Molyneux

being an anarchist is invested in the

non-harming principle and is using that

maybe arbitrarily as a basis for what is

and is not moral. So you have to

actually harm another person for it to

be immoral. And from the Buddhist point of view or just from a really common sense point of view, that's pretty much nonsensical. Like if you're trying to harm somebody and fail,

I mean like even in the legal system, attempted murder is still a crime. It's not as serious as murder, but still attempted murder or attempted fraud or attempted theft, attempted burglary, attempted like molestation of a child, all of that is illegal and wrong.

Even though nobody may have been harmed at all other than the perpetrator, the person attempting this is already poisoning his own mind with his evil

intentions.

So yeah, I would say Stfan Maul who even though he refers to himself as a philosopher is really not a first rate philosopher going with this kind of ethic

that he's more

he's more interested in politics than in like the subtleties of ethics. It seems to me

I'm not sure what other anarchists like isn't Michael Malice, isn't he? Isn't he a a well-known YouTube anarchist?

Whether he would have the same kind of ethic as Stfan Molyu with the non-harming principle and all that, I'm not sure. But I do think that Buddhist

ethics are much more subtle, much more sophisticated, much more realistic than this largely arbitrary definition of what is right and wrong based on an anarchistic principle uh like a political principle of non-harming rather than like why is harming so bad? I mean maybe he should like dig a little deeper. You know, if this is based on non-harming, why is harming another being immoral? Why is that unethical? And if he's just saying, well, that's just what anarchists believe. That's just like an axiom that we accept dogmatically.

Then I mean, that's that's what his

ethics are based on. That's like the the foundation of his ethics is just like this arbitrary decision made by political anarchists.

So yeah, I do think that the Buddhist ethic of something is good if it is conducive to the happiness of others and more importantly your own happiness. You know if if it something is conducive to your own happiness in the long term then that's good. If it's conducive to your own unhappiness in the long term that's bad.

Or if if it's like if it increases your delusion and attachment and desire, that's bad. If it decreases your delusion and attachment and desire,

that's good.

I definitely think that that it would be preferable. And not just because I accept it dogmatically as a Buddhist. It just makes a lot more sense to me. It seems more more intelligent and sophisticated and and realistic and plausible than

just basing it on the western anarchist non-harming principle which I assume is what he's doing because I don't know why else he would say that lying is wrong only if it harms another person but he's using justifications I should get back to Stefan Molyneux in his his video his talk I heard him saying that

like a compulsive liar let's say
somebody's trying to rip you off or
thing or and one example he gives is not
even somebody trying to rip you off.

It's like somebody is planning a
surprise party for you. Your mate is got
a surprise party planned for you and you
know that she's doing that. So, you
pretend to be surprised even though
you're not surprised because you already
knew it was going to happen. Well, he
says, you know, there's nothing wrong
with that. That that's probably a good
thing. And from a Buddhist point of
view, I mean, it's certainly not as bad
as like really messing somebody up,
which also messes yourself up. But

still, I mean, any kind of dishonesty is
it's like

betrayal of truth. It's like how are you
going to attain ultimate truth if you
can't even be faithful with regard to
conventional truth?

you know if you don't consider even
conventional truth to be something quasi
sacred

I mean how are you going to trans how
are you going to like rise above that
into into like the highest truth

so I mean he can say that you can you
can lie to somebody to protect somebody
else something like that and I've given
there's this famous short story I'm I'm

all over the place with with regard to
answering this question it's the last
one We'll be done after this, so bear
with me. But there is a famous short
story, the third the the fourth wise man
or the other wise man. I I've mentioned
this before where
you've got these four Persians and they
see the star of Bethlehem in the west
and they know the the Messiah has been
born. And so they're going to go and
offer their incense, frankincense, what
is it? Gold, frankincense, and myrr.
plus probably some other items to this
this king that has been born. So, three
of them set off, but the fourth one,
he's got some kind of business he has to

do, but he says, "I'll catch up with you on the road." So, the first three take off, and this fourth wise man, this other wise man, this magi, he takes off late. And he keeps getting like not completely sidetracked, but delayed. like you know he's traveling through the desert and he sees this guy who's almost dead of thirst and exposure lying by the side of the road. So he he has to get off and help him and he's nursing him back to health and giving him water and you know treating the the secondderree burns and all this and taking him somewhere where he can be taken care of and not just leaving him

abandoned there. And then he continues on his way after like a week and finally he gets to uh he gets to the Holy Land and he's staying at this house and this is right when King Herod has demanded the death of all the the baby boys. And so the mother is terrified. She's got a baby boy in the house. This this wise man is standing at the door and when the soldiers of King Herod pound on the door and demand entry, he he gives them this jewel. Maybe I think it was like a giant pearl that he was going to offer to the Messiah. You know, he he brought these treasures with him and he gives this this treasure to this, you know, soldier and says, "There are no there are no

babies here." And then, you know, it's like the bribe is accepted and the soldier just announces there's no babies. Let's keep going. And so, he saves this baby's life by telling a lie. He says, "There's no babies here. here, have this pearl. And of course, the mother is just weeping tears of joy and gratitude. And so from the Buddhist point of view, I mean, he did tell a lie. And it may be that he was trying to deceive this soldier, although the bribe was probably, you know, what really convinced the soldier that there was no baby there rather than him just saying there's no baby. But

still, he tells a lie and it saves the life of this baby. So I mean it's the easily the lesser of two evils in that case. It may be that some Buddhist arahant

that is mentioned in the wisudi ma I mean he wouldn't tell any lie at all. So he'd just remain silent. You know he wouldn't be under the same roof with the woman anyway. So I mean the the good Buddhist would just be avoiding the situation. He wouldn't be under the same roof with this woman in the first place. But still you're telling a lie that I mean you still have this effect on yourself. You in a way you're betraying the truth and you know you're like lie

detector tests you know they they test for like little signs of stress like increased perspiration increased heart rate and so forth which I mean when you're telling a lie as a general rule at some level you are uneasy about that because you know you're doing something wrong. Maybe a sociopath can pass lie detector tests with no problem because you know he doesn't have that. But most of us I mean we know we just feel in our body that we're doing something wrong when we're telling a lie. And so if telling the lie is going to be result in less suffering in the long run than telling the truth

according to me you're better off just choosing the lesser of two evils in that case.

But I mean as some hard-nosed Buddhist would just say just avoid the situation. Don't ever tell a lie even if it's a tiny one. You know, it's like you just say, "Well, I knew this surprise party was going to happen or you just remain silent, you know."

So,

I just completely left Stfan Molyneu standing standing on the road, I guess.

But I mean even I mean from the Buddhist point of view telling lies is always wrong but it might be less of a wrong than telling the truth in certain cases

or remaining silent for that matter in certain cases.

So it's it's like the trolley problem where you either let the trolley squish 10 people or you divert the trolley on its track so it only squishes one person. From the Buddhist point of view, what you should do is just do nothing and let the trolley squish 10 people. I mean, that's like like really hard-nosed Buddhist ethics because you have done nothing wrong. Just standing there. I mean, inaction is never unethical from a Buddhist point of view because you're not doing anything.

But I mean, some people could argue,

well, if you divert the trolley, so it only squishes one person. I mean, you're responsible for the death of one person, but if you hadn't done that, 10 people would be squished. And so, you could argue it'd be the lesser of two evils. It would not be completely good. There would be some killing involved due to your own action, but still, it would be less than letting 10 people get squished. And so, that's your choice to make. You have to take responsibility. Do you accept responsibility for you know that one person being squished or that lie being told if doing that is results in less suffering overall. So I'm of the opinion that sometimes you

may choose I mean you have the right to choose to between the lesser of two evils

and telling a lie sometimes may be the lesser of two evils but still it's it's like wrong. It is unethical. It is immoral from a Buddhist point of view.

And I might as well stop at that and say what I should always say at the beginning and I've only done once like a year ago which is if you have any questions you think I can answer especially about Buddhism especially Terraata Buddhism or early Buddhism like pre-terravata Buddhism some western philosophy you know some eastern

philosophy it's it's a little more hit
and miss the farther away you get from
like my particular fields of interest.
Like I also have a degree in biology.
I'm fairly good at biology questions
too.

And no more than three per person per
episode, please.

And also like and subscribe if you have
not done so already and be happy.

All right, then. Howdy.

We are recording, I assume.

Welcome to question and answer number 159. I am your host Pony Bosa. This is your co-host, my beverage.

And

159, I must say, although odd is not prime because it is $3 * 53$.

And I'm dispensing with coffee because I already drank enough coffee today. So, I'm just kind of tapering off the caffeine with an energy drink or something.

Tapering off some sort of essential oils contained in coffee but not contained in this particular energy drink.

And I spent part of my glorious day of
laziness

today

hauling rocks or just loading rocks into
my car cuz we spent several hundred on
lots and lots of rocks today. In fact,
most of it is going to be coming on
pallets like from a flatbed truck with a
forklift mounted on back just because it
was too many rocks for our little car.

So,

it's kind of late. In fact, this Q&A may
span two days because it may be after
midnight before I'm done with it. As you
can see, the fish tank is already in
moonlight mode. The fish are already
preparing to go to bed, and I'm just now

starting this Q&A.

So, I guess we should just get into it.

And the first question is from Sebakshan Cipad Zidana, who tried to ask five questions, but he did not succeed in getting all five of them on this Q&A.

And his first question is as follows. After living in Burma for decades, do you think villagers are better people than city folk with better morals?

Um, one of the first things I thought of when I saw this is there's a saying in Burma. I don't remember the the Burmese original, but it is to the effect of a man looking for a wife should look for a

village girl because village girls make better wives than city girls. But it might be a somewhat different reason than better people being better people. It's just that village people are simpler. They they're simplehearted and they probably have fewer desires and all that which might make a village woman more content as a man's wife than a city girl who's just wanting this and that and never satisfied kind of a thing.

My experience though with uh Burmese people living in villages and Burmese people living in cities is really it's it's just a matter of like simplicity of of life and simplicity of

heart to some degree than actual goodness because I've met plenty of very good people in cities, plenty of very good people in villages and I mean I'd have to do some kind of some kind of statistical study to find out if there's like a significant correlation between being a better person and being a village person um as opposed to being a worse person living in a city. But um my experience is that really Burmese people as a general rule, I mean the ones that would be dealing with me, I mean this is kind of a filter that might make my experience less than objective

because the people that were interacting with me for the most part were people that were really into like supporting monks that were like devout Buddhists who were really gung-ho with regard to supporting the SA and supporting me. and so forth.

Um,

so yeah, I mean, you've got bad people living in the cities, possibly more violent criminals and so forth. You can get away with less in a village. There's going to be less, you know, sexual misconduct, less thievery, less murder, that kind of thing in a village simply because everybody knows what everybody else is up to. You know, there's not a

whole lot of privacy in a village.

Everybody knows everybody else pretty much. Although I mean I lived way the heck out in the sticks in Burma like amongst hillbillies.

And I mean I was living on the edge of a national park. And the villages that were closest just right on the border of the national park had their economy largely based on poaching in in the the natural in the the national park. So, I mean, I've seen seen guys just walking down the trail heading into the the park and a duck flies by, they just frantically look for any rock or stick or anything that they can fling at that

duck just on the off chance that they hit it and kill it.

So, it's just different flavors of morality and immorality that you'll find in a village as opposed to a city. But, um I I wouldn't really say that village people are necessarily better on average than than city people.

And I'm just going to move on to the next next question here also from Seovax CPAD seizure. And this is a biology question.

He says, "What is the difference between a population, race, subspecies, and species?" I know for species, you could just say that they can reproduce together, but that doesn't seem to be a

universal enough definition since bacteria and such don't have sexual reproduction. So, the definition doesn't really work. Well, that's actually not entirely true because even bacteria will have they do have a kind of sexual reproduction. I can't remember what it's called. I don't think it's conjugation, but bacteria will actually come up to another bacterium and they've got like this tube. They will actually inject some of their own DNA into this other bacterium. So, the even bacteria do have a kind of sexual reproduction. With regard to something like amiebas, I'm not sure.

But let's see. What is the difference between a population, race of species, species? A population is just any group of I assume the same species that are just living together in the same area. You could just call that a population.

And the area could be largely um what's the word I'm trying to think of? Tell Come on, tell me in the comments. It's uh arbitrary.

Okay, forget the comments. It's it's just largely arbitrary. You know, what is going to form the population? Whether you're going to say it's going to be, you know, all the, you know, all the whatever species it is living in, you know, this general area between this

river and that mountain range or
whatever, or you want to just say that
it's like this herd of of wilderbeast in
Africa, this particular herd, whatever.

I assume population is largely an
arbitrary thing that if it's used in
like a scientific paper or something, it
would have to be defined. You know, what
what does this population consist of
before moving on and just referring to
the population

race

is I do think that at least it used to
be

used for animals other than humans. that
race was just a kind of you know like a

local variation. I mean they could interbreed with other members of the same species easily no problem. It's just that isolation as a general rule has caused you know the favoring of certain variations

well within the scope of the species.

It'd be sort of like breeds in dogs, although

of course breed is is different because a breed would be largely artificially artificially produced.

So yeah, I would guess that race is just kind of like a local peculiarity that is peculiar enough that it's considered cons like significant enough to you know single it

out.

Subspecies

is you're getting closer to species level. And I could have looked this up in a dictionary. I didn't I didn't look up subspecies in a dictionary, but I mean it's you're getting into like controversial. I mean it's all of this is relatively controversial. For example, Neanderls. Are they their own species or are they like I was taught when I was in school a subspecies? You had homo sapiens sapiens. You had homo sapiens and Neandertolancis two different subspecies. So a subspecies would probably be there's

starting to be like behavioral or
physiological

barriers between really like maximum
efficiency with regard to interbreeding,
you know, just behavioral or whatever it
is that there's already starting to be
certain

barriers or obstacles like I guess like
modern humans and um like Neanderls

For some reason, they there wasn't like
complete compatibility that the the
fertility of a Neanderal female

impregnated or attempted to be

impregnated by a homo sapiens sapiens

male. I mean, it wouldn't be as high as
with two homo sapiens sapiens or two
neans.

So I mean exactly where you draw the line obviously is going to be somewhat controversial because as I say some scientists some authorities will consider Neandertals to be a subspecies of homo sapiens and others will consider Neandertalensis or Homo Neanderthalensis just to be its own species.

So there's taxonomy is one of the least objective

fields in biology. I think there's there's so much like politics involved.

Like Linnaeus who devised modern taxonomy, he knew that humans and chimpanzees should belong to the same genus.

But he also knew that if he put humans and chimpanzees in the same genus or humans and any other animal in the same genus, he would be excommunicated from the church, which in the 18th century was social was just social death.

So he put humans and chimpanzees in different families even though a human and a chimpanzee are more closely related than a chimpanzee and a gorilla.

But chimpanzees and gorillas belong to the the family ponadi. Humans belong to the family hommininity which is not good science but that's the way it has been for a few hundred years now. It's like the closer you get to

humans the more finely differentiated things get which also is not not exactly objective.

So taxonomy is I mean it's largely arbitrary. I mean you can say sure there's a difference between plants and animals but then you get to something like the a uglina which is a single celled

I mean you can call it a flagagillate protozonean but also it's got like chloroplasts it photosynthesizes it's green like a plant so you get to really simple stuff and the it can get controversial even differentiating plants from animals.

So yeah, it's uh to some degree controversial or just arbitrary. I mean, clearly you can say a human being is a different species from a chimpanzee.

Human being is a is a different species from a bottle a Pacific bottl-nose dolphin.

But I mean, you got Pacific bottl-nose dolphins and Atlantic bottl-nose dolphins. They they're called different species, but could they interbreed? Is there any kind of blending like like they are connected like the the the what is it? The horn of the cape of good horn, you know, they can swim around that mixed together. Who knows?

So, let's see here.

Yeah, I guess uh I I suppose with regard to species um for animals that really do not reproduce sexually

then I mean you've got like the the the the famous lesbian lizards that that reproduce by parthnogenesis that the the the babies are just clones of the

mothers or some I assume some single-celled organisms reproduce this entirely through like binary fission.

like amebas or something. They just split in half.

So how would you define species there is just probably for the most part I mean traditionally they look different

and maybe they behave differently. I mean that's one of the profound things I learned in in biology taking biology as a student is that um like organisms like animals particular they differ from each I mean two species will differ from each other um to the same I mean approximately to the same extent behaviorally as as like phys physically. So it's I it seems to me that um I mean it could almost be a law to the extent that two species differ physically. I mean they will differ to a corresponding degree behaviorally. And that that happens with like races, males and females, that kind of thing also. I mean, we're built differently and

that's going to just have a built-in pressure, you know, like a evolutionary pressure for us to behave differently.

A big strong animal is just going to behave differently from a small weak animal, for example.

So,

enough biology, I guess.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the third question of CEO of action caden.

Although I will not move on to a fourth.

He says, "Thoughts on public nudity?"

Curious because the Jane monks and some Hindu aesthetics walk around naked and I don't know how to feel about it. Someone told me it was normal in many ancient

cultures like Greece and India, but it was condemned in others like Middle Eastern cultures and hence why those places being conquered by Semitic traditions made it taboo.

Yeah, I think even in countries where public nudity was not illegal, you know, like ancient classical Greece or India, still it was considered to be like uh kind of demeaning to one's dignity if one was like a high status kind of person.

Like in ancient Rome, they had a a certain holiday called the Lupercalia where men would run around naked and they'd have like some kind of little like a whip-like thing and they'd like

give like token little lashes to women
which was a kind of fertility ritual.

And Mark Anthony in participated in the
lupalia was running around naked and it
was just sort of like a political
scandal. you know, his opponents were
just, you know, just mock outrage like
you find all the time in modern American
politics. You know, how can how can like
a patrician be be acting this way, you
know, etc., etc., blah blah blah. And so
it was just considered to be kind of a a
fringe thing, you know, like some weird
philosophers can do that sort of thing.
Or maybe it's like a really poor person,
you know, some poor crazy person,

homeless person, they could do that sort of thing. But like a respectable citizen, as a general rule, isn't going to be walking around naked unless there's some special purpose for it, like the lupricalia or athletic competitions, which women weren't even allowed to attend.

That sort of thing.

But public nudity, it just reminds me of a saying of my father, my dear departed father, who was somewhat of a notist.

you know, in the morning he'd he'd be walking around the house scratching himself naked.

And he used to say, "If the good Lord intended people to be walking around

naked, they'd have been born that way."

Which is a good point, it seems to me.

So, I mean, public nudity, yeah, it's largely um just human neurosis with regard to sexuality.

that uh I mean there there have been human beings in modern times Australian aborigines wandered around naked like the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego before they all got wiped out by smallpox or tuberculosis or whatever it was they would wander around naked and it wasn't a big deal it wasn't like they were all just horny all the time and raping each other all the time I guess I shouldn't say that word on YouTube

but yeah I think the taboo on nudity in the west is largely because of Christianity. And it reminds me of there's a story in the Old Testament. I think it's in Genesis. Noah had three sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth. And um Noah got drunk and passed out in his tent. His son Ham walks in just completely innocently walks in, sees his father passed out naked. He just turns around and leaves. tells his other two brothers and then the other two brothers, they get a cloak or something and they both back in holding the cloak and they cover their father without looking at him. And then when Noah soers soers up, he curses Ham for having seen

him naked. So I'm not exactly sure why like Middle Eastern like Abrahamic religions have such a taboo against nudity. I don't know why, but human beings tend to be fairly neurotic about sexual stuff anyway.

So,

it could be some of that, but why the like the Semitic peoples were really so anti- nudity, I don't I'm not sure exactly because

like my dad said, the good Lord wanted people to be walking around naked.

They'd have been born that way.

So I mean I don't consider public nudity to be inherently immoral.

Like there is a rule a a rule of
monastic discipline for terabato
Buddhist monks against a monk walking
around naked unless his robes have been
stolen or destroyed or some some such
thing.

Um, and the reason is not that it was
like demeaning to amongst like his
dignity to be naked in public. It was
that lay people were confusing the
Buddhist monks with Ajivaca monks. And
the Ajivaca monks wandered around naked.
They didn't own anything. They didn't
even own an alms bowl. Some James were
like that, too. when they they just
wander naked through the village when
they go for alms and they would just

accept food into their cuped hands and then just stand there in the street eating it.

So that was the reason why monks were required to wear clothes um or a robe or actually no I think I might be confusing by rules of monastic discipline. There was a rule of monastic discipline preventing monks from bathing naked in the rain. And so somebody sent a servant girl to see some monks about something and they're bathing naked in the rain. She just turns around comes back and she said, "I didn't see any Buddhist monks. They were just Ajivakas there." Cuz again, people were confusing Buddhists

with Ajivacas. Because the Ajivacas went around naked. The Buddhists didn't. You know, it was just kind of like part of the uniform like shaving the head.

But I'm just sort of gilding the lily with my answers because I really just do not think that public nudity is inherently immoral. The reactions of other people who see somebody naked could be very immoral. Like a beautiful woman who's just walking naked down the street could be causing all sorts of impure thoughts. Not only in men, but like women who are getting pissed off at her because she looks so good or whatever.

So, or because their husband is just

like like staring at her with his mouth open.

So, let's see here.

Yeah, I guess I guess I gave quite a few thoughts on public nudity. I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Romeo and we are in fact recording. I'm looking at this thing again and the little green bar is going back and forth which indicates the microphone is working. And it looks like I'm not lagging because I did close all the extra unnecessary tabs before starting this video.

I do learn from experience occasionally.

So Romeo says, "What is your knowledge

and opinion of the healing of emotional and physical illnesses by clearing one's chakras?"

And

I mean Terra Buddhism really does not endorse the chakra system

that chakras I think I would guess that they came from like yoga which would be like sania

that it was one of the like the pet theories of the sanas

and then when some of the sania people got incorporated into Hinduism under the name of yoga with a capital Y then this the chakra theory along as like the three goonas you know you've got the satvik goona symbolized by the color

white the rajasic goona symbolized by
the color red the tamasic goona
symbolized by the color black which is
mentioned in the bhava gita that also
certainly came from sankha which got
incorporated in part into hinduism or
protohinduism

as yoga so yeah I mean there's no
mention of chakras in the sutas

So what is my knowledge and opinion of
the healing of emotional and physical
illnesses by clearing one's chakras?

I do think that chakras are kind of a
gimmick. You know, it's just like I
think in in the sut's like this idea of
nadis or nadi literally means something

like stream. You got these energy streams going through your body which is in some ways I think it comes closer to like Chinese traditional medicine which also has you know its own system which is not in agreement or at least not obviously in agreement with various other traditional like systems of medicine like in the west you had like Galen's the his theory of the four humors which prevailed up through medieval times up until modern times.

So I do think it's kind of a gimmick. It's just a kind of way of kind of wrapping your head around something using a certain system and it's largely

belief in the system which produces a kind of placebo effect.

It's you like tarot cards also is I I think I brought tarot cards up recently maybe in the in the previous Q&A where people can prognosticate or they can come up with some sometimes can come up with you know valid information or wisdom through the use of these tarot cards when I mean wisdom or any kind of paranormal powers are not like impregnated into these cards. I mean it's just like cardboard and laminated with plastic and some ink. That's all it is. But the people believe that by the help of these cards they can come up

with this information and they don't believe that they can come up with the same information without the cards as effectively. So they use the cards as a kind of gimmick or crutch. And I do think to some degree the chakra system is similar.

I mean, there could be that you've got like some kind of spiritual energy going up up the spine somehow that is has a better, more effective flow the more spiritually advanced you get. I mean it's possible

but I do think for the most part it's just a kind of arbitrary system can that conveniently helps premodern pre-scientific people understand things

and sometimes they understood things better than modern people do and so it has value you know it seems to work just like tarot cards seem to work otherwise they wouldn't keep selling them.

So,

I mean, so long as somebody involved has this faith in the healing of emotional and physical illnesses by clearing one's chakras,

then it could be it's it's like a kind of faith healing. But then again,

Reverend teacher Maker Mary Baker Eddie considered all medicine to just be placeos.

We just have faith that the medicine works and so it works.

And people who believe in the chakra system have faith that the chakra system accounts for some level of reality anyway. And so for them at least it does.

And it's just a convenient way of just measuring somebody's spiritual advancement. You know, first chakra is just survival. Second chakra is sex.

Third chakra is like status and power.

Fourth chakra is compassion and so on until you get to the crown chakra on the top of the skull which is full enlightenment apparently which is even higher than the third eye.

But I mean no no science that I know of
is going to verify you know the opening
of the third eye in some yogic sage or
the opening of the crown chakra an
enlightened being anything like that.

And so

I think I'm just going to move on to
Romeo's second question

which is what do you think is the most
effective process to heal oneself via
chakras and then in parenthesis he's got
mantras meditation visualization

uh question mark

and so the most effective process to
heal oneself via chakras find some
ayurvedic practitioner or some other

kind kind of Hindu practitioner who is an expert on chakras who's going to have deep faith in his chakras the whole system and like the effective processes of healing somebody and then go to them and then they'll they'll help you to heal your chakras because it's it's going to take faith in my opinion. I did have my chakras aligned for free by a person in California before I came to South Carolina. And uh what he said to me is he was like kind of kind of waving his hands over me and this kind of thing. And he was telling me, you know, my first chakra is solid, nothing to worry about. My second chakra is kind of kind of out of balance, which is makes

sense because I I was celibate for 30 years.

And uh you know he just kind of waved his hands at me and just kind of cleared my chakras that way at least to some degree.

Did the best he could under the circumstances.

So yeah, what do I think is the most effective process to heal oneself via chakras? Well, I mean, healing oneself, I mean, if that is um like disqualifying, you know, that's excluding these chakra healers who specialize in this cuz that would be the obvious thing to do. Just find someone

who specializes in healing through
chakras,

you know, sort of like brain surgery or
something. It's like you don't want to
do it on yourself. That could be very
dangerous.

But you go to some expert on brain
surgery, he does it for you. But if
you're going to heal yourself,
then I mean I guess it would just be
like

be as wellbalanced and grounded and
healthy this mentally especially but
also physically and just practice
spiritually

in in as you know comprehensive
way as possible. not just specializing

in some kind of niche niche kind of
meditation something like that but just
try to be as just all over wholesome as
you can and I mean you got to be careful
though most like if you're trying to be
as all over wholesome as you can and
you're celibate for example and you're
just horny all the time then that could
cause problems with your second chakra
so

golly I'm no I'm no authority already on
chakras. So, I mean really the best
thing you can do if you want to clear
your chakras, get them all balanced and
everything, go to a person who
specializes in healing with the chakra

system,

which would be like an Ayurvedic practitioner or some such.

But healing yourself, all you can really do is just try to be as natural and spiritual at the same time because being unnatural, I mean, it can mess you up at least like physically. Like you read some of the the stories of like Catholic saints,

like medieval Catholic saints, they were really definitely saints. They were just they were like like moral geniuses. I mean they were just like completely moral to the extent that they were able according to their understanding of morality which was of course

predominantly Christian but still I mean they would have all kinds of like health problems and so forth. St. John of the Cross one of my favorite Christians I mean he died relatively young from I don't not sure how to pronounce it.

It was some sort of skin infection that he got. And probably it's just like the just the the unnatural austerity, just the almost inhuman self-restraint.

I mean, just consider what Freud said about too much self-restraint. It can just make you a basket case.

So, I mean, that was the price they paid for their saintliness. And it works for

Buddhists, too.

But the best most effective process to heal yourself via chakras. I mean it would depend on what chakra it was too.

I mean if you got a sexual chakra problem then the way of healing that might be very different from like a compassion chakra problem.

So yeah, I think for starters, even if you're not going to get healed by a person who is a some kind of chakra healer, then you could ask them for advice and they would probably be able to advise you better than I could.

Partly because I consider the chakra thing to be largely an arbitrary kind of cooked up system that works because

people believe in it and at least it has
enough um what's the word? I keep

blanking out on words

correspondence

with empirical reality that you can kind
of map one to the other. You know each
chakra represents some specific stage of
spiritual development. So I mean it's
it's empirical to that extent anyway.

Whether it actually involves any kind of
like energy nodes associated with your
spinal region that is a little bit more
questionable.

So

yeah, I guess of the three examples he
gives, mantras, meditation, and

visualization, then yeah, I'd go with meditation.

Definitely meditation. And I'm going to move on to Romeo's third question, which is are chakras tied to Buddhism in any way? If so, how? Well, I would guess there's more chakra stuff in Mahayana Buddhism than in Terravada. Just because Mahayana Buddhism developed later than Terra at least, you know, sort of like some of the foundational ideas of Mahayana. you know they were in India possibly you know before some of these schools came into being chakras may have already been established as just Indian culture which was not the case in the Buddhist time I'm pretty sure so any

school of Buddhism that arose after the chakra system had been absorbed into mainstream Indian spiritual culture then there may be emphasis on chakras I have um seen one western monk, a terra Buddhist monk that was interviewed by Brian Rue on on one of his shows who practices yoga in addition to doing Buddhist meditation and so forth. He's an ordained terra Buddhist monk, but being a western, he's a bit more eclectic than most Asian terra Buddhist. And so, he's actually brought chakras and like yogic practices and so forth into his own practice. I think he was uh a disciple of Bonte Gunarata at one

time, but now I think he's got his own place somewhere in the United States.

So chakras are tied to Buddhism.

um partly through schools that arose

late enough that chakras were already

incorporated into like just general

Indian spiritual culture and also like

western eclectics or to some degree just

westernized Asian

bikus

or nuns

who have you know practiced yoga as part

of their spiritual practice even before

their ordination and so they can talk

about chakras and so forth But like

you're not going to find chakras

mentioned

at least not in this sense in in the
like the polyuts

I'm pretty sure.

So I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Ruie and Ruie
says, "Do you believe right view can be
a byproduct of meditation or is right
view the cause of seeing value in
meditation? Isn't recognition of
suffering already right view and thus
the necessary condition for the path to
be undertaken?" Well, there's different
right views. I mean there's like the
beginner's right view and the beginner's
right view is going to be very different
from like the enlightened sages right

view.

So the beginner's right view is just it's like going to be mentioned in the text. You know you believe in morality, you believe in in like karmic retribution. You believe that you know you should practice meditation and so forth. Maybe at least keep five precepts that kind of thing you know to know the four noble truths that sort of thing.

But the more advanced you get and the more right view becomes just silent. You know the the highest right view is non-perceptual nonverbal right view.

So right view evolves as your own spiritual development advances or evolves.

So

it can certainly it can be a byproduct of meditation or at least you know the evolution of your right view is going to be like encouraged by spiritual practice. You know, the wiser you get, the more advanced or sophisticated right view you're going to get. Not all right view is the same right view.

So

yeah, I mean this whole question of is right view the cause of seeing value in meditation. Um I think Rahm Das is the one who sort of introduced me to the idea that sila samadehi and pa which is like morality concentration and wisdom

they're like a tripod you know it's not like you have to have one before you get the next and then you have to get that before you get the next one you know it's like a lot of people think cila before you can master or before you can get high samadei you have to master sila and then before you can get high wisdom you have to master samadei But really it's more like a tripod because you're not going to practice at all without some wisdom.

So yeah, I mean they they develop together. Sila samati and puna develop together. And again just as you get more advanced your morality is going to become more sophisticated and subtle.

Your wisdom is going to become more sophisticated and subtle. Your concentration is going to become more sophisticated and subtle. And so they're just going to continue evolving together.

So right view at least improvements in right view

like increased subtlety in right view certainly can be a byproduct of meditation. Even though the meditation itself may have been a kind of byproduct of uh like a basic right view they just evolved together.

So let's see isn't recognition of suffering already right view to some

degree

especially if it's recognition of suffering in a certain way you know like the recognition of suffering of Achilles on the plains of Troy I mean he certainly acknowledged that there was suffering in fact he was inflicting lots of it but still

uh that in itself is not necessarily right view

there might be some rudiments you know some germs of right view in there but still it's it all it all develops and advances until finally you just wind up with emptiness. The highest right view is emptiness, empty mind.

So, I'm just going to move on to Ruy's next question. And he's sort of following up on a question he asked two Q&As's ago. And he says in session 157, it's kind of interesting that these Q&A are called sessions.

It's not episode 159, it's session 159.

So anyways he says in session 157 by narrative I didn't mean any sort of speech act or utterance but the inner filmic unfolding of stories and images that often seems quite independent and have a life of its own. However could the perception of this seeming independence be just a form of delusion? So he's referring to a narrative of just

sort of images in your mind that are
arising spontaneously
and going with
like Buddhist philosophy and also
Catholic philosophy to some degree like
when it first arises
then that's from the Buddhist point of
view that's just the fruition of your
own karma that thoughts that arise in
your mind arise through the fruition of
karma. So that's just passive. That's
happening on its own. But if you grasp
that, you know, if you just take the
ball and run with it, so to speak, you
know, that becomes the the beginning of
like this chain of associations.
You know, you start doing a running

commentary on that. Then of course you're making new karma. And then let's see what what's the exact question here. Perception of this seeming independence just be a form of delusion.

Um, no. I think that when it first arises going with Buddhist philosophy and also going with Catholic philosophy that I mean that's just you're not responsible for that. You have a thought that suddenly pops into your mind of like killing your own mother or some such then that might be the fruition of unh wholesome karma in the past but still it is ethically neutral just so long as it's just popping into your mind

without any like volitional effort for it to pop into your mind. If you act upon it then of course then you're doing karma.

So and the reason why I mentioned Catholics over and over again is St.

John of the Cross, I don't know if I mentioned this, he's one of my favorite Christians

that he was a father confessor at a convent for many years. And his advice to people making confession, like a lot of people, they'd be like hyper conscientious. And so they'd be confessing to him these thoughts that would arise in their minds. And he'd say, "The first motion of the thought is

not your responsibility. That you are not making it happen. It's just that if you follow through, you continue with the thought, then you might have something to confess. But don't come to me confessing just the first like you know the first flashes of some like unh wholesome thought. So long as you are not responding to that thought and continuing with it, you haven't done anything wrong.

So

yeah, it's like the first thoughts I mean the what what's going on in your mind is is uh just like what's like popping into your mind spontaneously it

seems in most cases anyway is the fruition of karma which is ethically neutral.

And so I mean that can just happen a lot and like the wiser you get the less you will just start just through kneejerk reflex just following up on the thought and using that as like the beginning of a chain of association. You know you just let it arise and pass away. Arise and pass away. Like in the platform sutra of Hui Ning, he says Hui Ning says that uh

um like one thing that the sage does, he does not allow his thoughts to hook up in sequence.

I mean I if you have to then sure but as

a general rule you're just sitting there. Your thoughts might be just be arising and passing away but you're not like deliberately forming chains of association.

then it's it's becoming volal and then you're making new karma which could be a cusalakama which is not good

and I'm just going to move on next question this is from JK

and JK says even entertaining for one second that becoming enlightened and understanding the whole universe was a thing how could that stop rebirth obviously entertaining that rebirth was a thing also So,

so when you become enlightened,
you don't I mean you do understand the
whole universe in a way. I mean, you
don't it's not like you become omniscient
necessarily. If you become enlightened,
you're not suddenly going to know the
cube root of 53. You're not going to
know how many hairs are on your head.
You're not going to be able to speak
fluent Han Chinese if you never learned
it before necessarily.

I would be surprised if Gormma Buddha
could have spoken fluent swahili.

So

when you become enlightened and
understand the whole universe, it's like
you're understanding the essence of what

this universe is based on. You know this universe is a kind of mental construction. I mean the universe that we are experiencing is clearly a mental construction. And so when you understand like the the fundamental essence of consciousness, you're understanding the fundamental essence of this mental construction that we call the world. So that's one thing, becoming enlightened, understanding the whole universe, which is the universe of your own mind.

So how could that stop rebirth? Because rebirth relies upon delusion. And when you have like penetrated the delusion and you're no longer deluded, then this

karmic force that's driving you through
just chronic dissatisfaction
just from one moment to the next to the
next to the next, that's gone.

So

see, how could that stop rebirth?
understanding the universe. It's just
rebirth is just part of this mental
construction.

And when you transcend the mental
construction, then you transcend the
phenomena of the mental construction. I
mean, you might not be completely
removed from it. A fully enlightened
being like arguably God Buddha is still
walking around talking to people and so
forth. It's just that he is no longer

identifying with it. He no longer considers it to be ultimate reality because he knows ultimate reality at that point and he knows that this isn't it.

This world of things interacting with each other and having names and all that. That's a mental construction.

So

delusion prevents you from knowing reality. And delusion is what causes you to continue existing as a deluded being.

So I mean it's sort of like waking up from the dream. You know you wake up

from a dream that stops the dream,
doesn't it?

So, I'm just going to move on to JK's
second question,

which is even accepting that life
experience shows that bad actions can
indeed snowball into bad consequences.

Isn't it more convincing that karma is
explained as an ancient cultural or
religious concept to enforce pro-social
behavior rather than being a real thing?

Okay. Well, the main argument, it seems
to me, against this very idea

is that the people that were taking

karma most seriously in ancient India

were not pro-social. I mean, they were

abandoning society. They were renouncing

society and going off and living alone in forests.

So, I mean, if the whole idea of karma was invented

for the sake of enforcing pro-social behavior and this this and this is like this a basic staple of atheistic argumentation. I don't know if JK here is an atheist or not, but it's so many people will say, I mean, it's just to a religious person or a spiritual person, it's just obvious nonsense. It's just silly. But they take very seriously the idea that religion is invented by the upper classes to keep the lower classes in line and under control.

But with Buddhism, I mean, it clearly doesn't work that way because the founder of Buddhism, God Buddha, was encouraging people to renounce society. Jesus of Nazareth allegedly did the same.

Renounce society.

sell all that you have, give the money to the poor and follow me, take up your cross and all that.

So, it's not convincing at all. Even if you don't want to believe in karma, but I mean this alternate theory is not convincing at all that karma is explained as an ancient culture or religious concept to enforce pro-social behavior since the people that were

taking it most seriously were abandoning society

and karma from the Buddhist point of view is volition. So I mean if you don't want to believe that karma exists then going with terra Buddhism you you wouldn't believe that volition exists chana or will you know schopenhau's will with a capital w because karma is not some sort of as yet undiscovered law of physics that it's like bringing into the spiritual or ethical realm. This like Newtonian idea of every action has an equal and opposite reaction. That's how I understood it before I was a monk. Like

when I was like 18 years old, maybe my early 20s, I believed that it was kind of like this as yet undiscovered law of physics of like a more or less Newtonian idea. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. You do bad things outwardly, the bad thing bad things will come back to you. But that's really not how karma works.

Karma is like the the the momentum of your mental energy, the momentum of your mental states.

And since, as I mentioned just a few minutes ago that this world we live in is a kind of mental construction, you have like an a dirty ugly mind, you're going to create a dirty, ugly world. If

you have a like a clean, beautiful mind,
you'll have more of a clean, beautiful
world. And it may be that they're right
next to each other. And so you might
say, well, they're both living in the
same world. But subjectively, they're
not.

So

I guess I should just move on. Next
question. This is from Sedarta

Lohachita,

and he says, "How Pyobbasa would define
liberty?" Although he's not American, so
he just uses single quotes instead of
double quotes.

So how I would define liberty? Well, I

guess I would define it in kind of somewhat indirect manner like a truly free society.

In a truly free society, a person should be allowed to do whatever they want so long as they are not harming anybody else or infringing upon the rights of anybody else. So in a truly free society, public nudity, you know, if you had real genuine liberty, walking around naked, probably would not be against the law. Taking drugs, even like really dangerous ones, wouldn't be against the law. If you weren't harming anybody else, I mean, if you're like an airline pilot and you're just getting just [_] up on heroin or something right

before having to fly, then obviously you would be endangering other people, you know, or drunk driving, for example.

So

yeah, I would consider liberty to be the the right I guess to do what you think is right to follow your own conscience to the the pursuit of happiness to engage in the pursuit of happiness so long as you are not like preventing other people from doing likewise.

And I mean then you get into these sticky issues of well what if someone is offended or traumatized from seeing somebody walking naked or you know it's you call somebody a name. I mean, do you

have the right to to state what you consider to be objective facts, say about human biodiversity, and then other people are saying, "Oh, I feel unsafe or you call a transsexual person by their male name when they're insisting that they're a woman." Now, I mean, in some places that's illegal, but I mean, whether that would be like the right of somebody to call you whatever they want, unless they're like like deliberately slandering you, trying to get you in trouble. You know, they're they're saying that you're a thief when they know full well you're not one, then that would be different. Yelling fire in a crowded theater, for example.

But so I mean there's going to be
controversy controversial like blurry
boundary lines

with regard to you know how free I mean
what rights you have that really are or
are not infringing upon somebody else's
rights.

But I think like the the snowflake types
that just complain about everything,
they would have to toughen up in a truly
free society. You know, they'd have
they'd have to get used to being called
things they don't want to be called.

They might have to get used to seeing
somebody walking down the street naked,
that kind of stuff.

So yeah, liberty would just be being able to follow your conscience in the pursuit of happiness so long as you are not preventing others from doing likewise.

And that's kind of libertarian and I don't think that it is really the wisest kind of political system

that a certain degree of liberty is important

but absolute liberty would be like social chaos I think where I mean it's good to have certain moral principles that I mean like

frowning upon women just being absolutely [—]

for example, or men being absolutely

[__] for that matter, just sort of bringing into the mainstream people who are addicted to drugs or addicted to certain sexual fetishes or kinks, that kind of thing, that it's not good for society, even though technically it's more free.

So I do think that a certain amount of shared values, having a value system that helps to stabilize society is very important or helpful to a society in the Darwinian struggle for existence so to speak.

And I'm just going to move on next question. This is also from Sedart Loha. He says, "Your parents, they were from

Protestant or Catholic background."

Well, both of my parents came from a Southern Baptist background. That my father's father, according to him, me in my previous existence was an ordained Baptist minister. And I've got ordained Baptist ministers on my mother's side of the family, too. I've got two cousins on my mother's side of the family at least, who were still are, I suppose, ordained Baptist ministers. So my my background my ancestral background recently over the past few generations is Southern Baptist.

In fact, I think it was my greatgrandfather, one of my great-grandfathers on my father's side.

His middle name was Baptist. He was John Baptist Reynolds. Or may maybe it wasn't Reynolds. Could have been uh I don't know. Roach. Could have been Roach. My father's mother's maiden name was Roach.

So anyways, I'm just gonna move on. Next question. This is from Taskaziz.

And Tzas is asking, I assume, a joke question here.

There was some mention of Biku Analio on the Discord server. And then Tzasquez is here says, "What would English-speaking modern western woman think if they rename her Bikuni Analia?" And then he's got an N in boldface type. So apparently

he's making some kind of poo poo pee pee
joke.

And uh I don't fully understand it to
tell you the truth. What would

English-speaking modern western women
think? I assume he means instead of
woman if they being maybe Biku Analio
changes his name to Bikuni Analia. So
it's like I guess the main point here
would be what would happen if some Biku
decides to become trans and starts
calling himself a bikuni.

Well, I mean that wouldn't fly in
orthodox terravada, but then again in
the west orthodox terravada is is a kind
of dinosaur I think at least it is
amongst most people who consider

themselves to be ter Buddhists
in the west.

So

what would English-sp speakaking modern
western women think if some monk is
become decides that he's really a woman
and starts calling himself a beuni with
you know I think we can leave aside a n
boldfaced type as irrelevant to that
question

so

different ones would think different
things I think a lot of the sort of we
poss

Insight movement would just cheer this
person on. It's like they just think

that they're stunning and brave. They're just modern-day heroes. But from the Orthodox Theravada point of view and from the point of view of conservative Theravada Buddhists, which do form the majority in this world, even though most of them are in Asia, then it would just I mean it wouldn't fly at all.

I'm just going to move on to Trezaziz's second question which is more of a serious question.

He says, "Our biggest difference for me with your interpretation of Buddhism is that you think one cannot reason or figure out anything about this world we live in. Is it is true or am I misunderstanding your position?" Well,

what obviously I mean I explain a lot of stuff in to in terms of like empiricism. So with regard to conventional truth, sure you can figure out all kinds of stuff, you know, you can figure out what gravity is. You can figure out like like gas pressures and like the the dynamics that influence gas pressures, that kind of thing. You can do mathematics. You can figure out all kinds of stuff. It's just that it's not ultimate truth.

You can't figure out ultimate truth. You can figure out all kinds of empirical stuff, though. That's what science is for.

So, you know, like biology, that kind of thing. I got no problem with that. I refer to biology a lot, anthropology, math sometimes.

So I think you can reason or figure out empirical stuff about the samsaric world we're living in clearly. Otherwise I wouldn't be bringing up science like scientific explanations for things or objective explanations for things. In fact, why would I even be answering questions?

Well, I guess I could be answering questions without figuring out anything. But I mean that wouldn't make much sense either, would it?

So yeah, I mean you're never going to

understand ultimate truth. You're not going to understand paramata satcha, the highest ultimate truth by thinking about it. You're never going to figure it out. The closest you can come with regard to that would be something like in Zen where you just keep trying and trying and trying and trying until finally something snaps and your mind just stops and becomes silent. silent and then it's like it just shines through the silence. Suddenly your mind is not obscured with all this thinking anymore and there it is. There has always been it's just been covered up by thinking.

So if you want to understand samsara

the west has done the best with regard
to understanding samsara. He came up
with scientific empiricism
which is about the best system devised
thus far for just understanding the
samsaric environment in which we appear
to be living.

But to penetrate samsara you can't use
that

to to transcend samsara. I mean you're
not going to do it by figuring out the
highest truth. It just doesn't work that
way.

And I'm just going to move on to

Tzasiz's

third question. What about my postcard?

It's been two months already since I

posted it. I didn't get the postcard.

I've got two other postcards from Trezas
is which are up there on the bookcase,
including the the weird shaped one,
which must have been like an early
attempt at postcards in in his native
land. There they there have been
significant improvements in the shape of
postcards since then. But this third
postcard that presumably I would guess
was for my birthday. I just didn't get
it. And whether it's because the postal
service in Poland, whatever country he
comes from is not so good. Or it could
be that America in in its decline
has a postal service that is declining

in its reliability. Like in Burma, you just don't send anything valuable in the mail. It's just you just don't do it. I was going to send a key in the mail once. I was advised sternly, do not send that key in the mail. You're better off finding a bus driver who's going there and then giving it to the bus driver with a, you know, some money and then in good faith he will pass it on and it'll get there. It's called a luon in Burma. So yeah, it may happen. It may still may still arrive. I remember in Burma once I got a letter from my mother, I think more than a year after she sent it. And we're not America. The American Postal Service hasn't hasn't degenerated

to the point that it is on a par with the Burmese Postal Service, which is almost totally unreliable.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Arpad. And Arpad is a Frenchman who I recently learned actually eats popcorn with a spoon.

I mean, the French I mean, they've always had a reputation for being kind of decent, at least in modern times or later modern times. But I mean, eating popcorn with a spoon is pushing it.

But our pad says, "Are there any aspects of Janism that you think are accurate or find appealing?"

Well, that's kind of a tough question. I

mean, Janism does have as a philosophy what is called Sead Vada or is called other things too. I I mentioned this in a previous Q&A recently where according to the Janes, everything has an infinite number of aspects or qualities. Only a fully enlightened tier tongue can understand this. Like a fully enlightened Jane can can see all of the qualities simultaneously. But those of us who are still wallowing in samsara, we can't see even most of the qualities and aspects of a thing. And so in order to be rigorously like what's the word? not precise, accurate, rigorously accurate. You should always

throw in seed in a sentence, which means like kind of or in a sense. So, in a sense, this is true. In a sense, this isn't true. And as a philosophy, it's pretty much useless other than just bearing in mind that you're never going to be able to speak the whole truth.

You're never going to be able to know the whole truth unless you're a fully enlightened being.

But having to throw kind of into every single sentence is just not really a pragmatic useful kind of approach to human knowledge.

Um,

see with regard to Janism, I mean I

can't really think offhand of any way
that Jainism comes closer to like
ultimate truth than Buddhism other than
maybe that Siad Vada thing. Whereas in
Abhidharma for example, Orthodox Theravada,
they do think that you can explain
ultimate truth.

And I think the Jains may have been a
little bit more

uh wise in that particular regard.

But there is I I have read some some
Jain sutras

and there is this one thing that has
stuck in my mind for for years. I read
this book in college. I was going
through Max Muller's sacred books of the
east series when I was in college

and I was reading some Jane sutras. I think they were um translated by a fellow named Jacobe or Yakobi.

I don't know how to pronounce whatever country he comes from. I think he was like Swedish or something. And a Jane if he's going to cross a river. I I think I' I've mentioned this before. You got a Jane monk who's going to cross a river. There's no bridge. There's no regular ferry, but there's a guy in a boat who's willing to take the Jane across the river. The Jane is not allowed to accept if the boat's going to cross just for his sake. If they're already going to cross, there's already

people on the boat and he can get on board, that's fine. But if the boat guy is just going to take him across just as a favor to him, a Jāne is forbidden because he's making karma by doing that. A Jāne should not do anything that makes karma or at least as little as possible that makes karma. So I mean there's all these rules about like I mean it's even mentioned in the in the Buddhist text also that uh a Jāne should not accept alms from someone who is willing to offer him food but there's a hungry dog standing there or even if there's lots of flies buzzing around because by accepting that food and eating it himself he might be depriving

that dog or those flies of a meal and he'd be making karma by doing that. So anyways getting back to the boat the the boat guy was going to cross the river anyway. the Jane gets on unobtrusively and Jane's have to be unobtrusive for the sake of karma cuz I mean I'll get to that. So anyways, he gets across and according to the sutra if the boat starts to sink the Jane is not allowed to help bail out the boat because that would be making karma. So what he's supposed to do if the boat starts to sink, you know, the boat is taking on water. If he's the kind of monk or the kind of Jane monk that wears

clothes,

then he's supposed to take off his

clothes, fold them up, and put them onto

his head because when the pissed-off

boat owner throws him overboard for not

helping to bail out the boat, his robes

won't get wet.

Now, it's just stuck in my mind for all

these decades since I read it in

college.

But getting back to to just basic Jane

philosophy is like karma is like this

substance this sticky substance. In fact

claims that the the Buddhist term asawa

comes from the Janes. It was like

borrowed from the Janes instead of

borrowing it from the brahinss that

particular term asawa was b b b b b b b
b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b b
b b b b b b b b b b b b borrowed from
the Janes. And it's like something that
flows in and sticks to you.

And so the Janes believe that karma
sticks to your ja or your soul, weighs
it down so it can't float up into
heaven. So you have to exhaust all of
your karma, not create any new karma,
bad or good, and just exhaust the karma
you've already got. Partly just through
like passive self- torture, eating only
once a week, you know, this kind of
stuff. And so I mean there's a
simplicity, like an elegance to it. I

mean it's very straightforward, very simple. You just exhaust your karma.

Don't create any new karma and then you float upwards. Your ja floats upwards.

Well, I mean it's interesting from an anthropological point of view. It's kind of entertaining.

But with regard to like the wisdom of the system, I do think that that

Buddhism is is a better system in pretty much every respect except for like the

Abidama stuff. And the Janes really

didn't have very many scholars. I've

mentioned this in previous Q&As also

where they were just hardcore aesthetics

and they didn't have enough monks just

memorizing texts because they weren't

written down in ancient India. You know, it was just ancient Indian tradition that sacred texts especially, you memorize. You just memorize it by heart. And the James just didn't have enough scholars to just memorize. And so they lost their, you know, their version of the typica twice. They had to have like a great council where they would kind of cobble together all that remained trying to fill in the gaps to some degree.

But I've completely wandered away from the question.

And so I think I'm just going to move on this question. This is from Nirmmmit and Nermmit says, "Is it true that Adish

Shankaracharya was a major reason for Buddhism's decline in India?" And Shankaracharya was like in a way he was sort of like the founding father of Advaita Vedanta.

So

I mean it's possible that Shankaracharya was a kind of reason for Buddhism's decline simply because he was borrowing ideas from Mahayana Buddhists and sort of sort of Hinduizing it. So he was taking some advanced Buddhist philosophy to some degree and just incorporating that into Hinduism so Hinduism could compete philosophically better with the Buddhists.

I mean when it was just like Vedantism it

was relatively crude philosophically and so the Buddhists really I mean they could win debates pretty easily but then when somebody like Shankara comes along and you know adds sophisticated philosophy to the Hindu side then there's more competition which would then weaken Buddhism but I mean it wasn't the main reason

I think the main reasons for Buddhism decline in India. First of all, of course, you had the the Muslim Turks just genociding Indian Buddhists in ancient times. One of the largest genocides in history that almost never gets mentioned, at least not in the

West. That would be Islamophobic.

But also Buddhism was becoming more and more esoteric,

just tantric and relying upon like

Buddhist universities and so forth that

the the average lay person living in a

village just could not relate to it as

much. You know, it was just so far

beyond them, they couldn't really relate

to it. And so, um, Buddhism kind of lost

some footing in India because of that.

And just some of the weird tantric ideas

were just getting really out there. You

know, they were just sort of pushing it

and pushing it. Sort of like

progressivism in the west, the

post-modern west has just gone so far

that it's just losing the common person.

You know, it's just sort of like this fanatical fringe that still takes it seriously at this point.

So yeah, I do think it's possible that Shankara just through sort of adapting Majamaka Buddhist ideas and I mean he he he had to have been influenced by Buddhism even if just his own inherent wisdom. I mean he was considered to be fully enlightened since he was a child. So I mean it could be that he was a sage also that just spontaneously you know realized certain things but then he still he could like take certain philosophical concepts from Buddhism and

just sort of transplant them into the
nent you know protohinduism which then
strengthened Hinduism and sort of
relatively speaking weakened Buddhism.
So that's possible.

And I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from OFM.

And OFM says, "What's your take on mind
essence direct path Buddhist Mahammudra
teachings in India that apparently
carried over to Tibetan Vajraana?" Well,
I mean, I kind of was touching on that
sort of thing just just a few moments
ago with this is sort of getting into
the tantric kind of esoteric stuff that
the average lay Buddhist in India just
could not relate to anymore and it was

just beyond them.

But mind, essence, I mean, in a way that kind of contradicts earlier Buddhism in that nothing in samsara has an essence.

And I mean, you get out of samsara and essence doesn't even mean anything anymore.

So, um, but aside from that, I'm really no expert on like Tibetan Buddhism, Tric Buddhism. I've never really had much interest in it. became fairly obvious very early on that the historical Gorama Buddha didn't teach it. And my main interest or one of my main interests as a Buddhist and as a monk for 30 years was to find out as well as I could what

Gorama Buddha taught. Because if I was a Buddhist, I want to follow what the Buddha taught. I don't want to follow a bunch of madeup stuff that that arose centuries later. I didn't want to just follow along with Burmese tradition or Thai tradition. I mean, I wanted to know what the Buddha taught and I wanted to follow it as well as I could. And it became pretty obvious very early on.

Vajraana or Maha Mudra, this kind of stuff. I mean it has certain elements of early Buddhism but for the most part it leaves like the original teachings of Gorama Buddha behind or it just incorporates so much other stuff you know this later additions that it just

dilutes down the original message of
Gorama Buddha and I just didn't have
much interest in that I didn't even have
much interest in like Abidama which is
terra Buddhist the third pitka
most western monks just don't have any
use for they'll just reject it or just
ignore it.

So

yeah, I I say so an awful lot. It's just
it's like a filler.

Every language has its filler particles.

So is one in English, I guess.

And I almost said so again just now.

What's your take? Some some people say
basically that kind of thing a lot too.

I used to do that until somebody pointed out to me that basically is just another meaningless filler for the most part.

So my take on mind essence direct path

Buddhist Mahamudra teachings in India

that apparently carried over into

Tibetan vajarana in a way was just

progressive Buddhism that was it still

had like profound wisdom in it but it

was it was deviating so far from what

the Buddha taught or what like

most like reasonable kind

spiritual seekers can really wrap their

head around or fully appreciate. I guess

that I mean it's uh I mean it's just

kind of o gone overboard in my opinion.

I mean if you if you really don't care

what the Buddha really taught then you can just follow any system and call yourself a Buddhist and that's fine. You know that's just the way you choose to do it. That's that's okay with me. But I mean, if you're on my Discord server and are insisting that the Buddha taught like whatever just, you know, some obviously later Mahayana concept, then you might get push back.

But this kind of stuff, I mean, it's got its own wisdom.

I'm sure it does. There may be fully enlightened Mahamudra Buddhists out there, or at least historically, but it has deviated too far from what

the historical God Buddha originally taught for it to be of any great interest to me other than just kind of historical or anthropological interest. Maybe to some degree a kind of triangulation. That's been one of the main benefits I've gotten from studying other philosophies and religious systems, especially like advanced philosophies and religious systems is it allows a kind of triangulation. What is it that sages in different parts of the world agree upon? That kind of thing. And then you take that more seriously than a oneoff. You know, you've got this one sage in like Italy or like like China or wherever that is saying this

one unique thing that is at odds with others. Then you might be a little more skeptical of that. But then again, God Buddha had his own unique teachings like no self, one of the few spiritual systems that rejects the idea of an eternal soul.

So, you just have to be careful.

Let's see here.

I guess I answered that one. So, I'm just going to move on to the next one, which is the next question, which is from No Juice.

And No Juice says, "If someone loses focus on Dharma and finds themselves sucked into samsara, what can they do to

correct themselves and return to grounding their mind in dharma?" Not necessarily living an actively evil or nihilistic life but forgetting dhamma as an active factor coloring their perception and mental states. I feel that I tend to go through prolonged cycles between spiritual mindfulness and mental immersion in the world. Well, note it like you suddenly notice that you're just wallowing in samsara. You note it and as soon as you note it, you're not wallowing in samsara anymore. the noting of the wallowing and the wallowing itself they're incompatible you know they're mutually exclusive so you're wallowing in samsara when you

note that you're wallowing in samsara
like you're pissed off and all of a
sudden you become mindful of being
pissed off then you have transcended it
in a sense you've separated it you're
not wallowing it anymore because you're
just the observer in a sense you know if
you're anything at all you're the one
doing the observing and not the thing
being observed So anything that you can
observe, it's not you and it's not
ultimately real.

And so you're wallowing in samsara.

Suddenly you notice you're wallowing in
samsara. That's it. You've cured
yourself for that moment at least.

So I mean mahasi teachers, teachers of the mahasi method, I mean for the for them this would just be like an obvious answer. Just note it.

Note it. Note it. Note it. And it's a lot of mahasi teachers, even the really advanced ones, just about any question you you have, you have any problem in your meditation, any kind of weird phenomenon in your meditation, any any kind of stumbling block or anything like that, the the most usual most likely answer you're going to get is note it. And that I mean, in a way, it's like a panacea.

So it might not resolve the problem but at least you are detached from the

problem. The problem isn't you anymore.
So if you're wallowing in samsara or
sucked into samsara to the extent that
you know that you're not sucked into
samsara anymore. It's like one of my
favorite verses of the dharmap. The fool
who's aware of his foolishness is at
least wise to that extent. But the fool
who considers himself wise is called a
fool indeed. So if you know that you're
getting you're getting sucked into
samsara sometimes that's at least you're
wise to that extent
and the more you are aware of that just
just be mindful of it and to the extent
that you're mindful of it you're not

wallowing in it anymore you're not
sucked into samsara anymore to the
extent that you are noting and aware of
it

and it's sort of like meditation it's
like you note it and then you kind of
like stray back into samosauric modes of
being and then you as soon as you're
aware of that you just note it again and
it's like bringing back the meditation
to the breath or whatever.

So in a way it's it's it's pretty much
just like meditation on a grand scale.

As soon as you notice you're deviating
from dharma or or just being in the
present moment or being mindful or
whatever, then you just note it and come

back to to the center, so to speak.

And I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Librelam, and he says, "Would you ever breed poison dart frogs?"

No, I'm I'm really not into raising frogs. I mean, if I were going to raise amphibians, definitely I would choose salamanders over frogs. I prefer salamanders to frogs. Nothing against frogs. I am not like a a frog aophobe, anything like that, but I just like salamanders better. I had a few salamanders when I was a kid. I kept one in a big brandy

snifter and you drop an earthworm into it and that salamander would just like attack that worm and they'd be like rolling around in the in the water with it like like it was like an alligator attacking a snake or something.

So, no on the poison dart frogs. I'm just going to move on. Next question.

This is from Xenithoid.

And Xenithoid says, "Apparently getting a Buddha tattoo is against the law in some places. Did you ever see people with Buddha tattoos in Asia?" No, I can't say that I ever saw anyone with a Buddha tattooed on their arm or leg or whatever in in Burma.

Um,

I'm not exactly sure why that is,
but usually they have Buddhist symbols.
They can have Buddhist symbols, but more
likely it's going to be more of a like a
traditional Burmese
pretty much like animistic or alchemical
kind of tattoos or it's just going to be
ornamental for some reason. There's I
mean, you can see Buddhist monks in
Burma with like big scorpion on their
leg, that kind of thing. I knew this one
uh Buddhist monk in Burma, Burmese monk.
He had a university degree in English,
but his body was just covered with
tattoos and they were all like magical
tattoos like to protect him from

witchcraft and snake bites and it was just sort of like like runes like Burmese runes all over him.

So I mean one thing this question did remind me of though is like around 200 after 2011 after Burma opened up to like western capitalism you know the sanctions were released because they pretended to stop having a military government and all that. So there was a fellow from New Zealand I think and I mean after 2011 there was just this flood of westerners coming into Burma just looking around for ways to make money. You know it's just a new untapped resource. You know it's a you know this capitalism hasn't really gotten its its

roots in here yet. We're going to make a
we're going to make a mint.

So anyways, this this New Zealand guy,
he he sets up a nightclub in Rangon and
he puts out an advertisement of the
Buddha wearing stereo headphones and the
Burmese government promptly arrested
this guy and threw him into prison for
sacrilege, I guess.

And I knew a few people that were
thinking that's really pushing it. I
mean, that's going too far. But for me,
I mean, they were making an example of
him, and I think they they may have been
justified. You've got all these
irreligious Westerners, flooding into

the most devoutly Buddhist country in the world, probably. And they're just like showing the Buddha with stereo headphones on, just being irreligious.

And

the government was just saying, "We don't put up with that [__] in this country. You want to do that [__] go back to New Zealand, go back to America, England, wherever. You're not doing it here. And so I could appreciate it to some degree.

I mean, he was just an unfortunate example. He [__] around and he found out, but I bet not very many people put out similar advertisements after that happened. The problem was solved

essentially.

So yeah, but no on the Buddha tattoos.

For some reason, I do not recall seeing a Buddha tattoo on any tattooed person in Asia. So, oh, there's one other thing, though. When I was in Japan, I spent a range retreat in Japan like in 1997,

and somebody gave us Buddha cookies.

There were cookies shaped like the Buddha. And I mean, in Burma, people would be afraid to eat these, you know, it's just they would not sell at all.

But I mean, I ate mine. But it's like there was definitely like this twinge of should I really be doing this while I'm

like biting the head off of a Buddha
cookie?

But I'm just going to move on to

Xenoid's next question here. What is the
general attitude toward tattoos in ter
countries? Well, the only country I can
really speak of based on years of
experience is Burma. And I've already
mentioned a lot of people have tattoos
in Burma. even like I mean it's not like
in America

where you know there's people with just
like tats all over them sleeve tattoos
um it's mostly guys every once in a
while you'll see a woman that just has
like I knew this one village woman who
had like three dots tattooed on her

wrist and um she went to like a fair or a festival or something and there was this tattoo person I don't know if you call them an artist if they're just doing three dots But this tattooist u was giving like protection tattoos and maybe the three dots just represent Buddha Dhamama or some such thing you know it's just a very subtle Buddhist kind of tattoo not a Buddha but it was like had this protective quality to it and um I mean it's not just a recent thing because there's less tattoos now than there were before the British took over Burma Because like in the 1800s, it was just the standard practice for

men to be completely tattooed from the knee to the to the hips. And it would almost all be covered up by their sarong. But if they lift up their sarong to cross a river or something, Tom Puliata was like this. If he would lift up his his robes to like wait across the stream or something, you would see that his upper legs were just completely covered with tattoos just, you know, like a sleeve kind of tattoo.

Also, I have read that in the 1800s or very early 20th century that it was a fashion in Burma for men to get the top of their penis slid open and like little jingle bells. I think they're called chew in Burmese. Like implanted into

their penis so that their penis would have like this this jingly lump under the skin. Although I I guess I could have uh

like refrained from mentioning that part. But yeah, there's tattoos were really a big deal in Burma. That for example, I've I've read somewhere that uh burglars, thieves in particular, would get a tattoo of a yawning cat on their thigh, which presumably made them like jump higher and be faster and this kind of thing. And like I've already mentioned, a lot of protection tattoos. Like there's a kind of runic symbol thing in Burma called an inn. It looks

like a a tic-tac-toe tic-tac-toe board.

And then a few of the the spaces on the tic-tac-toe board would have like obscure little marks.

And there's a kind of alchemy in Burma that is based on ins. You know, there's different kind of alchemists in Burma.

You've got iron alchemists and mercury alchemists, mantra alchemists, and you got the in alchemist that specializes in these weird symbolic figures.

So, there's a lot of that kind of thing, you know, tattoos to protect you from witchcraft and and and snake bites and that kind of thing. And then some are just ornamental, but they're very common

among um among men, possibly more common than in the modern west where tattoos, even virgins get tattoos in the west now, which is kind of strange.

So let's see here. General attitude toward tattoos in ter countries. Again, I can only speak about Burma and it was well established in Burmese culture, even more than now in the past.

Also, I think it was in Thailand that there was certain hill tribes, maybe it was in Burma, where among certain hill tribes, maybe it was the Chin in Burma, where the girls would get their faces tattooed just like covered their faces with tattoos like like some kind of

Mexican gang member. That was the purpose of that was to make them less attractive to the like the local lords who might want to include them in their herums. just like recruit them against their will to live in the big house and wear pretty dresses and so forth.

So yeah, it's it's common in Southeast Asia as a general rule. I'm pretty sure.

So I'm just going to move on to Xenithoid's third tattoo question.

Have you ever considered getting a tattoo of anything related to Buddhism?

And really, I have not. Um I've never really wanted to get a tattoo. It's like my skin is like the top of the jar of peanut butter before you you've scooped

any out. You know, it's just seems a shame to mar this pristine surface, so to speak.

But I used to have this idea of just getting the M symbol, which is more Hindu than Buddhist. There is M in in Buddhism. So, I guess it could qualify here

kind of on the on the borderline, but I was considering just getting the M symbol maybe on my ankle or just like over my left shoulder blade, but that would be about as close to a Buddhist tattoo that I've ever considered. And my woman wants us to get matching tattoos. And I'm just kind of

resisting it because I don't have any tattoos at all. It seems like if I ever decide to take up a life of crime, having identifying marks might be a bad idea.

And it's like you're just stuck with it. You know, you get a tattoo, you're just stuck with it for the rest of your life. You might decide it was a bad idea a year later. Too bad for you. You can get lasers on it or something that will at least make it fade.

My father had one tattoo on his body. It was in block letters on on his forearm. It said, "Lest I forget."

And

I think he had it done on VE Day when he

was in he was a soldier in World War II and he got really stinking drunk one time celebrating that the the Allies had won and he got that tattooed on his arm. That's that's one story. Um, I think on another occasion he said there was a different reason for it, but he never told me what the different reason was. So, I'm just going with the the VE day one. And I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Robert. And Robert says, "What do you think of the Gnostics?"

Well, I really don't know that much about the Gnostics. And what little I know, I I'm just not very much

impressed. You know, the Gnostics, I'm
just the stereotypical Gnostic.

who rides a gnu

is bitten by ganats so that he's

ganacheing his teeth in frustration

the typical gnostic stereotypical I mean

they believe that the world is like evil

and I mean that's even more than Buddha

Buddhism says it's suffering you know

the this world dook up this world is

dook up it's on fire so forth but the

gnostics took it a step further it seems

to me that it's like this is a bad place

and you need to like just like

dissociate from worldliness as much as

you can. Just just the flesh is just bad

and it just it just seems

it's more negative. I mean a lot of people say Buddhism is negative butgnosticism seems to have taken it even like even farther into a realm that I consider to be relatively unhealthy. But I'm no authority on the Gnostics. I mean they had some influence on early Christianity. I've read that the epis not the epistle but the the gospel according to John was composed largely for the sake of refuting certain gnostic sects that had gained prominence in the early second century of the common era. I think uh the gospel according to Thomas, which I like. I wish that it had been included in the New Testament

instead of John,

I think that was uh partly Gnostic in origin. It may have been uh like u a gospel that was accepted by the Gnostics but not by more mainstream like more Catholic kind of Christians.

Um, and the Gnostics, they just they just took the ball and ran with it with regard to like classifying angels and so forth, which doesn't strike me as useful in any degree. I mean, the Buddhists kind of do that with regard to Davas and Brahas, but I mean, it's not really important to me. I don't see how that's going to help you to wake up.

So what little I know about the Gnostics, I mean they seem to have gone

deeper than like mainstream Christians.
I don't think they would have gone
deeper than like contemplative monastics
in Orthodox Christianity or Catholicism.
But I mean because I mean once you get a
certain point I mean you're a heavy
hitter and it's you know once you become
like a really advanced mystic you're not
going to get much more advanced than
that.

So I assume the Gnostics there was a lot
of wisdom like the pseudo Dionysius I
don't know if he was a Gnostic but I'm
sure the Gnostics liked him.

Uh you know they they may have had more
of a mystical leaning but two things

about them that I mean I kind of understand or at least believe is one that they were just overly negative towards this world. you know just sort of like aversion dosa towards this world which is not like a balanced point of view it seems to me and second just this extreme classification of different archons and levels of angels and so forth that I mean it's just like complete mythology at that point but I'm sure they had like advanced practices they probably had like very wise gnostic sages and so forth But those aren't really the ones that you learn a lot about in history books. And that's like the only place I've learned

about gnostics for the most part is just like history books about like early Christianity or the late Roman Empire, that kind of thing.

So I'm just going to move on to Robert's second question. Do you have any opinions on the Sufis? Well, I have read that Muhammad, peace be upon him, would have just vehemently disapproved of the Sufis that Muhammad was very I mean the the Islam that he taught was very thisworldly even though you know there's an emphasis on heaven and so forth that like Old Testament um like protojudaism doesn't have you know he might be a

little more spiritual than Old Testament
Judaism

But still he was pretty much in and of
the world. And so the Sufis I'm pretty
sure were influenced by India.

Um I'm no authority on the Sufis. I know
that they have adopted certain Buddhist
ideas even adopted like Buddhist stories
like there's a story from I think it's
the Dhamapata commentary that also is
included in like an old Sufi book of of
stories. So

um there obviously has been some
influence from Buddhism and probably
Hinduism also on Sufism and that's
probably where they get their mysticism
you know their meditative techniques or

at least the original idea for meditative techniques. I'm sure that there have been sages like very spiritually advanced people all over the world in all religions just they just happen to be born there you know they just have this innate talent and you know they're just stuck with this this religion that you know everyone around them follows and if you don't follow it then you get killed or something. I mean there are places and times in history like that like 16th century Spain for example.

So I do think that Sufism was a kind of it started off as a kind of eastern

Islam probably in Persia like what's
that area

like it's sort of like on the the
frontier between northwestern India and
southeastern Iran or Persia that had a
lot of Buddhism there and then of course
it was part of the Persian Empire for a
long time and so there'd be after Muslim
Islam took over you know there'd like
some cultural influence and um you know
cultural influence just through invasion
of India also later on.

So I do think that Sufism is like Islam
that got a little bit more sophisticated
through incorporating certain Buddhist
and Hindu ideas and practices.

And aside from that, there are there is

some Sufism that like whirling dervishes
I don't have much use for. But some of
those the crazy wisdom of some of the
Sufi masters. I remember there's reading
about this one Sufi master who would
just do like weird backwards stuff. I
guess the the Dakota Indians or Lakota
Indians of the the Plains in the in the
United States, they had this one member
of the tribe who would do everything the
opposite. I'm not exactly sure why, but
you know, it's like he'd fall madly in
love with the ugliest, most
foul-tempered woman in the in the
village and he'd ride his horse
backwards and he'd just laugh aoriously

if the chief died. This kind of thing.

There were certain Sufi masters that were like that. And there's this one story that sticks in my mind of this Sufi master who's like at a marketplace sitting next to a pile of hot chilies and he's just eating one chili pepper after another after another. Just tears streaming down his face. His face is just beat red. You know, he's obviously in a serious amount of discomfort from eating these hot peppers. Somebody finally asked him, "Why are you doing this?" And he said, "I I keep eating them just hoping to get a sweet one." And you know, they're they're making some kind of crazy wisdom kind of

teaching out of it, which I it kind of appeals to me. I can kind of appreciate that sort of thing. But still, I don't see what the point of favoring Sufism would be when you can just get the the pure source of the best of Sufism farther east.

So,

I'm just going to move on to Robert's third question, which is, which of the mystic traditions outside of Buddhism do you consider to come closest to getting it right? Well, I mean getting what right?

Um I mean a mystic tradition would have like two different levels. There would

be the level of mysticism and then
there'd be like the level of like theory
and

I mean a mystic

if he's an advanced mystic like I've
already been mentioning like St. John of
the Cross here we go again. I mean he
really was a master of fourth Janna. He
was like an advanced heavyhitterter
mystic but he lived in 16th century
Spain. He had no choice but to be a
Catholic or to be a heretic burned at
stake. Those were his two choices. So he
was a Catholic and he he entered a
contemplative order that the cal the
Carmealites.

His mentor was St. Teresa of Avia who

was also uh like an advanced mystic even though she apparently was a little bit nutty

but still I mean those aren't mutually exclusive.

So I mean with regard to the actual mysticism of just getting into contemplative states where you're wide awake and not thinking anything then I mean just about any mystical tradition can have that. I mean at least in like gifted talented individuals

but with regard to the theory surrounding that mysticism

I mean none of it's going to be very good because mysticis like mystical

enlightenment or mystical illumination cannot be explained in words and you're just going to be using cultural conditioning and so forth as a as a way of just jerryrigging some kind of some theoretical framework. work to to explain it and I mean none of it is really of any great value with regard to explaining it.

I mean even Buddhism like there are some serious Buddhists. Nyan Vera the the existentialist eccentric English monk who lived in London in the 50s and 60s. He just hated mysticism. He just utterly despised it. You know he just vehemently insisted that there's no such thing as that that mysticism is just [_]

And I think a lot of orthodox devout
terra Buddhists would not consider terra
to be a mystical tradition. I mean it's
pretty clear to me if you read like the
atakawaga or you know what janna is that
pretty damn mystical

and just uh well

the ways of explaining it are just are
not they're always going to fall short.

So,

it's this is a hard question for me to
answer. Which mystical traditions
outside Buddhism come closest to getting
it right? I mean, getting it right just
means being in an advanced mystical
state because none of the theories are

going to get it right. All the theories are going to be invalid.

And there have been mystics in just about every tradition probably Sufi Sufism included.

And I mean there could be just completely non-religious people who just have mystical experiences either through a new neardeath experience or whatever. Some of them might not ever try to even explain it.

So this is a tough question. This might be the most difficult question I've been asked on this Q&A.

Which of the mystical traditions outside Buddhism come closest to getting it right?

I think all of them do. At least with regard to the actual practice of mysticism. Um, I mean, Christianity, I don't know, it's it's like exceptional Christians in in certain periods like 16th century Spain, there were a lot of heavyhitting mystics in 16th century Spain.

But nowadays,

I don't know. Meister Ehart was another one of these really advanced Christian mystics. But some people say Paul of Tarsus was a mystic. And I mean, his mysticism based on his epistles does not seem to be extremely advanced or at least he doesn't mention anything

extremely advanced. I mean, he does have like this one epistol where he's kind of making this innuendo about this stuff that he experienced that was so, you know, so exalted, but I mean, his personality doesn't really reflect that. Then you have the pseudoianis who started off as a pagan and then when or so I have read some Byzantine emperor bans the philosophicalmies or schools of of Athens you know they're just pretty much like clamping down on paganism then the pseudodianicius just for whatever reasons converted to Christianity and started introducing relatively advanced mysticism into Christianity.

So getting it right really would just be having as pure of a mystical experience as possible, which is just wide awake, not thinking anything, no perceptual like no perceptual explanation, commentary, anything like that.

And I guess I better just move on to the next question. And this is our last questioner.

By golly, I think I'm getting a little more concise even though I still digress all over the place. Well, we did have slightly fewer questions than usual this time and some of them were relatively easy to answer.

Anyways, our next and last question here is Fred and Fred says, "When the body is dispersed, is the mind stream capable of storing previous memories?"

Golly.

Yeah. Well, going with Terraata

Buddhism, as soon as the body is

dispersed, you get a new body. So, I

mean, there's not even a single moment

when you have the mind stream without a

body, unless you're like in a a formless

realm, which is extremely advanced

heaven realm.

But aside from that, I mean, you go from

dying person to fertilized egg

is immediately. no gap in between other

than just the tiniest, you know,

fraction of a trillionth of a second in between the flashes of these moments.

And then the minds the mental states aren't there either during that that tiniest infinite little gap.

So is the mind stream capable of storing previous memories without a body?

Uh gosh, that's really a theoretical question cuz personally I don't recall not having a body and storing previous memories in my mind stream while not having that body.

But theoretically, I don't think it would be absolutely necessary to have a body in order to have a mind and a mind stream.

There are presumably just like spirit beings that don't have a physical body. Although in Tibetan Buddhism generally the explanation for that like ghosts and so forth is that they do have a body. It's just that their body is of a different kind, made of a different kind of matter than ours. So that we don't see them. They generally don't see us. And so I mean we could be like in the same room together and not even know it.

Um but just theoretically going with the idea that anything is possible I don't see why in some version of reality somewhere somehow you have got minds that don't rely upon

a brain

that you just have like this I don't know I mean it could just be like some kind of resonating pulsing energy or something that has enough structure to it, you know, some sort of geometric stability or some such that I mean it doesn't need a brain. It just it's mind only, I suppose.

And yeah, I I don't see why it would be impossible in theory. Let's just put it that way. With regard to humans, then I mean, you don't have a body without a mind. You don't have a mind without a body. They just they're

together. Namarupa, at least according to Orthodox Terra.

So, I'm just going to move on to Fred's next question,

which is what is the purpose of previous memories when they can be bogus

recollections and bias? Well, I mean,

there's not really a purpose. I mean,

it's just sort of like like a side

effect or it's like um some I've I've

watched a lot of ghost shows like

paranormal reality shows where

paranormal investigators, which usually

they're not. They're just like making a

show to make money, you know, just

playing up. Oh, I got a weird feeling

just now. you know this kind of [_]

that at least I mean according to the theory that some haunted houses may really have intelligent spirits like haunting that house but a lot of so-called haunted houses just have like this residual energy like residual emotional imprints in the house that that cause sort of like apparitions that really just are doing the same thing every time. You know, it's just you just see this apparition of the lady in white walking down the hall and that's all she ever does. You know, it's just sort of like this imprint in the aortic record or something of of her just, you know, she was had some emotionally intense

experience. Maybe her child just died or something and so it just somehow imprinted that energy into the house somehow. And I mean, what is the purpose of it? There's no purpose. It just happens. It's like this residual side effect and like a child remembering a past life

then I mean it's not really a purpose. I mean maybe there could be some kind of Darwinian survival value to that. I don't know what it would be some sort of like racial memory or something. I'm not sure. But I mean it this kind of reminds me of one time I was working on a commercial fishing vessel, a factory trawler in the Bearing Sea long ago and I

was the biologist on board and so one of these guys working on the ship asked me what is the purpose of a jellyfish and it's like the purpose of a jellyfish is to stay alive long enough to make baby jellyfishes. You know it's there's not really a purpose. So what is the purpose of previous memories when they can be bogus recollections bias? I mean the easiest answer is there is no purpose. It's just kind of like this residual side effect that happens sometimes that and there's not necessarily a purpose there. If there was like this valuable purpose, then it might just happen to pretty much

everybody

instead of just being this like rare phenomenon of children especially, small children especially who insist that they were this other person who died and then became them.

And I think most if not all but most like past life regressions are just kind of bogus recollections and bias like like uh Fred here says you know it's just you know you get hypnotized and then they say go back to your your previous existence and it could just be like subconscious imagination you know just dreaming up this past life that never happened. I assume a lot of cases are like that. Even like pa alya pa

aliato specialized in teaching janna or
like samata meditation unlike most um
meditation teachers in Burmese
traditions who teach like mindfulness
sip batana paliato I mean he was really
into janna and I mean he was more
orthodox than somebody like mahasiato. I
mean he was he was more according to the
text and what is like like genuine
orthodox terra Buddhist theory.

And I mean some of some of his examples
of success stories like there was this
one female meditator who had a past life
regression of being a royal white
elephant who as a result of the merit of
offering a flower to a pigota got reborn

as a human. And to a Burmese person who takes that kind of stuff seriously, I mean, they don't they don't question it. It's like, wow, that's that's profound. But to a westerner capable of critical thought, you know, it's like, why would a an elephant offer a flower to a pigota and and have this wish of being reborn as a human and then have the wish fulfilled through the merit of offering a flower to a a bell-shaped pile of bricks?

So yeah, what is the purpose of previous memories? For the most part, there is no purpose. It just is like this unusual largely paranormal sort of liinal experience that is sort of going against

purpose. You know, it's just like this not exactly random, but it's just like this quirky side effect that comes up sometimes.

slips through the cracks of the the rules of this version of Sams Sara.

So, I'm just going to move on to Fred's third question, which is the last question of the evening or the morning if you I guess it technically is morning. No, it isn't. It's not even tomorrow yet. Golly, this is a late one though.

The fish tank's going to the light's going to turn off any time now. So, Fred's last question. Why is the ego

pernicious and selfdepreciating?

I'm not exactly sure what

self-depreciating means

is he I guess he's saying why is the ego

pernicious and also why is the ego

self-depreciating which I assume means

something like like not beneficial.

So yeah that's why is the ego not

beneficial? Let's just kind of simplify

the question. And the ego is not

beneficial largely because it's based on

delusion.

I mean the ego is the belief. It is the

conceit I am which is the root of all

suffering. Like that's that's a

statement in the

it's in the artaga. I'm pretty sure this

may not be an exact quote but it's like the conceit I am is the root of all suffering.

So I mean that's one reason why the ego is not beneficial. It's based on delusion.

And so I mean if you're deluded you're going to suffer. I mean if you transcend the ego you realize that the ego is just sort of taking a tiny infinitesimally small fraction of infinity and trying to turn that into reality and ignore all the rest of infinity.

Then yeah, it's going to be incomplete.

It's going to be unsatisfying

based on delusion and ignorance and it's

just I mean the ego has to perpetuate itself.

It's just sort of built into egos. It's like Darwinian evolution where the struggle for survival. I mean all beings fear death for example or at least any being that feels fear. I mean, you might have animals that are so primitive they don't have any fear at all.

I think insects may be that way despite the fact that they might get out of the way of a slapping hand.

But I mean, there has to be this desire to keep going and this desire is suffering. Desire is the cause of all suffering. So, in order to have an ego, you pretty much have to suffer. You have

to be delusional and you have to be unhappy, at least not fully satisfied. So the more ego you've got, the more samsaric you are, the more delusional you are, at least in certain respects. And delusion results in suffering. the ego just it through its desire to perpetuate itself and its desire to continue existing, you know, it's it's pretty much at odds with reality. It's going to lose the battle sooner or later. No matter how hard you try to stay alive, sooner or later you're going to fail.

And the harder you try, it's like the more dissatisfied and worried and

stressed and everything you're going to be. So the more ego you have, the more kind of isolation you've got also.

You know, it's like alienation from the rest of samsara at the very least.

And also it's just like alienation from reality.

So there's lots of reasons why the ego is pernacious.

I mean really, I mean the ego is based on delusion. From a Buddhist point of view, there is no self.

So, the belief that you are a self, I mean, it's putting you at odds with reality. And when you're odds with reality, you lose because reality always wins.

And I suppose I might as well just stop here.

like I should always say at the beginning and only did once to my recollection. If you have any questions you think I can answer, then go ahead and ask those particular questions and I will do my best to answer them. And uh like and subscribe if you have not done so already. And if you're into it, be happy.

Okay, I think we're recording now.

Hail audience. Hello and welcome to question and answer number 160. I am your host Ponyo Bosa and this is my glass of boine glandular secretions.

And of course 160 is nowhere near to being prime. about as unprimed as you can get because if I did my math correctly, 160 is $2 * 2 * 2 * 2 * 2 * 5$ or if you prefer $5 * 2^5$ th power.

So

before I start answering questions, we don't have a whole lot of questions.

This will probably be a relatively short one, but before I start answering questions, there are a couple things I'd

like to cover. One is you may have noticed that I have technical difficulties with these videos sometimes. Like last week, for unknown reasons, there was like this weird reverb

effect in in like the audio up until about halfway through the video and then it suddenly spontaneously cleared up.

Other times it's like not too long ago, the sound just completely cut off about halfway through the video.

And then before that, before switching to a different um like

what do you call it recording software that sometimes I would have to do the same video twice or even three times

because it would appear to be recording and then I'd go back and it would be like an empty file.

So I do have kind of a theory about this partly. I mean it could be the karma of some of the people involved probably all the people involved is such that there has to be some kind of difficulties in the transmission of dharma or dharma if you prefer.

So it's like it shouldn't be too easy that the easier it is to get something the less it is worth. It's a law of economics. It works with regard to like females and that sort of thing too. It's not just economics. Works that way with

Dharma, too. Apparently, easier it is to get it, the less it is worth. Which is one reason why the philosopher Girdf deliberately made his philosophy hard to understand. So, you'd have to work like rack your brains to try and understand what he was trying to say. But since I don't do that, we have to have technical difficulties. Although I've also got this thing about technical stuff, like complicated technical stuff often breaks down around me. Like when I would ride a bus in Burma, almost always it would break down. But then again, it could be that just buses in Burma almost always break down.

There's that, too. I mean, one time I

was on a bus, the entire drive line just fell out right onto the highway.

Anyways, that was my halfbaked theory with regard to why there are so many technical difficulties in my videos. But also, I remember like maybe a couple months ago, somebody asked me if there's any story about my monk's life that I haven't told yet. And of course, one reason why I haven't told such stories is because I don't think of them. But then the other night when I was taking a shower when I get good ideas I I take get good ideas when I'm bathing for some reason. It was that way in Burma too. I remember this story about when I first

came to Mahagandon which is a big school
monastery in Amarapura in central Burma.

Uh for a short time a few years

Amarapura was actually the capital of
Burma but now it's just kind of a like a
suburb of Mandalay.

And I spent a little over a year at
Mahagandon which is a big school
monastery. My the abbot of the first
monastery I stayed at. My acharia sent
me there just to learn Burmese and study
some poly and that sort of thing.

So anyways, I was given a tour of the
place when I first got there and they
had like a little clinic there, just
this little like a a sedite I think it
was called like you know the medicine

building and there was like this little
spectacled monk, little Burmese monk
there who was showing me around and he
he took me to like the medicine cabinet
and

he he said you know anything you want
just help yourself and I'm looking in
this medicine cabinet. hadn't been a
monk for very long and I was kind of a
druggie before I became a monk
and there was like this big jug of
phenobarbital there and and I'd never
taken barbiturates before in my life. I
think the hippies used to call them
yellows
and

at least this kind of of barbiterate
phenobarbatl

and so I was just sort of had this inner
struggle. It's like, man, should I just
take a handful just just in case, you
know, just just add it to my first aid
kit, so to speak? Also, I remember they
had like this big gallon jug of Valium
there, too, but I just resisted the urge
and didn't take any. And then, I mean, I
didn't like, you know, um, take him up
on his offer for me to just help myself
to anything that was in the medicine
cabinet. So later I asked one of the the
other monks who was sort of taking
charge of me. He's kind of like my
supervisor, assistant teacher, that sort

of thing. I asked, "Is that monk there a doctor?" You know, the the the monk who's running the dispensary. And he says, "No, actually he's got a fourth grade education. It was just that some village or some local doctor or more than one doctor just gave him like the rundown the easy like basics on how to give injections and what to give for for different kinds of ailments but probably in all likelihood he was mainly just handing out paracetamol and this stuff called bomidone which is like an antihistamine.

So anyways,

I guess I should start answering

questions. And this first question, first group of questions is from Gnostic Rocker, who asked me these questions more than a week ago, but he sent the questions in kind of an unusual place. So I overlooked them last time. So he's first on the list this time.

So what he did was he just emailed me the questions. And usually people don't email me questions or there's one other person, Romeo, who will email me the questions, but he'll also leave the exact same questions under the YouTube video, which is where I the first place I look.

So anyways, Gnostic Rocker says,

"As an ex-minastic, what is your view of

the following?" And then he continues,
as you might expect. He says, "Why is
Araant upatissa's first century
meditation manual and suta commentarial
exegesis

the wimbouti maga rarely studied or even
discussed in terra circles? The weimi
maga is clearly an orthodox text of
significant seriousness and historical
context contextual integrity, but I have
never heard a monastic even mention it."

And he continues, "Is it because as a
meditation instruction manual and
hermeneutic suta interpretation, the
Wimuta Maga, Wimuti Maga encourages a
very different kind of dharma practice

than that outlined in the sutas. In the text, the Wii Muti Maga advises meditators to meditate on fire, to meditate on flowers, and to meditate on the flow, movement, and energy of wind, and to meditate on mandelas, which the meditator paints on cloth or walls. The text also says that after such practices, the meditator will attain the power to literally cause earthquakes, shake palaces, have the power to cause rain to fall and to start fires at will with his psychic powers. It outlines a very different kind of meditation path than the styles of samatawiasa that terra monastics usually teach. Is that the reason for the monastic silence on

the text? because it contrasts so greatly with the standard suda guidance and descriptions of meditators attainments. Okay, so the question essentially is

how about the Wii Moody manga? How come it's not as big of a deal in Terravada as Nostic Rucker thinks that maybe it should be? So the thing is the Wimui Maga was considered to be lost until finally I think it was like in the 1970s they found like an old palm leaf manuscript stored away at some old monastery in Sri Lanka. So it had just essentially become extinct. The Wimi Maga is apparently the Wii Maga as it is

like printed and translated today is based on one old manuscript found at some old monastery in Sri Lanka back in the 19 like 1970s approximately.

So apparently what happened in Terravada was you had

um southern India and in Sri Lanka you had like proto commentaries I mean it wasn't like the main commentarial tradition yet but you still had commentarial literature including this wea manga I whether it really was composed by an orahant named upatissa I mean that could just be like a legend but it is known that the wizudi manga which is composed by Buddhagosa was largely based like with regard to

format and everything on the Wii Moody
manga. So it was sort of like supposedly
a more orthodox or more in line with the
like the development of orthodoxy
um than the weiimi manga was. So it was
kind of based on the weoodi manga but it
had like teachings that were more in
line with what orthodox terraodada was
becoming and so it just replaced the
wemui maaga. The wisudi manga replaced
the wimuti maga
and I mean that's like I mean once it
was replaced by what was considered to
be a superior text or at least a more
orthodox text then the wimoody manga
just kind of faded out.

So that's the main the main explanation
as far as I understand it. But let's see
with regard to

let's see. Yeah, I mean a lot of Asian
terraota monks have probably never heard
of the wemui manga just because like I
said it just kind of died out and it was
just based on like one text like some
ancient Latin texts and the only reason
that they exist I think some of Tacitus
is like this where it's just some
Catholic monastery had it preserved in
some library somewhere and it was just
ignored and forgotten until some scholar
finally
rediscovers it.

So, let's see. The Wii Maga advises

meditators to meditate on fire. Well, I mean, that's fire cina. That's one of the that's one of the methods taught in uh in the Wizudi Maga also to meditate on flowers. Um I don't remember the Wudi Maga advising meditation on flowers.

Although in the commentary of literature there is a story of the Buddha teaching a monk to meditate by contemplating a flower. I think it was a red flower and the monk became enlightened as a result.

He was a a disciple of venerable Sar Puta and Sar Puta not being omniscient was giving him meditation instructions that they they just weren't vibing with him very well. They weren't working very

well and my eyes are starting to kind of burn a little bit. This happens to me.

I didn't take a shower today and so if I go for more than a day without taking a shower, eventually my eyes start to burn,

which I think is just like eyelid grease getting into my eyes.

So it's it behooves you to wash off your eyelid grease

or at least wipe them off. So anyways,

oh so venerable Saruto was teaching this monk and it just wasn't working. So then

this monk went to the Buddha and the

Buddha could just like see right into

him and see what he needed and just gave

him a red flower and said meditate on

this and within no time the monk had become enlightened.

Let's see. Movement, energy of wind, wind cina. That's also taught in the Wizudi manga. To meditate on mandelas, which would be casinos in general at least. Um, a a casino would just be a solid color or a solid element like earth casina or blue cina or red cina, white casino, light casino, that kind of thing. So, it's the Wizudi manga and the Wii manga really are not like radically different. It's just that the Wudi Maga was considered to be like an a refinement and improvement plus like an adjustment of certain teachings that

maybe weren't as orthodox as they were
when they were composed um in the Wii
Moody maga.

So let's see and the certain powers like
causing earthquakes and making rain and
so forth. I mean that's not too far of a
stretch from just orthodox
terraoden mainstream doctrines.

So,

I guess I answered that question. And
so, I'm just going to move on to Gnostic
Rocker's second rather long question,
which may even be longer than the first
one. He says, "You mentioned that you
had enjoyed Francis Herbert Bradley's
Appearance and Reality, which is on the
bookshelf back there. I haven't read it,

but I'm aware that it was a pivotal text for Burton Russell, exercising profound influence on his early years as a thinker. Professors Sprig and Hondur write of the text in the Oxford Companion to Philosophy that, and Gnostic Rucker quotes, quote, Bradley's appearance in reality is the main statement of his metaphysics. Book one, appearance, argues that most ordinary things

For example, things and their qualities, time and space, causation, the self, even things in themselves are merely appearances. While book two, reality, strains to characterize with

more final truth the reality they so usefully misrepresent to us, namely the absolute, a single cosmic experience of which we, so far as we truly are at all, are components. FH Bradley's appearance in reality leads to a form of monism according to which there is only one thing distinctions within which are simply appearance. This is clearly heady stuff. There is no access to reality apart from what the mind provides us with and further that the mind can provide and reveal to us only its own contents. when I unquote. So then Gnostic Rucker continues, "When I read that quote, it seemed seems obvious to me why you would like Bradley like

George Barkley. It's very Hindu or Buddhist, isn't it?" Echoing the concepts of Maya, Samsara, Papancha, and Anicha. Am I correct in connecting the above to why you appreciate Bradley's work? Is it unsurprising that such a text would find its way to a monastery in ex British colonial setting of Burma? So the short version of this question is why do you like FH Bradley?

And I had never heard of FH Bradley until

I was reading the letters of venerable Nano Vera the eccentric existentialist British monk who lived in son back in the 50s and first half of the 60s before

he selfdeleted.

And he mentions in his letters, I mean, he was mostly into existentialism and like protoexistentialism like Kirkagard. He was heavily into reading Kirkagard, but he he mentioned that he was reading FH Bradley and he liked it. I think he was reading Bradley's Logic, which I think is also on the back the the back bookshelf there, but I've never read it and probably never will because I'm no longer living alone in a cave with nothing better to do than to read long difficult books and meditate.

So anyways, because venerable Nyana Vera was occasionally making comments about

FH Bradley and how he agreed with FH Bradley and so I thought, wow, that's that's just something I aspired to read someday is FH Bradley. So when I was in America during one of my sojourns to America,

um I had a supporter who was willing to get me the book and he it was out of print, long out of print. So he found it like a a used book online, I guess. I think it was printed in like 1910.

And nobody had read the entire book until I read the entire book. I went back to Burma and was reading it in a cave.

if I remember correctly.

So

let's see why do why did I like FH

Bradley? Mainly just because he had such a different way of looking at things.

That's one reason why I like David Hume too. You know he just you know most philosophers are looking at something from a certain point of view or at least from the same perspective and then some other philosopher just kind comes in sideways.

You know, like David Hume was was just challenging what most philosophers just accepted as given, just axiomatic, and he's saying, "Whoa, wait a minute. You can question that. That's not necessarily true." Like cause and effect

being a good one. When with respect to David Hume, FH Bradley, um he had one strike against him in that he was a Hegelian.

So it there was like a a fashion of like German um idealism which was founded essentially by Kant and then Hegel and Schopenhau were like the first generation of his dec or his successors who adopted uh like idealist just mindonly kind of philosophy that physical matter doesn't exist and so I mean I really don't have much use for Hegel, but Bradley, he really doesn't mention Hegel much and his philosophy just kind of, you know,

starts with some Hegelian assumptions like like there is no physical matter and then just kind of works out his version of reality from that. And um it's it was really kind of heavy reading and I didn't really absorb a whole hell of a lot of it. I do remember this one weird idea that Bradley had. It's like in order for something truly to exist, it would have to contain all of the causes of its existence internally.

And so he comes up with this strange theory that because of this, the bigger something is, the more real it is, because the the greater the chances that more of the causes of this this entity's existence are internal. If something is

just like this tiny speck, then the causes of its existence aren't going to be there. So, I mean, that's kind of the Buddhist point of view is everything is just kind of atomized and the cause of that atom's existence is entirely not internal. You know, it's it's entirely external to that little speck's existence.

So, Bradley, he wasn't a Buddhist.

And so he just had this idea because you know that the more real something is is the the I mean in order for something to be absolutely real, it would have to contain within itself all of the causes of its own existence. And so he had this

theory that the bigger something is, the more causes of its own existence are likely to be inside of it. So that's kind of a weird idea that he just kind of arrives at. I don't know what what kind of

benefit there is from that. You know, like an elephant is more real than an ant because the elephant is bigger. So, the elephant would be more real than a human at least with regard to their their apparent physical bodies even though Bradley didn't really exist in or he didn't believe in physical bodies. He believed in the appearance of physical bodies.

But one thing that I especially like

about Bradley is his epistemology
that like at the turn of the 20th
century there were three main theories
with regard to epistemology or the
philosophy of
the philosophy of knowledge.

I think that's theory of knowledge.

That's it. Theory of knowledge was what
it was also called. So you had the
correspondence theory which is what
science is based on. The correspondence
theory is a statement is true if and
only if it corresponds to some empirical
reality. So going with the
correspondence theory the statement the
apple is on the table is true if and

only if there really is an apple on the table.

So then you had the coherence theory which was mainly championed by certain Hegelians including FH Bradley.

The coherence theory says that the statement a statement is true if and only if it is in harmony with the other statements that have already been determined to be true.

So the statement the apple is on the table is true if and only if it is in harmony with all the other perceptions you've already formulated that you consider to be true. So that comes closer to uh like a Buddhist interpretation of samsara and

conventional truth. So that's like
conventional truth unlike like science
and its attempt to like like build a
tower of babel like an intellectual
tower of babel up into the heavens of
omniscience that it's just not going to
work that way. It's it's just so long as
you agree that it's true then it's true
at least in a conventional sense and
that is like samsaric truth. Ultimate
truth would be more the correspondence
theory. ultimate truth is something is
true if and only if it corresponds to
reality.

But I mean it it just kind of goes
beyond words. It's no longer samsaric.

And I might as well add the third the third theory of knowledge which was championed by William James which was um pragmatism. It's true if it works and if it stops working it stops being true. So the apple is on the table. the statement the apples on the table would be true if and only if you could actually walk over there and and get the apple or you know at least potentially I guess but I've read one kind of icky thing about Bradley and he's he definitely was not a Buddhist probably didn't give a damn about Buddhism even though certain aspects of his philosophy are in harmony with certain aspects of certain Buddhist philosophies especially like yoga which

was idealist it's like the mind only school of Buddhist philosophy.

But FH Bradley, he was like a lifelong fellow of Oxford University. So he just he was single. He just lived in like a dorm or an apartment on the campus of Oxford University. And one of his habits was he'd sit in the window. He had like an upper story bedroom, I guess. He'd sit in the upper window and shoot cats with he had a revolver. So he'd just be sitting in his window just shooting at stray cats, which is not a good thing to do from the Buddhist point of view. But he did have some interesting philosophy. So I think I better just move on to the

next question here

also from Gnostic Rucker. And this is kind of a short one. He says, "You are a monastic for 30 years. Didn't you miss rock and roll? deep in your being.

Didn't you ache to hear the emotional, visceral, cerebral, comforting, lifeafffffirming, life realizing, healing, joyful, rebellious, autonomous rock and roll expression of our species being and species nature.

Well, it is true that like when I was living in Burma, I did not have access to any

most of the time that I was in Burma, I had no access to internet. I mean, there was no internet most of the time that I

was in Burma and it was like 1G if there was any internet. It sucked.

But I mean, I listen to a lot of rock and roll. So, still I'd be playing rock and roll in my head, you know? I'd be a Buddhist monk. I'd be trying to live like an ancient Indian biku aesthetic, but still I'd have like Led Zeppelin and talking heads, this kind of stuff playing in my head sometimes just spontaneously. I remember one memorable occasion. I woke up on the floor of a cave, which is where I normally slept. It's closer you get to the floor, the cooler it is. So, I woke up with four sticks by Led Zeppelin just pounding

away in my head. And the fact that it was like in mid pound when I woke up, I mean, it was it had to have been going quite quite a while before I even woke up.

So

yeah, there is that. I mean, sometimes I even have to confess like starting to sing because monks aren't supposed to sing. It's a dooka offense. You have to make confession for that. You know, you just got music in your head and then you just kind of start singing along and then just broke a rule.

But I do like rock and roll. I have to admit

there were a certain two things in

particular that I thought were going to be like severe challenges, maybe three, before I became a monk.

It's like, well, how am I going to deal with not having this anymore, but rock and roll really wasn't one of them. One of them was just like orgasms and sexuality.

That should be self-explanatory. One was my book collection because I really took pride in my book collection. I unlike this book collection that is just kind of there and I don't look at it very often. I don't read books hardly at all anymore but I used to be really into it and

parting with my book collection was it was daunting before I actually did it. Afterwards it was like nothing. It was like ah no big deal but before it was it was difficult. That's often the way it is like renouncing something. It seems like it's so difficult until you actually do it and then you realize that it was easy. And then the third thing that I was considered to be like a really daunting challenge to just go cold turkey for the rest of my life was pro football, which I have zero interest in at all anymore. I I don't know if I can name a single pro athlete.

There's some Kelsey guy who's engaged to Taylor Swift. That's that's about it.

And not because I watch football. It's just, you know, you just hear see this stuff on the internet just accidentally.

So, let's see.

Yeah, rock and roll.

Yeah, I just have to just play it in my own head. I have a fairly good memory, so I could do that. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Romeo. And Romeo says, "What is your knowledge and opinion of past Hindu yogi Paramahamsai Yogaandanda?"

And strangely enough, Paramahamsa translates into English as ultimate goose. Although technically again, Hamsa probably is the ruddy shell

duck and not a goose. Although usually
hansaw is translated as goose in English
like wild goose

but more correctly it is the ruddy shell
duck which is big like a goose, long
neck like a goose, honks like a goose. I
don't know why it isn't a goose. Any
ornithologists out there who can explain
to me why a shell duck is a duck instead
of a goose, just let me know. Just
enlighten me with regard to this. I
assume it's just like parallel evolution
or convergent evolution where you had a
line of ducks that just became more and
more goose-like.

Anyways, getting back to yoga nandanda,
I did read his his book Autobiography of

a Yogi twice. Once when I was a teenager. It was like one of the first spiritual books I ever read. And I was impressed the first time and the second time I was like in my 20s, mid20s I suppose. And I'm just kind of like one eyebrow keeps going up. It's like, huh? Yeah, I'm not sure about this. Like, I think he claimed that Jesus came to visit him like when he was in a hotel room and like also when he was in a hotel hotel room, he looked out the window and saw I think it was Lord Krishna levitating outside the window. This kind of stuff. Also, he struck me as a bit gay the second time I read it.

I wouldn't be surprised if he was gay.

Although technically I mean that that doesn't really I I'm saying technically a lot but I mean it's neither here nor there. Like one of the best teachers I ever had in my life was was gay.

So I mean being gay really isn't necessarily a strike against somebody.

Unless he's like a religious swami who's actually a practicing homosexual then that might be a bit different. But one of my heroes, one of my first spiritual teachers was Ramdas, formerly known as Dr. Richard Albert of Harvard University, who was a switch hitter. I mean, he he was AC/DC. So, he was doing some gay stuff even while he was like

living at ashrams in India.

Still, I mean, I have respect for the man.

So

my knowledge and opinion of past Hindu Yogi Parahasa Yoga Nana yeah I think he was kind of credulous and I think he may have sort of played upon the credul of others to some degree.

Um, I don't know what kind of spiritual attainments he would have. Although, if Jesus is visiting him in his hotel room, then if if that really happened, then he could be relatively advanced. But if it didn't really happen, then to some degree, you've got kind of like a

showman writing books for the sake of, I don't know, whatever.

So yeah, I the first time I read it, I was impressed like as a teenager just kind of like stars in my eyes just kind of believing all of it.

But uh the second time not so much.

But I mean even if he wasn't fully enlightened, and I kind of doubt that he was fully enlightened still, I mean you can't really blame somebody for not being fully enlightened. I mean, he's probably operating or was probably operating at a higher level of consciousness than the average normie.

So, I mean, you shouldn't just even if you don't think he was fully enlightened

or you think that not everything in his book is necessarily true, that doesn't mean you just throw out the baby with a bath water. I mean, I'm sure that there's some wisdom in there, but it's been a long time since I read the book, and that's pretty much all I know about him is just what I read in his autobiography.

So, I'm going to move on to Romeo's second question. Have you ever read his book, Autobiography of a Yogi? If so, what's your opinion of it? Well, I guess I already answered that question in my answer to the first first question by Romeo. So I suppose I'll just move on to

the third question which also kind of
was answered already. Romeo says is the
self-realization

fellowship that yoga nandanda started
and still exists a cult and I didn't
even know that it still existed.

It's I don't know you know what their
attitude is. So, I mean I mean it would
be a cult if they were like
how how how do I explain it? You know,
if they're like trying to get people to
join and then like trying to prevent
them from leaving to the point of like
punishing them if they try to leave,
that kind of thing, that would be rather
cultish. Whether they actually do that
or not, I don't know.

You know, it's kind of like the the
like the the fellowship or whatever it
is that followed Krishna Murdy. I think
it was like Ohigh California. Is that is
that where it was? You know, that still
exists too, I guess. Well, is that a
cult? I I really don't know because I
don't know hardly anything about it. So,
sorry about that. And I'm gonna move on
to the next question. This is from
Sedarta Lohachita. And Sedart Lohita
says, "Have you ever been in an Indian
reserve or reservation or in Mexico?"
Well, I've never been to Mexico. I've
been in Mexican restaurants, however.
Um, but with regard to Indian

reservations, yeah, I've been to quite a few of those

because I there's lots of Indian reservations in Washington State where I grew up and went to school. So, like for example, um I took a marine biology course in college and we went on a field trip to Nia Bay, which is like the the northwestern tip of Washington State and it has rocky beaches there that are relatively unusual.

And so we went there to study like rocky beaches and that entire area is the Macau Indian Reservation. Whether they got casinos now, I don't know, but they didn't have casinos back then. And it was a dry reservation. No alcohol

allowed and it was just dead. There was nothing going on.

Also, there was the let's see the Tokund Indian Reservation when I was a kid.

That's where we would buy illegal fireworks that there the the uh economy of the Tokund Indian Reservation was selling duty-free cigarettes that relatively cheap, at least cheaper than the cigarettes you'd buy outside the reservations. and also dangerous fireworks.

So, we we'd go on like this pilgrimage to the Tokan Indian Reservation every year when I was a kid to buy like bottle rockets and firecrackers and that kind

of stuff that weren't safe and sane.

Also, the Quinno1 Indian Reservation,
the uh let's see, oh, there's also the
the Lummy Indian Reservation. We went on
an marine biology field trip to the
Lummy Indian Reservation, too. They have
uh kitchen mittens there and it's right
on the the the coast like the San Juan
Islands. There's Lummy Island is one of
the larger San Juan Islands that's like
an Indian reservation
and we were just looking through kitchen
mittens and all just also just
experiencing the the marine life of that
area. And for those of you who don't
know what a kitchen mitten is, is um
when you've got

mainly hunter gatherers who like live in certain areas at least seasonally for hundreds of years, you get this huge mound of I mean for them it was garbage. For us it's it's like clamshells and like other kinds of like crustation exoskeletons. It's mostly like clamshells that have just been tossed there by people just throwing them away for hundreds and hundreds of years until it's essentially this huge mound. So yeah, I've been to that Indian reservation. I had a friend who I guess he's still a friend. and we haven't communicated in a while, but his mother used to live on an Indian reservation in

California, which got just essentially incinerated when there was big fires there earlier, you know, several years ago. So, yeah, on the west coast of the United States, there's lots of Indian reservations. is way more than on like on the east coast because by the time you know the the west was turning into states there was more of a concept of some fairness and justice towards the native Americans instead of the idea the only good Indian is a dead Indian. Like the state of Alaska I think at least onethird of the entire state is owned by indigenous peoples. Like I used to work out of Dutch Harbor, Alaska, which is on uh on Alaska Island in in the Illusian

Islands. And there are a lot of white people living there, but they can't own their own property because it's all owned by the alleyutes. So that would be kind of an Indian reservation.

Oh, also I spoke at an Indian reservation. I think it was the same the Lummy Indian reservation. I actually gave a dama talk there when I was a monk.

And you have to kind of let's see kind of translate into sort of different language. I mean you can't use a lot of poly terms because people living on Indian reservations generally are not fluent in poly.

So yeah I have been to Indian reservations a plenty but never been to Mexico. So, I'll move on to Sedarta

Lohita's second question, which is, "Can you talk fluent Burmese?" And when I was living in Burma, I figured I had the proficiency in the Burmese language of about like a seven-year-old Burmese kid. So, I mean, I could talk easy language fluently, but talking about something that I wasn't used to talking about, like fixing cars, you know, I didn't know the words for that. I had not learned the vocabulary. A lot of the idioms I wouldn't learn. I had this one supporter who kept telling me that I talk like a dictionary because

I'm just trying to say what I'm trying to say in Burmese without knowing just the way the Burmese people say it. Like I didn't know all the idioms, that kind of thing, all the the terms of speech, that kind of thing. So I would just kind of say it like putting it together, translating the English into Burmese, and some of the time they wouldn't even know what I was saying. But Burmese it's like with regard to its grammar and vocabulary it's very simple it's an easy language but the difficult part for westerners is the pronunciation it's a mono syllabic language which is most of the words have only one syllable and

there are differences
in sounds that Americans don't make like
or we don't really differentiate them
like no and no two entirely different
words in Burmese or like moe means it's
very rainy. Mo with a more aspirated K.
Mo. No, Mo and Moe. Mo means it's a
drought. So you just add just a little
bit of aspiration to a K and the
sentence go switch switches from it's
it's very rainy to it's not raining. So
you have to be really careful. I
remember I remember the okay it's like
lo in Burmese means to work or to do. Lo
means because of low means um to to
need. And low is the worst cuss word in
the Burmese language. It's like it's

like [__] in Burmese. And so I knew this Australian monk who was afraid to say that he needed anything because he was afraid of accidentally adding just a little bit too much emphasis and just making it into the worst cuss word in the Burmese language.

So he would just try to say things and try to say that he needed something without actually using the word need because he was so afraid of accidentally mispronouncing it and just causing all the teenage girls to start crying or whatever to just blush and cover their faces and rush from the room.

So it's getting kind of rusty too now. I

mean, it would take a while of actually conversing in Burmese before I'd get back up to the proficiency of a seven-year-old child, maybe nine.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question here. This is from David. And David says, "I'm a former Zen monk. A long time ago. Last year, I died on an operating table. Two blood transfusions and the skill of a surgeon brought me back somewhat. I had a near-death experience which I cannot dismiss as macio which I suppose would be like maya in in poly or Sanskrit or even delirium conscious lucid. I navigated my surroundings in that state of awareness.

I found a huge disparity between the Buddha Dharma and what I actually experienced. I'd appreciate your thoughts when you ever find the time gash out.

So, I didn't know exactly what he's referring to. You know, how is it different? What is the disparity? So I asked him in the comments and his answer was the lie of karma, the lie of rebirth which is a truth but only if you believe you're guilty of crimes and sins which you don't have to believe in. They're cosmic sins like the ten commandments. If you don't believe you're free of them when the datagata said he saw the house

builder that's allegedly like his first words after he became enlightened. house builder you are seeing.

Uh, okay. I'll just get back here though. When the Dakata said he saw the house builder but never extrapolated, what did he know yet never transmitted? I know now that a collective aggregate we'd call a soul exists despite the Buddha claiming there is no intermediary body or anata. There is.

And then somebody else had com like responded to what he said in the comments. You know, there was like this little thread. And then um David then continues in his response to this other person. Rebirth isn't a

lie. It happens. I simply don't believe the intention behind it is to exhaust karma. I believe what I saw was a pyramid scheme for egregor and other parasites. But it seems the boss had left the building. Only the middle management remain.

Okay.

So, let's try and find the question here.

Let's see. I'd appreciate your thoughts when you ever find the time. And so, first of all, I mean, having a near-death experience, I mean, there's going to be a great lucidity to it in many, if not most cases, you know, and

you're going to experience strange things, but still, I mean, like going with the Tibetan Book of the Dead, which is essentially an it's not just a near-death experience, it's a death experience, although there's a lot of similarities between the stereotypical near-death experience. You know, you see your you start rising up. You see your body lying there below you. You go up higher. You can see certain things that like with clairvoyance or whatever. You know, you're seeing it with like a different different pair of eyes. Then you go upwards. There's like the bright light like a tunnel with light at the other end. you get to the other end and

then there's some kind of a spirit guide that I mean there's different things but your experiences are going to be largely in accord in accordance with your subconscious imagination which will be heavily influenced by your your religious beliefs like a Christian they go up into into this heaven realm they might be met by Jesus himself or the Virgin Mary or some Christian saint or a lot of people who are just kind of secular humanist types they'll be met by some beloved grandfather or you know some beloved family member that that had already died. This kind of thing and the what heaven looks like is going to vary

depending on the person.

So, there was like this ordinary kind of suburban housewife who has a near-death experience and she gets up there and heaven is just full of prefab houses, you know? It's like housing tracks.

So,

I mean, you can have like near-death experiences that can be like enlightenment experiences like uh what's his name? John John Ren Lewis who was an atheist. He was like one of the the leaders of an atheistic society. He was a scientist or a mathematician. He has this near-death experience from almost being poisoned to death in Thailand.

And I mean, it just like opened up this

a whole new way of looking at things.

And, you know, he just kind of set aside all the the materialistic science stuff because he he just had outgrown it during this one experience. and he just felt that this this awakening experience that he had in the near-death experience just remained with him for the rest of his life.

So,

um, one thing that's interesting from the book of the Tibetan book of the dead is you are warned or admonished that you're going to see all this stuff. You're going to see Buddhas, you're going to see demons, you're going to see

all kinds of beings that will communicate with you and so forth. Keep reminding yourself this is not real. It can seem even more real than ordinary samsara but still it's just a higher level of illusion. You know it's kind of like da realm illusion instead of human realm illusion.

So I mean orthodox tradition when it says when the dagoda says he saw the house builder he's referring to Mara but you can take that or leave it. And this with regard to I mean this idea let's see the lie of karma. I'm not exactly sure what the lie is. I guess he he explains it here. The lie of rebirth which is a truth but only if you believe

you're guilty of crimes and sins which
you don't have to believe in. They're
cosmic sins like the ten commandments.

And this seems to indicate that David or
maybe Zen the Zen school that he was
following has very different

understanding of karma and morality
ethics how all that works than in terra
because in terravada

it's not cosmic sins like the ten
commandments. The five precepts are just
superficial rules that help you to
practice.

It's not cosmic sins like the ten
commandments and the way morality and
karma works or let's start with

morality. Anything that gets you closer to enlightenment is moral and good and wholesome and skillful. Anything that takes you farther away from enlightenment is bad. You know, sin, so to speak, it is unskillful, unhealthy, unh wholesome. And I mean that's what it boils down to with regard to morality or ethics.

I mean cosmic sins or that you don't have to believe in. I mean if if you are skillful enough that you do not believe that samsara is real that you have taken that to heart you know just all the way down to the marrow of your bones then that could be true. But for the most

part anyone who's not fully enlightened is going to believe that at least to some degree that samsara is real. And so they're stuck in it. It's like the some westerners have discussed this sort of thing too. The movie Apocalypse Now for example or the the novel Dostky's novel Crime and Punishment are both cases of someone who tries to be like more wise than the average person. And so they just just accept like essentially a Nichian philosophy of you know good and evil. they're just kind of illusory, you know, it's just sort of a cultural construct. I don't have to enslave myself to this

concept of good and evil. I can just do whatever is expedient.

And so, Raskolnikov in Crime and Punishment actually axe murders a woman. I think he ax murders what two women and one of them was pregnant and then he just kind of goes insane. I mean, he just I mean, it just [_] him up. And it's the same way with Colonel Kurtz in Apocalypse Now. He's trying to just do what is expedient. Just do what it takes to win this war or whatever. And he just goes crazy. And then his dying words, what has it all catches up to him are the horror. The horror.

And I mean, you can take that or leave it. You know, it's just a novel and a

and a movie. a really excellent novel
and a really excellent movie. But still,
but really the way morality works in in
terra Buddhism anyway is nothing like
cosmic sins or the ten commandments.

It's psychological. It's just the
effects of certain attitudes and certain
mental states on on your mind on you can
call it your spirit if you like. call it
the karmic stream because karma is the
momentum of your mental states. So I
mean getting down to the let's see
he says I simply don't believe the
intention behind it is to exhaust
exhaust karma like rebirth.

He doesn't believe that rebirth the

intention behind rebirth is to exhaust karma.

So

yeah I mean from the Buddhist point of view you don't exhaust karma. The and rebirth the purpose of rebirth isn't to exhaust karma. The purpose of rebirth is just you it just it's momentum you know it's like a the flowing of a river or the burning of a fire you know it's like it doesn't necessarily have any intention at all it's just like this natural process that happens in this version of samsara

so

I mean if if David has become enlightened so that he's not going to be

reborn anymore he's not creating karma anymore that's that's fine But if he's not fully enlightened, then it could be that he is mistaken to some degree with regard to his uh his change experience of what karma is, what morality is. Um and with regard to a self, let's see, where does this say? He says, I know now that a collective aggregate we'd call a soul exists.

And I mean if there it's an aggregate then it's not like ultimately real. I mean you can say I I've been saying this for many years even when I was a monk that in in ter Buddhism is this there's this weird phenomenon of people saying

okay in samsara according to conventional truth you can say there's a self you know the Buddha himself is referring to this person that person even referring to himself.

So you can say that in conventional truth there is a self but in ultimate truth there's no self. But then the Teravāda Buddhists will go even farther and say from the conventional point of view even there's no soul. There's I mean ultimately there's no soul even conventionally there's no soul which I don't think really has much backing it up. If you can say that a like a three-dimensional, four-dimensional, three and a half dimensional human

is conventionally a self. What's to prevent a four-dimensional, five-dimensional entity that includes this human?

I mean, I mean, ultimately it's not real, but conventionally in a samsaric context, why not? So I think it is possible that in a samsaric context not an ultimate one but a samsaric one conventional one that there could be souls too. It's just that when you get to the highest ultimate level then there are no aggregates there's no differentiation at all.

So,

so you can say that a soul exists in a

samsaric context, but ultimately, yeah, I really don't think so. It's like no self is really I don't have the problems with it that a lot of western Buddhists have. There are a lot of western Buddhists that I mean they just get angry just vehemently insist that there is a self and to the extent that I mean instead of just going to a different religious system that accepts an eternal soul they just try to change Buddhism so that there's an eternal soul. I guess some entire schools of of Mahayana have done this sort of thing. There was one school of Buddhism called the Pugaladins who are now extinct I think who and they

couldn't say there was a self but they
they said there's a pudgala or an
individual which was just I mean they
couldn't use self because that was just
uncontroversially not Buddhist. It was
just like wrong view. So they had to
like use a different word that was
pretty much of a synonym.

But they don't exist anymore.

But yeah, I have no problem at all that
just intuitively, intellectually,
anything accepting that ultimately there
is no self.

I mean, there's there's an absolute an
undifferentiated absolute, but you can't
even say that it exists. It's just off

the scale

and it's not differentiated.

So

gosh, what else is there to say with regard to this?

Let's see.

Last year he died on operating table.

Yeah. No, I mean, you want to like say

I'm sorry to hear it, but then again I

mean a lot of people they have these

near-death experiences or just tragedy

strikes and it can just jolt them into a

higher level of consciousness. I knew

this this woman who was kind of a

superficial, shallow, selfish kind of a

person. Then she gets the C-word and

she's like doesn't know if she's going

to survive or not. She starts rethinking her attitudes afterwards. She did survive and I mean she was a deeper better person as a result of it.

Not that I'm like promoting like carcinomas or anything like that.

But if anyone can explain to me what is the connection between cancer and crabs

I don't know cancer means crab also

carcinus means crab you know like in

carcinogen so what is the connection

between cancer and crabs

maybe like the like the cells kind of

get kind of spiky looking or something

like a crab I don't know

so anyways getting back to this question

I I think I think I pretty much covered what I wanted to cover.

Um, yeah, if I missed out on anything, I guess David or someone else can point it out to me. But I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from S Papalapa, one of the four kinds of wrong view or no, wrong speech. Excuse me. S. Papa says, "I'm sure you've been asked this before, but can you lucid dream?" And I've never had a full-blown lucid dream before. I've like especially when I was a monk, I would be right at the verge of having a lucid dream. There's one one occasion where I'm I'm a monk. I'm dreaming that I'm eating dinner. I'm

eating in the afternoon. And then all of a sudden, it dawns on me, I can't be doing this. This is against the rules. But then there was this awareness, this is just a dream. I can go ahead and eat this if I want to. And I'm not breaking any rules.

So that has happened to me. I had a friend, the the Texan hermit who lived in the huge hollow banyan tree in in central Burma that he was really practicing lucid dreaming. He bought he got well he didn't buy them but he had supporters donate books about lucid dreaming that I was kind of looking at you know just kind of getting some ideas

and he was saying that um when you're dreaming let's say you're dreaming that you're on a bus and then all of a sudden you're not on a bus anymore but you're on an airplane. You didn't get off the bus and onto the airplane. It's just that somehow when you weren't noticing the bus turns into an airplane and then you have this this like this dissonance happens where it's like wow how'd that happen just for like you know just a few moments it's like you suddenly realize how'd that happen that that according to my friend who was into lucid dreaming he said that's kind of like a like kind of a gateway you can use those moments as a way of kind of

breaking through the the illusion
illusion and and just sort of like
participate more lucidly in the
illusion.

But I've never had like a fullblown
complete lucid dream. I think that time
when I was eating dinner in the dream
and then realized, oh, I shouldn't be
doing this and then further realized, oh
wait, this is just a dream, so it's
okay. That that's about as close as I've
ever come to lucid dreaming. And I'm
going to move on to the next question.

This is from Cherasquez.

And Trazask is says, "What about
requests from the real TIG to get back

to Discord server?" And I'm not exactly sure why Trazask is wants the real TIG back on the server.

So yeah, what about it? I mean, I'm uh I mean, TR TIG is still around that I mean, I kind of have an idea of what his what one of his aliases is.

And uh he actually got like mildly reprimanded, if I'm not mistaken, for asking like trivial, silly, irreverent joke questions just maybe a month or so ago.

Could

be wrong though.

But yeah, I mean, request from the real TIG to get back on the Discord server. I don't know. He's going to have to figure

something out, I guess, because I'm really kind of experiencing inertia. You know, I got no fire under my ass spurring me on to to readmit him or any such thing. And so, I'm just going to move on to Troas is his next question. What software you were using to write a book? Is the end format for a book a PDF? Well, it turns out that Kindle I mean my books are published on Amazon and Kindle is one of the formats and so they have like this free app that you can download where you're um composing the book or you know just like formatting it within the the proper measurements and everything of an Amazon

book.

So that's what I've been using. And then the last after you finished it, you get everything the way you want, then you you change it to a PDF. You know, at first it's just some kind of document file. And then after you get, you know, everything right, you know, you you it just automatically does the page numbers and everything, you know, the headers on on the top of the pages and that kind of thing. So I mean, it just takes care of all that.

So that's that's what I've been using.

It's like the Kindle software for for books. And I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Quoistor.

Quistor says, "If someone's been meditating all their life and gains substantial wisdom into the workings of the mind, but are then reborn as an animal, would there be any awareness or mindfulness present whilst in that state?"

Um

well I mean first of all someone's been meditating all their life and gained substantial wisdom into the workings of the mind. Um it would be very rare I think for them to be reborn as an animal.

I'm not exactly sure how that would

work.

But let's just assume for the sake of argument that you do have some meditation master who is reborn as an animal. Guess like I guess there's the famous coan it's it's Hakuin's fox I think it's called where somebody's fox where there's this Zen master who's asked a question about karma you know is the is the enlightened person subject to the law of karma and he said no and then as a result of that one question he gets reborn as a fox who lives on the other side of the hill from the monastery so I guess even according to some Buddhist tradition traditions, a

meditation master can be reborn as an animal. But assuming that they were reborn as an animal, I assume they would be a very unusual animal. You know, they'd be like an animal with with like light shining out of them.

Like I I mentioned before that I've got one dog here that I think there's a good chance, assuming that rebirth is a thing, that this dog was probably like a a human baby in a previous life. You know, it's like babies used to die young a lot back in the old days. You know, in certain times and places in this world, most babies would not reach, you know, 9 years of age. So, there's a good chance

that maybe in a past life, I had this baby and we loved each other. You know, the baby's like maybe a year old, just still preverbal, you know, still not really able to think in words or anything, but just like kind of present. And then and then that baby died. And it's I think there's a possibility that this dog is was a baby in a pre previous life. Also, when I was a kid, we had this collie. It was one of the just most strangely intelligent dogs. I mean, partly it was just it's a collie is a sheep dog. So, it would it would treat us kids. I mean, I was a little kid at the time. Treat us kids like sheep. You know, it's like if

we were walking towards the street, this dog would just get in between us and the street and push us back towards the house with his body or any kind of strange human or strange dog. Anyone that that Rowdy didn't real didn't recognize, he'd just get right in between us and them and just guard us. But he had he had just he he could hold a grudge for a week. He got in lots of fights. And so we moved out in the country and a neighbor dog and our dog got in a fight and the owners, my father and Mr. Conway, the farmer who owned the the this German Shepherd that they were pulled them

apart. But Mr. Conway was an older man. He wasn't as strong. His dog got loose and attacked Rowdy while my dad was holding him. And Rowdy just would not even look at him for at least a week. My dad would call him. he'd just like give him a dirty look and just walk the other way. He was he he remembered that and he was just this dog was more human than most dogs. So, I think there's a possibility that you can have, you know, sort of people reborn as animals under certain rare circumstances. I don't think it happens like very frequently, but I mean you still have the the karmic momentum of being a human. I mean I don't think that my dog that I've got

now or the colleague that we had when I was a kid were meditation masters in a previous life.

So let's see here.

I'm not even sure exactly how to answer this question. Would there be any awareness or mindfulness present while in that in that state? Well, I mean even animals especially like vertebrates have awareness and some kind of mindfulness um even if they weren't human in a previous life, even if they weren't a meditation master in a previous life. So I just assume that their awareness I mean that I mean animals according to echarollah all animals are enlightened

anyway other than a few domesticated animals that have acquired neurosis from their human masters. But according to him every animal pretty much is right here right now. You know they're not like dwelling they're not worried about the future. They're not feeling regret about the past. They're always right here right now. just be here now like Ramdas used to say which according to echarollah is like a state of enlightenment.

So in that case goalia might to some degree be an improvement although according to Buddhist philosophy the animal realm is a lower realm and animals are not enlightened just as

newborn babies are not enlightened.

But I'm not even I'm I don't think I've even answered the question.

So yeah, I mean there's going to be some kind of karmic momentum going from the previous life. So it's probably going to be like a relatively wise animal that maybe doesn't even live very long.

You know, they just have this one little karmic blip that they got to deal with and then is just move back to some higher realm again.

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to Quistor's next question. And this one's kind of weird, too. He says, "If you regularly enter Janna all the way up to

the eighth Janna, but don't really like that Janna and enjoy lower Janna's, are you reborn into the Janna realm you like most or into the highest Janna you experience regularly?"

Well, I mean, the whole idea of eight Jonas is something that I'm fairly skeptical of.

I mean you start off with four Jas and probably in my opinion the four Jas were just the four levels of meditation.

First Janna you're still thinking it's like first J in my opinion originally was not a superhuman mental state that it was just I mean you're meditating correctly even though you're at like an elementary stage of meditation. So

you're still labeling for example still
using a mantra you're still have some
kind of thinking and perceiving going on
but then as you get more and more
advanced you leave especially the
thinking you know you're not I mean if
you're doing meditation on the breath
breathing in breathing out breathing in
breathing out that gets left behind
you're not doing that anymore at second
Janna you're not thinking anything
anymore

so then Abidama comes along and they
decide that they're going to make an
extra Janna. So according to Abidama,
there's five Jonas because second Janna

gets split up. You know, you've got like initial and sustained thought that I mean according according to first I mean in first Jonah you've got initial and sustained thought in second Jonah you don't have that. So the abidamists to split that and they say okay you don't have the initial thought or it's one or the other. Okay, you don't have the sustained thought, but you still have the initial thought. That would be the new second Janna or like second Janna A and then second Janna B is you don't have initial or sustained thought. So I mean that didn't really catch traction in Buddhist philosophy. So that really is ignored that that extra the

fifth Janna the five Janna systems is pretty much ignored by everybody except Abidama scholars because in the sutas it's always talking about four Jonas but then you've got these four arupas or formless Jas that I mean I wrote an essay on this giving my best guess as to the origin and I don't think the Buddha really taught these formless jas you know, the realm of, let's see, the realm of infinite space, the realm of infinite consciousness, the realm of nothingness, and the realm of neither perception nor non-perception.

And I I'm guessing that at least three of these, it's fairly, you know,

plausible that they were attempts to describe Nirvana or Nibbana that really didn't catch traction and fell by the wayside, but still you find them in early texts. And so you've got to incorporate them into some system without dignifying them with being synonyms of enlightenment. You know, neither perception nor non-perception. I mean that comes that can come right out of the kalahawa suta which is discussing an enlightened state the the enlightened mind or the realm of infinite consciousness. There's at least two sutas that claim nibbana is infinite formless consciousness or at least they strongly

imply it.

So, let's just forget

the higher J these these formless Janna

because I mean I'm rather skeptical and

I mean let's see here Quistor himself

has

like ignored the fifth genre of of the

Abidama scholars.

[Music]

So let's just say that you master the

highest Janna and you don't like that

Jonah very much. you like some lower

Janna, which I don't think that that's

really an option in the text. I mean, it

just seems that it's just assumed

the higher the Janna, the more you're

going to like it. You know, it's just more advanced. There's less dooka.

But

I guess I mean, so so this this scenario, I don't think you ever come across it. I mean, there might be some sutra that I'm just not thinking of that discusses this. You know, you have some monk who gets up into fourth Jonah, but he really prefers second Jonah even though it's cruddier and has more dooka in it just because he's maybe not ripe for enlightenment or something. Uh, he just would prefer this more crude meditative state.

So, are you reborn into the genre realm you like the most or into the highest

genre that you experience regularly? It could be that you're you get into the the the J the highest Janna that you have mastered that that there's a good chance of that

that it could be that let's say you got up into fourth Janna but it was really shaky. It didn't last very long and then you go back down to third Janna. Third Janna is pretty solid. then it may be I don't I don't want to just make this as an assertion because this is just a guess. I don't want to just be pedalling heresy here. But if you just got fourth Janna, just a few glimpses of it or just kind of shaky, you never really mastered

it, but you're solid with third Janna, there's a good chance you'd wind up into the Janna realm, assuming that those even exist. these these Brahma realms that are higher than the highest Brahma realm posited by the the the Vadic Hindus or protohindus who invented the whole Brahma system anyway.

So yeah, it could be just you just wind up in the realm corresponding to the Janna that you really mastered or were best at.

But I mean the whole 31 plains of existence, I mean I I realize most teachers of Buddhism, especially most monks, they can't really be skeptical about their tradition. And so you wind

up with this scenario where everybody is saying that their system is 100% right.

The Christians, what whatever school of Christianity it is, you know, the Catholics and the Jehovah Witnesses aren't going to be agreeing on on everything.

or you know the Buddhist it's like you you reject Christianity a western person rejects Christianity because he just can't believe it and then he just wholeheartedly believes everything in ter Buddhism I mean I just cannot operate that way I'm I'm that way with political parties too I mean I can't just accept and agree with everything

that they say

so I mean it's I it's it's going to

depend on like the momentum of your

mind. You know, where is the momentum of

your mind? What direction is it heading?

You know, how subtle is it? How refined

is it? That's going to determine where

you're going to wind up. And all this

talk about four Jas, five Jonas, eight

Janna, especially the five and the

eight. And then like you're guaranteed

of of the Janna realm correspond you

know the Brahma realm corresponding to

the to that Janna and all. I mean if you

can demonstrate that to me that that is

really empirically true then then go

right ahead.

But I mean it's it's in the sutas. So there's definitely that you know like God before he selfdeleted and became enlightened in the process you know he's saying well if I if I die with Janna and guaranteed to Brahma realm if I die without Janna there's no guarantee so it's like even goda he'd get Janna and lose it get Janna lose it get it lose it get it lose it until finally in desperation while he still has it he decides to selfdelete because then he's he's guaranteed of at least a Brahma realm

So just because you had Janna sometimes doesn't guarantee anything according to

that pseudo.

So you're going to have to have mastered it or at least have mastered it temporarily at the time of your death in order for you to land in the corresponding Brahma realm which are of course higher than the personification of ultimate reality.

as formulated by the Vadic protohindu Hindus. I almost said Hindus for some reason possibly confusing Hindus with Landrew on an old episode of Star Trek.

So I think I'm just going to move on this question. This is from not sure how to pronounce the name here. Meilles Mephles.

Anyways, Meph says, "I really enjoy

these podcasts and lectures you post. I enjoyed your videos comparing Buddhism with Hinduism and Buddhism with Christianity along with your videos discussing Hinduism and Christianity separately. Could you please make a video with guest speakers as well discussing just Islam or comparing Islam to Buddhism? I think I would greatly enjoy listening to that."

And I mean, if I were to do a video with guest speakers um discussing Islam, especially if there's somebody who is like a Muslim that I'm discussing this with, it would just it would devolve into a debate and

I think I don't think it would be a fair debate. I think I would just pretty much beat up just intellectually on a Muslim. I mean the facts are I mean based on Muslim tradition itself that the founder of their religious system was a warlord, a bandit. I mean he sold women and children into slavery after having their mother their fathers and husbands beheaded. He raped women sometimes with their husband freshly dead right outside the tent. I mean, what what kind of common ground is there going to be? I mean, you can say, okay, do good, don't do bad, but that's about as far as it's going to get.

You know, honor your mother and father,

I suppose that kind of thing.

But, I mean, any kind of discussion of the merits of Islam, I mean, I I really would have to bash away at it.

So I mean the founder of Islam, peace be upon him, I mean he comes much closer to Moses than he does to Jesus or the Buddha. Jesus and the Buddha were both saintly holy men. Moses and Muhammad were warlords

who were using religion as a way of controlling people and getting them to follow them largely out of fear.

So yeah, I really do not have much respect for Islam. I mean, it's it's a dark age barbarous religion suitable for

dark age barbarism, but not suitable for a modern technological civilized society.

And I hope Mef is is not offended.

Maybe maybe he's a Muslim or something.

And there are good Muslims. There are wise Muslims. There have been like Sufi poets that were they were very spiritually advanced. But it was in spite of their religion more than because of it. It's just anywhere in the world you're going to find people who are spiritual geniuses who just get born into a society that may or may not really do justice to their wisdom. But I don't think Muhammad was one of those.

I think the Quran was a chneled document. In other words, that it was composed in a state of hysterical dissociation.

Much like the Book of Mormon, Mormonism and Islam have certain similarities in that respect.

But yeah, I mean a video with guest speakers discussing Islam. I mean maybe somebody like Brian, my my buddy Brian, but we'd we'd be essentially bashing it.

We'd be discussing why and like some of the stuff I've already said, bandit warlord

be having people beheaded and sold into slavery.

I mean, that's based on the Muslims own traditions. They don't I mean they don't deny this.

I mean they might back away from the term warlord, but that's essentially what he was. He was like king of Arabia at the time of his death.

Well, people forcibly converted, convert or die.

So

plus I mean the the genocide of Indian Buddhists like in the medieval medieval period that was one of the one of the worst genocides in history that you don't hear much about.

Yeah.

Yeah. I kind of doubt that it would

happen. Although I if I did do a video on Islam, it would be like with somebody like Brian and we'd just essentially both agree on bashing it.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Dama River.

And Dma River says, "Tourist visas to Myanmar are very short, only 28 days, which makes it quite hard for a foreigner to live in a Burmese monastery and consider ordination. How did you get around this? What kind of visa were you on while you were a monk in Myanmar?"

Well, Burma has meditation visas, which I think I mean it changes a lot. The laws change a lot, but I think the last

few times I was in Burma that your first visa would be six months and then it would be like you'd get it renewed every year after that. So, it'd be it'd be a one-year visa. Most of the time that I was in Burma, more than 20 years was just a yearly renewal of my meditation visa. And if you're going to a Burmese monastery or meditation center, they will sponsor you, you know, they'll they will send the sponsorship letter to the Department of Immigration, you know, requesting that you get a meditation visa. One time I went to Burma, um, I didn't have time to go through all the the the necessary red tape to get a meditation

visa. So, I actually went on a business visa. I went with a a friend of mine who he he he considered me he called me his like his his advisor or something. He was an architect. He was working in in in Burma at the time. And so I I got a a business visa, which was like three months or something, which I mean, you can once you get into the country, then you can switch it over to a meditation visa, that sort of thing.

Maybe not so easy with a tourist visa.

I'm not so sure. I don't think I ever had a tourist visa in Burma, but they do have meditation visas, which after a preliminary period is renewed every

year, or at least that's the way it was the whole time I was in Burma.

And the Burmese government, they do realize that one of their most valuable resources is dharma. You know, the the Burmese, even the Burmese government are proud that they are arguably the most Buddhist country in the world.

And they're they're they're quite willing to share that with others. So, it's just a matter of national pride.

and the west I mean western terravada Buddhism it's changing now because you got more and more Thai monastics settling in the west but the goa method and the mahasi method and the mahasi method was is like largely what the

western weasa movement is based on to
the extent that it's not based on the
goa method so western Buddhism was
primarily Burmese in its origin up until
the Ajan Cha people and just other Thai
monastics started you know kind of
establishing themselves and becoming
more numerous in the west

let's see here so yeah I answered that
question I'm moving on to the next one
and this is from Austin

and Austin says quote there is not the
slightest difference between samsara and
nirvana unquote

And he says, "Why?" Well, I mean, for
starters, Nirvana doesn't have any

differences. There's no differences in Nirvana. There's no distinction of like [—] from shyola, you know, your ass from a hole in the ground. There's no distinctions at all in Nirvana. So, there would be no distinction from samsara. That's one way of looking at it. It's kind of maybe a cheesy way of looking at it, but it's like I've said before, I mean, listen, don't have a cup. I've got a glass. So is But is this It's not going to work because glass has two different meanings. Huh. So now I I search around. Okay.

This thing that I wipe my eyes on. It is a It is a Kleenex. It is tissue paper.

Right. Well, is it Kleenex or is it
it paper? You know, is it is it a tissue
or is it paper?

Well, it's both, isn't it? I mean,
what's the difference? I mean, you could
say the difference between tissue and
paper is the tissue is like the the
function and the paper is the the
essence. And that's the way I would
differentiate some sorrow and nervana.
But ultimately, it's the same [_]
piece of white paper, isn't it?

Pardon my French.

No, wait. Paper's English. That's not
French.

But yeah, I mean, is it tissue or is it

paper?

Is it samsara or is it nirvana?

Two ways of looking at the same thing.

It's just that if you look at nirvana with unenlightened eyes, you see samsara.

If you look at samsara with enlightened eyes, arguably you see nirvana.

So that's that's pretty much the argument or the answer to the question right there.

Yeah.

I mean ultimately I mean here in samsara here we are in samsara. How far away is nirvana from here?

It's right here.

If it's anywhere at all you can say it's

nowhere I suppose.

But my answer is it's just a difference of you know waves and water. If you if you look at it through at through the perspective of waves you're in some sorrow. And if you look at the same ocean from the perspective perspective of water it's that you're enlightened nibbana.

And that's why meditation goes for the flat calm so that you're less distracted by the waves. You're less likely to identify reality with waves. And then ideally you can develop what is called zen in the marketplace by the Zen Buddhists where even you got stormy

raging seas,

waves everywhere, you still just see
water.

And that would be the enlightened mind.

I'm just going to move on. Nice
question. This is from Yugao.

Let's see. I was scrolling down to see
how many more questions. And we're we're
getting down towards the bottom. So,
it's going to be way less than two hours
unless I just start digressing wildly.

So, Yuga says, and I I do not fully
understand this question. I I'm going to
have to like infer or guess what he's
actually asking here. Yugu says, "There
is this plant in my garden." He does not
specify the species, but I'll just start

over. There is this plant in my garden. It never stops to grow. I cut it bare until the end of summer. It is all over the place. Today I was looking at it. It's like samsara, I thought, never ending. It will keep on going no matter what. Now my question is what is it that we are supposed to cut in roots for it to stop? So with regard to this the actual question he's referring to samsara I assume you know what are the roots of samsara that we have to cut for samsara to stop and then just using the plant that you just cut it down to the ground over and over again and it just keeps coming back because you do not

eradicate the roots.

Well,

the root for samsara is delusion,

which is essentially

well, like I was just saying, it's

identifying with the waves instead of

the water or identifying with Kleenex

instead of paper,

identifying with cup instead of ceramic.

So, and then like the most pernicious

form of this identifying with forms

instead of essence is this

differentiation of one form from

another. And like the the root problem

going with some Buddhist philosophy

anyway is the like the primordial

distinction of self from other. You know

the the conceit I am is the root of all suffering.

So what we're supposed to cut is delusion. And one of the main like symptoms of that delusion is differentiating the world, differentiating samsara and considering these different differentiated parts to be like really different from each other instead of just waves on the surface of the same ocean.

So what we're supposed to cut is delusion, but I mean you can't just decide, okay, I'm going to cut my delusion now. And it just doesn't work that way. So you got to like get down

into the different layers of your delusion so that you can deal with them. And by practicing meditation, practicing mindfulness, then it causes the subconscious mind to become conscious.

And then I mean it's like you become aware, you become more conscious of what previously was just subconscious, you know, like just habit patterns and so forth. I got a dog behind me snoring loudly.

Well, maybe not real loudly.

So, getting back to the question before I was distracted by the snoring dog.

Let's see.

Oh, man. I got thrown off track by that one.

So okay you've got delusion or ignorance
Avija you know it's like dependent core
rising starts with Avija you know that's
the first step at least in the
traditional 12 nidana theory of
dependent core rising you've got the
first is ava
so avija pacio sankara
so because of because of ignorance
you've uh
conditioned things. Although according
to orthodox tradition, sankara here
means karma
but sankara usually just means any
condition thing this and that whatever.
So

let's see. So I mean that's how you have
to break I mean you have to eradicate
delusion in order to eradicate this
this like persistently recurring
like system of aggregates that we
identify with a self
and according to orthodox tradition
where you break the chain is between
let's see perception and no perception
isn't even in there. It's feeling and
craving va and tata
that that that's where you you can
actually consciously break the chain.
So in that case you have to but I mean
even in that case still you have to be
aware of the stuff that's going on
deeper down in order to like deal with

that. So through meditation and just
relentless mindfulness,
you become as conscious as you can with
as little subconscious as possible. And
then by just noting it and observing it,
you're you're like depriving it of its
momentum.

It might still occur, but to the extent
that you're you're like not identifying
with it, that you're just noting it and
letting it go, just observing it and
letting it go. you're not reinforcing it
and so you're not adding new momentum to
this flow of mental states that keeps us
going that is essentially karma
so let's see here did I answer the

question yet

what is what is it that we are supposed
to cut in roots for it to stop yeah well
practically it's desire

But you could say that the do desire
itself is based in delusion. And it just
goes back to the old like the head
versus heart kind of emphasis on dharma.

You know the the heart emphasis on
dharma is you want to stop suffering.

The head emphasis of dharma is you want
to stop delusion. And really by stopping
one you automatically stop the other.

So, it's the same enlightenment either
way.

But really, it seems to me being more
head oriented

that the main point is to stop being delusional.

And by being delusional, you continue to create karma and you continue to perpetuate yourself like the plant that just keeps coming back and keeps coming back no matter how many times you cut it off. just like moral restraint isn't going to do it. I can tell you from my own personal experience as a monk for 30 years, you know, you avoid doing certain things because it's against the rules or whatever and then you're not a monk anymore. It just comes right back again because the latent tendencies, the anusas are still there that were not

completely eradicated.

So you can eradicate your delusion or you can eradicate your desire or your clinging. And either way it's it comes out the same. The math works out either way. And I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Xenithoid. And he is our last questioner for the evening. And he asked three questions. The first of which is as follows. Xenithoid says, "Can you give your opinion on meditation lying down versus sitting versus standing still?" I think it was Ajan Punadamo that mentioned that each one from the first to the last will encourage more virill over sitting. It feels more engaged.

However, monks are traditionally depicted as almost always doing sitting meditation. Yeah, there's there's a reason for that. First of all, lying down meditation, usually lying on your back, it's just too easy to get sleepy, too easy to fall asleep doing lying meditation. Some people can be really good at it. But the thing is, your posture helps to guide your mental states. So, if you're in a sleepy kind of posture, it helps you to be sleepy. If you're in an alert kind of mental state, like your back straight up and down, it helps you to be alert. So the main problem with lying down

meditation is that it just is too conducive to sleepiness.

Then with regard to standing meditation, there was a I I don't know if he's still alive, but there was a meditation teacher in Burma, Tangjidon, venerable Tangid Doniato, who specialized in standing meditation. And I went to one of his retreats, and I mean, you can do it. Although there are certain problems with standing meditation, too. First of all, the bottoms of your feet get really hot and sore. It's people just don't realize just how like pervasive dooka is like you know you sit in the same position like on on a comfy couch or something but after a while you start

feeling uncomfortable and so you you change position and you might do it unmindfully so that you barely even notice. You're lying in bed sleeping you know even sometimes you have to roll over just because it's getting uncomfortable on one side you want to roll over on the other side. And when we're standing, we're generally not just standing in attention. It may be that Xenithoid was in the military or something where you're just standing in attention maybe for an hour or two straight without moving, then maybe you would know about this stuff. But if you stand at attention like barefoot on a

hard floor, then before very long, the bottoms of your feet are just going to be like screaming.

And also if I mean you can't stand on something soft because then you're not as stable and you can fall over easily which is brings to the brings me to the next point is that you can fall over like the Tangidon Seattle um meditation at the retreat that I went to there was a few times people just you just hear this boom behind you before somebody just fell over.

It's not as stable of a position as sitting cross-legged on the floor, especially if you're in the full lotus that you've got like this tripod, you

know, like the the triangular stable structure. Like a three-legged stool is more stable than a four-legged stool just because I mean it's it doesn't wobble.

So just from a yogic point of view, I mean there's there's bound to be certain exceptions but certain exceptions but in in general the best posture for for meditation is sitting cross-legged that thousands of years of practitioners have arrived at this and for good reason. For some people, lying down works good. Other people, standing works good, but for me, sitting meditation was by far the best. You get into deeper

meditative states. You know, like when you're standing, you're always having to adjust. And a lot of the adjustments I have read are occurring in the spinal cord. It doesn't even get up to your brain. You know, you start tipping one way and like certain nerves will fire so that it triggers certain like like muscle adjustments so that you remain standing. that that is going on all the time when we're standing.

And so there's a certain instability, a certain effort that is always required to keep you standing. Whereas if you're sitting in the full lotus, then you're stable and it doesn't require hardly any effort at all.

But lying down is so effortless that you can fall asleep easily. Or at least I can. I I experimented for a little while doing lying down meditation with a like a mala like a a Buddhist rosary where like the movement of my thumb would would sort of be enough movement to keep me awake but it was still a shallow kind of meditation. It wasn't nearly as deep as if you're sitting in the full lotus just going beyond like motions and physical motions and so forth.

So I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question also from Xenithoid.

He says, "You've mentioned that around 40 your meditation quality started to

decline. Did you ever consider pursuing meditation techniques with more going on such as yantra gazing, whatever that is, visualizations, dream yoga, perhaps even tantra. I've heard that in the Vajraana tradition, they will start you out on simple breath meditation and then add in more complexity as time goes on. Well, adding in more complexity is is sort of retrograde.

like visualizations.

I mean when I was meditating, I mean when you get into deep meditation like the first time you get into like silent, clear, spacious meditation, you have no doubt whatsoever that it's it's well

worth 15 years of struggling and floundering to get you there for five seconds. that five seconds of this like silent clear meditation is better than 10 years of grinding away with breathing in breathing out breathing in breathing out or visualizing anything. It's just it's like and beyond an order of magnitude. It's just qualitatively superior or or just higher more refined than like visualisations or that kind of thing mantras that kind of thing.

So I mean I could do that but it's like I I kept doing it when I was a monk just it's but it's like going back to the

ABCs. It's like I mean you're in college and all of a sudden you got to go back to grade school and then you you get back up into college again and then back to third grade you go over and over and over again and you just get tired of going back to the ABCs over and over again.

I mean it could be that there was some meditation technique out there that was kind of busy work at first but then would just kind of lead you in to like higher Janna or some such you know just empty spacious hyperconscious mind wide awake and not thinking anything but I didn't really come across it I mean it it wasn't readily available in a

terravada tradition I I don't know what it would be exactly.

Maybe some kind of Tibetan technique, but I was never into Tibetan Buddhism.

So I mean yeah I mean there was always an option of doing meditation techniques that were more busy work but I mean it's so

just manifestly inferior to a higher meditative state where like I say it's like your mind is just like crystal clear like glass.

So I mean you want to just keep going back and grinding away at ABC. I mean that some people are fine with that but I just I just lost patience with it.

So I'm just going to move on to Xenithoid's third question which is the last question. He says did you ever purposefully cause yourself dooka as a monk to have a challenge in your meditation? Ajan man was known to deliberately go out into tigerinfested forests to meditate on and conquer the fear of death. I think that in order to become enlightened, one may have to deliberately interact with sensations and situations they have aversion towards in order to overcome them. Yeah, sure. That's that's true. I mean, purposefully causing myself dooka. I mean, like, for example, living alone in a forest in in just blazing heat. Being

alone being bitten by mosquitoes that I'm not even supposed to slap, just drenched in sweat. Eating disgusting goop.

50 different kinds of goop all just dumped into the same bowl. I mean, if you want to call that purposefully causing myself dooka, just being an aesthetic, sleeping on a concrete floor with a piece of wood for a pillow, I did it for years. But I mean, I didn't do it as really I wasn't thinking of it as purposefully causing yourself dooka. It's just purposefully giving yourself situations not to to experience dooka. I

suppose one of my first teachers in
Burma uh complimented me to one of my
supporters. He says, "Upino can endure
duka

because I mean I'm living in this
blazing hot wasteland in total solitude
in a totally alien environment. I mean
nobody there spoke English. I didn't
speak Burmese yet. The only way I could
communicate was speaking broken poly to
one of the assistant seats who had had
some schooling.

So I mean just being an aesthetic in
accordance with like ancient Indian
Buddhist tradition. I mean that would
seem to fit the bill here fairly fairly
solid. But there was a case there's a

book back on the bookcase Battle for the Mind by William Sergeant. It's one of those important books. You know it'd be like one of the 10 most important books I ever read. And he's talking about how all vertebrates, including Pavlov's, dogs, not just humans, we are governed by habit. Once we get a habitual way of dealing with life, then even if it doesn't make us very happy, you know, even if we're like miserable, so long as it keeps us alive, that's good enough. You know, it's we're surviving. And that's really the point from a biological point of view. So that's good enough.

But if you get yourself into a situation where your habitual way of dealing with life isn't working anymore, then you have a crisis. You have like a breakdown and then you become um very open to suggestion, very open to change. So it's like once you get this habitual way of of living your life, you're pretty much stuck until some crisis slams you out of it. And like Rahm Doss talks about this in a more spiritual sense. Um so what some systems do is they deliberately trigger this crisis like the Methodist church founded by John Wesley that he would do this as a way of converting people so that they were born again. He would give these talks back in the 1700s

in in rural England about how anybody who sins and does not repent is going to go to hell. The first half of his sermon would be along these lines. And people in the 1700s really could not deny that. That was just part of their culture. They were born and raised in that kind of system, that that belief system. So it's like sure, you do not repent, you go to hell. And then the whole second half of his speeches, he would just go into grizzly detail with regard to the tortures of hell and the demons just jabbing you with pitchforks and the boiling blood and the boiling pitch and the screaming and wailing and all this.

And he would give these these sermons until people would just start freaking out. I mean, they would be like going into convulsions on the floor, foaming at the mouth because they couldn't deny it. He was essentially like proving to them as far as they were concerned they were going to burn in hell forever and ever. They could not deny it. Their cultural conditioning would not allow them to just say, "Nah, that's not going to happen." And then uh when they would start going into the convulsions or freaking out, they would generally just pass out. You know, they'd faint. And then there would be like assistants who would be there kind of like helping them

to like restructure
their personality so that they were born
again. You know like you have this
crisis you become very open to
suggestion. You know it's like you just
become a sponge because the the habits
that you have like cultivated for your
entire life just aren't working anymore.
So then it's just like this animal
instinct not only in humans but in other
animals too that when this habitual way
of dealing with things isn't working
anymore. Then you go into this crisis
and then you become very open to
suggestion. That's how Chinese like
thought reform camps work. They just

break you down with like sleep deprivation and and not enough food until you just like crack up. And then the commasar or the the political officers would be there like indoctrinating you with this communist philosophy that you would just absorb like a sponge. Some kinds of military basic training are like this where they just get the raw recruits and just break them down and then just rebuild them after they've gone through the crisis situation into just these fighting machines that will not hesitate to follow an order. manhood rituals in like premodern societies, you know, just scaring the hell out of this kid. And

then, you know, then you start teaching him like the like the standards of men of the tribe and then they just become a man of the tribe and they'll just die for the tribe.

Live and die for the tribe.

So

the the way he learned about it, the author, William Sargeant, was he was a doctor in World War II dealing with soldiers who had what is now called PTSD. It back then it was called battle fatigue. In World War I, it was called shell shock. It's just, you know, you got bombs going off, you think you're going to die at any second. You just saw

your best friend's head get blown off. You just freak out. You're trapped in a burning tank or something. you have this horrible experience and it just kind of locks you in to these like neurotic symptoms of PTSD. And he found out that the way to cure somebody of this was to put them in another crisis, sometimes by just reliving the experience through just having them recall the memories that they were reluctant to recall or even hypnotizing them to relive the experience. And he said if it was just so horrific that they could not bear to remember it, he he'd have them recall or like like imagine some similar kind of experience that would then cause them to

have a crisis again and then he could like try to like instill healthier, you know, more normal kind of responses and cure them of the the PTSD.

Pavlov was doing this with his dogs.

It's some people think that Pavlov, you know, his life's work was just like studying dogs who slobber when he rang a bell or flashed a light. But that was just sort of a side project that he was working on that really Pavlov I have read according to this book his life's work was like causing dogs to have neurotic symptoms and then trying to cure them of the neurotic symptoms. And I mean Pavlov was just he was a bastard.

I mean, he was he'd just be like giving dogs electric shocks over and over again until they were just freaking out, you know? They'd just be like like shivering in the corner of their cage, pissing on themselves, just completely freaked out, just habitually, chronically, and then you try to cure them. And it turns out the way you cure them, put them in a new crisis situation and then they become curable. So, it's not you can't teach an old dog new tricks. It's just I'm teaching it the old tricks that is the trick.

And I'm completely lost the track here.

Oh yeah. So with that as an extremely long intro, I had read this book and I

was thinking, well, seems like if I'm going to become enlightened or at least make like significant spiritual progress, I should have like a crisis breakdown. And so one of the one of the years I was living under the big rock ledge on the outskirts of Alondo Kasper. I was actually trying to trigger like this crisis stage which was really a gamble because I wasn't going to have anybody around me to kind of pick up the pieces and help me you know help coach me to you know like get better but I I got close but I mean just the blazing heat and the solitude and just I mean I don't even recall now exactly

how I was turning turning up the volume,
you know, just making it even more
intense than just usually living alone
in a forest under a rock ledge.

But partly it was just the weather. It
was it was the the weather that year. It
was it was the monsoon season, but it
wouldn't rain. It was just like maximum
humidity and just blazing sun. And it
was just I mean it was just misery.

And I just deliberately cultivated that
kind of [__] Sometimes I'd be sitting
there just dripping with sweat under
this rock led just thinking why do I do
this [__] to myself?

So let's see here.

So the question did you ever

purposefully cause it yourself duka as a monk to have to ch have a challenge in your meditation? I mean that's pretty much what what the monk's life is.

Especially if you're living according to the sutas like the the the wandering vagrant monks sleeping under trees in forests and not being able to even slap the mosquitoes that are biting them.

Yeah. I mean that's I mean it's it's just like a [__] accelerator.

I mean that's that's the whole lifestyle is largely based on that. In fact, I've often considered that that lifestyle of just throwing yourself at the mercy of essentially a merciless world is more

conducive to enlightenment than sitting in meditation.

Maybe sitting in meditation is just like the fine adjust knob.

But really, it seems like a major part of spiritual practice from like the ancient Indian Buddhist point of view is just wandering homeless and penniless.

Give no thought for tomorrow, what you will eat or where you will sleep. Just like sleeping under trees, enduring like heat and cold and sickness and hunger and thirst and all that. I mean, that's just being an aesthetic. That's just what it was all about.

So, yeah, you can you can you can answer the question yourself after hearing that

information. I mean, would that fit the qualifications of me purposefully calling myself dooka as a monk?

But Ajan M known to deliberately go out into tigerinfested forests. Yeah. I mean, the main reason for that is like danger makes you more mindful. You're more likely to be mindful if you're in a dangerous situation. And some people just get kind of addicted to that like rock climbers or people who race motorcycles.

is it forces them to be completely alert with like this expanded awareness because you just space off for half a second and you're dead.

And these people, they just kind of become addicted to the rock climbing or the motorcycle racing or whatever it is, bull fighting or whatever, cuz they don't know how to cultivate this expanded awareness, this hyper alertness without the gimmick of the motorcycle or or the the cliff face or whatever it is.

So, yeah, I guess I'm done. Let's just let's just call it good.

And so, like I should always say at the beginning, I never do except once. If you have any questions you think I can answer, especially with regard to dharma, I mean, biology, western philosophy, that kind of thing is fair

game, too.

And uh no more than three questions per person per episode, please. And like and subscribe if you've not done so already.

Just smash the like button, as they say.

Just just take a hammer to the son of a

[__] just

and uh be happy. And now we're done. And

I'm going to stop recording.

Okay then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 161.

I am your host Ponyo Bosa and this is my beverage.

And I know what some of you out there are thinking.

You're thinking, "Oh, 161 might be a prime number." No. No, it's not. grow up. So 161 is actually 7 time 23.

So it's kind of semi-prime, I guess, sort of, but it's not.

And we've got sort of like lower end of the the average amount. You know, we got maybe 30 questions. So that's that's all right. That's fine.

We don't want to uh stray into the extremes of too many or too few.

And I might as well just wade it into this. And the first question is from Siovak and Cipad Ziderna who has the special privilege of asking more than three questions this time because sometimes it happens that someone will ask a question in the Discord server after I've already recorded the next Q&A but before I put it up on the like in the Q&A room. So that sometimes I'll just scroll below the the most recent Q&A to to find the new questions. And this time or last time I failed to look just above the Q&A that was posted for questions that were asked after I

collected the questions. No, after something but is after I had recorded the Q&A the the previous one but let's see I don't know I already explained it once that should be good enough as it turns out as just he asked these questions right before the the previous Q&A came up and so it was above the the most recent Q&A and I didn't look above I just looked below assuming that all the new questions would be after the Q&A was posted which was not the case.

Just disregard everything that I just said because it is largely irrelevant.

So sea of action cipad says

does Hinduism have good morality? To me,

Hinduism seems like a religion with no real morality beyond the cast system Dharma. And most of the morality in India comes from non-Hindu traditions like Buddhism, Jainism, or even the British forcing it onto the Hindus. Not saying Hindus can't be moral, but it seems to have no real significance on a spiritual level in itself and is merely a social convention. For example, they see no problem in widow burning, treating lowcasts like subhumans, or sacrificing people to the goddess Kie because at the end of the day, morality has nothing to do with spirituality. Correct me if I'm wrong, as I've heard similar claims about the ancient Greek

pagans, but from my research that turned out to be incorrect. So, I wonder how true it is here.

So, that's the first question.

And my experience with Hindus just kind of superficially is that the one kind of morality that they seem to take very seriously is a himsa.

That a himsa is taken seriously by Hindus, at least by mainstream Hindus. I mean, there's always going to be some people that just don't give a [__] about morality regardless of what religious system they grew up in. But I mean in like Hindus um just going with my limited experience

and my father's stories about working on ships with Hindu crews and just you know what I've seen and heard

stereotypes generalities that sort of thing is that Hindus will steal I mean not all of them obviously but it's common that I mean stealing anything that isn't nailed down. I when I went to India, I had size 13 flip-flops that were all chewed up by rats from when I was in Thailand.

I just You turn your back, you turn your back again, and they're not there anymore. What they want to do with size 13 rat chewed flip-flops, I don't know. But I was going barefoot most of my pilgrimage to India, not out of

religious sentiment, but because my flip-flops got stolen.

Also lying is considered to be like it's like good manners in in India or that is my experience where it's just considered to be polite to tell people what you think they want to hear that sort of thing. Um with regard to like what is this widow burning? I mean that is supposedly voluntary on the part of the widow. There's not like people like throwing this struggling woman into the fire that I've that I've ever heard of. So, let's see here. Treating low cast like subhumans. Well, Siovak and Cipad Zidonai himself would seem to endorse

that under certain circumstances
since I believe I can recall him
lamenting the decline of the Indian race
or rather the Indo-Arian race as it
interbred with the indigenous like
dossia people
until you know it's just no longer of
like Indo-Uropean caliber in certain
respects.

So I don't see why uh Seio Cad Zedena
would uh disapprove of treating low
casts like subhumans. Uh sacrificing
people to the goddess Kie. Yeah, there
have been certain sects of Kie
worshippers that would actually do human
sacrifices and also I have read in fact
it was in a book called where there is

no doctor the Indian version where
there's this stern warning that
sacrificing a baby to Kie is not going
to cause a woman to be to come fertile
don't do that it's not good
so I guess even nowadays that sometimes
a baby will be somebody else's baby will
be sacrificed to Collie for the sake of
the the woman being able to conceive
that sort of thing. But I mean you can
find this these kind of outliers in any
kind of religious culture including
Buddhism. Not that there's like regular
human sacrifices in Burma that I know
of.

But still, you know, there's always

going to be these outliers that most like the average Hindu wouldn't think of doing.

So, let's see here.

the aims I mean Siovak and Sipad Zna says that most of the morality in India comes from non-Hindu traditions like Buddhism and a himsa is largely like a himsa in India like in Hinduism was largely inspired by Buddhism you know this animal sacrifices came to an end largely because of the effects of Buddhism in Indian culture but still in India like vegetarianism is common at least not eating beef is fairly common. They do have like a respect for renunciation, that sort of

thing. You know, they still uphold like the the renunciant ideal.

Um, but as I say, like with regard to the average person, it may be that the one main thing that they really consider to be of utmost importance is is just not killing.

So I mean there is that that's I mean from the Buddhist point of view that's the most important precept to keep is not killing you know so know what I'm saying

so let's see

even the British forcing it onto the Hindus.

Uh yeah I mean just

even like

well where do I start with this? I mean originally like the Vedic religion was similar to like European paganism you know it came from the same source at least much of it did so there wasn't really a lot of morality involved it was just sort of like propitiating the gods you know offering sacrifices to the gods in return for sons cattle and victory over one's enemies that sort of thing But I mean any kind of culture is going to have some kind of um like moral ideals, you know, at least even just like fearlessness, you know, barbarian virtues, like just bravery, that kind of

thing that I I'm not exactly sure how much emphasis on bravery there is in modern Hindus, but I assume there's some of that Let's see. It seems to have no real spiritual level itself is merely a social convention. Let's see what is this. He says at the end of the day, morality has nothing to do with spirituality. I don't think so. It's like cultural conventions may not have much to do with spirituality, but morality certainly has, you know, it's just like the elementary level of spirituality. You know silo samari pa according to terra Buddhism you have to

have pure morals before you can really get advancement in in your meditation and you have to have like pure samadei pure concentration before you can get enlightenment.

So

yeah I would I would uh
niggle with that part.

So yeah, I do think like the the main outstanding virtue of Hindus would be

like not killing. They might steal and lie that sort of thing. With regard to like sexual morality, I really don't know. And I think it has changed radically just over the past few decades where I mean it used to be just a very

patriarchal kind of a society. Women were like a girl was owned by her father and then she would be passed off to her husband who became her new owner and then if her husband died then her grown sons would essentially be her owner that women were practically property in India up until fairly recently because nowadays you hear about just Indian women also just being like like what Instagram thoughts and stuff. So I really can't say what India is like exactly nowadays or what Hindus are like exactly nowadays but just based on like my experience in life at the very least they take aims

seriously.

So I'm just going to move on to Siobak and Sipad Zido's next question. Let's see here which is as follows. The Hindu gods like Shiva, Brahma, Vishnu and Indra have vices like lust or use tactics like rape through trickery to get their way in some texts. It doesn't seem Hinduism has an ideal of immoral purity in their tradition. At least from my limited understanding, you just don't want to get on some aesthetic or gods bad side or they will unleash their fury on you.

Meanwhile, in Buddhism, the gods are seen as more morally pure in general, and the higher up you go in the cosmos,

the more pure the beings become in their morality. What do you think this says about how these two different traditions view the world differently?

Okay. Well, one thing is like I've already mentioned like the the early vadic protohinduism was similar to like ancient Greek and Roman paganism. And so I mean if you read ancient Greek and Roman stories about the gods they do the same stuff. You know they have vices like lust and use tactics like rape through trickery etc etc.

So in that in that respect um they come from a common tradition of like amoral

gods. you know, the gods don't have to worry about that sort of thing since morality to like a prehistoric pagan or early historic pagan. Morality is just like not pissing off the gods. You know, you want the gods on your side instead of on the side of your enemies.

So, if there's like taboos, you know, some god doesn't want you to eat beans, then you don't eat beans if you don't want that god to be displeased with you, that sort of thing.

You know, like you you want to be on the good side of Mars, the god of war. You don't drop your shield and run from the battlefield.

But let's see,

the the the Buddhists, it is true that the Buddhists have more moral deities partly because their tradition isn't as old. So they're not they don't have this baggage. You know, it's like in in like the late Roman Empire, like in the time of Julian the Apostate, when he's trying to like improve paganism so it can compete better with Christianity. I mean, he's he he was saddled with all this baggage of all these poets coming up with all these tales of gods just behaving in this petty vindictive shitty way that I mean it just kind of like a a ball and chain to trying to uplift the gods into morally superior

beings.

And Hinduism

probably got stuck with some of that. In

Buddhism, it was kind of a new

tradition. And so even Saka, king of

gods, he was like the uh he was like the

patron deity of the the Indo-arian

invaders,

you know, the he's one of the main

deities who's propitiated in the vades,

you know, he was like the the pat the

tribal deity of the indoorans

and they just I mean the Buddhists just

took Indra, king of gods, who was like

this swaggering like war god practically

and turn him into a good Buddhist,

change his name, turn him into a like an

arya, like a Buddhist saint. And they could get away with that sort of stuff. You know, they're just coming up with a new tradition. They can just have like a more advanced concept of morally superior beings.

So, there's that, too.

But I mean I would assume that like a lot of these tales of the Hindus of like the gods and you know just all this head chopping and like like collie you know dripping. She got fangs dripping with blood and all that. It's it's like reinterpreted metaphorically.

But there's also this one issue especially with regard to Krishna

like in the Mahabaratam

and probably some of the what do you
call them

I can't remember the the the kind of
literature that that I'm trying to get
at but there's a lot of a lot of it
regards Krishna for example

and

Krishna

did all kinds of stuff I mean you know
he was not a moral person he was like
amoral in certain respects even Oh, he
was like a personification an avatar of
the to Vishnavite Hindus the highest god
you know the absolute
capital G god and in a sense
it makes sense

because like I like I've said before
Krishna wasn't just the god of good
Krishna I mean or Vishnu you know
Krishna as an avatar of Vishnu was the
god of good and evil. He was the god of
everything. And so he had to represent
everything. Sort of like in Gene Wolf's
The Book of the New where the like the
Messiah figure, you know, the
consiliator, the person who represents
the human race is he's he starts off as
a torturer, you know, he's just kind of
born and raised into a guild of
torturers. And he starts off as a
torturer,
not because he chose that that job, you

know, didn't have a calling towards it.
who was just kind of born into this
guild and started off as a torturer and
it's like in order to represent humanity
you have to represent all that humanity
represents that all that it brings to
the table and I think there is some
wisdom in having Krishna you know like
seducing the 500 you know coward girls
all at the same time or you know
stealing or you know help participating
in wars that kind of thing
that it does make kind of sense. I mean,
it's it's a more sophisticated view of
some anthropomorphic capital G God than
just God is absolutely good and he
doesn't like evil even though this

universe that he created is just like
overflowing with it.

So, it's like to the pure man all things
are pure as as the Bible says. So I mean
there is some of that in kind of the
more

sophisticated
um like Hindu mythology.

So,

but then again, its roots go back into
the same roots as the Greek and Roman
pantheons where the gods are essentially
amoral or, you know, they're just sort
of glorified humans with glorified human
vices, that kind of thing. So, there's
some of that, too.

So, let's see here. Did I answer the question?

I think so.

Let's see. Or I I guess the question is what do you think this says about how these two different traditions view the world differently? Um yeah, Buddhism especially in its when it was just starting, you know, vadicism had already existed for over a thousand years in the Buddhist time. So it was already ancient in the Buddhist time. And so I mean you can't change up these relics of like a much earlier time other than just reinterpreting things as metaphors and that sort of thing. Whereas Buddhism you know it arose in the so-called axial age

where there was a more sophisticated understanding of you know morality and how it how it is related to spirituality in general that sort of thing. And so they could kind of start off and from a more sophisticated place than the Hindus did. But really I mean the culture was this the same that like vadism and and Buddhism you know they coexisted for a long time.

So I mean they viewed the world rather similarly from that from that point of view. And I mean the Hindus had their own like renunciant aesthetics and all that too. So Hinduism is just has a broader spectrum of what it represents.

Buddhism is somewhat more narrow especially the early Indian pre-Mahayana schools you know they were kind of rather tightly focused on you know like liberating oneself from samsara. It wasn't so much all this stuff about marriage and children and all this other stuff that the Vedic system was started in.

So

gosh, what am I where was I trying to go with that one? This is this is what happens when like some of the first questions get into heavy stuff when I haven't really gotten my momentum going yet.

But I think what this says about how

these two different traditions view the world differently, the the Buddhist view is much more focused on like liberation from suffering and samsaric delusion whereas that's also contained in Hinduism. It's just that that's just one aspect of this whole spectrum of stuff going on in Hinduism because Hinduism was largely just Indian culture for a long time. I mean there wasn't really much differentiation between just Hind or like Vadic Brahmanism and just ancient North Indian culture. I mean it was pretty much the same thing. So you got like the laws of Manu that

it's just like social codes, proper behavior, don't never a a Brahman should never point with his finger at a pregnant cow, that kind of thing.

So the way they view the world is fairly similar although just the the morals are different with regard to especially renunciation. Like a good Hindu should go through the the different uh ashwama dharmmas. You know, he should start off as the celibate student and then he should become the householder, raise a family and then he renounces the world after his kids are grown and no longer dependent on it.

Whereas in Buddhism, it's just renounce as soon as you can. That's like the main

difference. plus you know certain

philosophical

differences that I don't know if if uh

I'm going to get into in this this

particular episode because I'm moving on

to the next question also from se of

action cad says thoughts on Ajan Sona

saying the Buddha was not just a mystic

because he was able to be logical and

lucid seems to make sense to me well I

mean St. John of the Cross was able to

be logical and lucid. I mean, just

because someone's a mystic doesn't mean

that they're going to be like completely

irrational.

I mean, you can be a mystic and all

sorts of other things. You can be a mystic and a scientist. Some people have managed that.

So yeah, he wasn't just a mystic, but I do think that early Buddhism was primarily based on mysticism and he used like his intelligence and his you know premodern logic as a way of supporting that.

sort of like Nagarja also he had a a kind of he had a more sophisticated more advanced kind of logic because he he rose like 500 years after the time of the Buddha. Um and he's using all this complicated philosophy as a way of just sort of getting to mysticism. It's like you know like Nagarjuna is famous for

just setting up these syllogisms that just destroys all possibilities. you know there there is no valid answer to any question and so that just kind of like he's using logic to destroy itself and leaving just silence and emptiness behind which is the mystical aspect of it because you cannot understand reality by thinking about it.

The only way you can understand reality is just by just participating in it directly with no symbolic interpretation between you and reality.

No, trying to make sense of stuff for example.

So yeah, I mean I'm not exactly sure

what Ajan Sona would consider to be genuine teachings of the Buddha. I assume he'd be more orthodox than me and consider more of the typical to be genuine teachings of the Buddha. So that you're going to have like vibhajada.

Sometimes in the sutas Theravada is referred to as vibhajavada or the doctrine of analysis. And I really don't think the Buddha was analyzing much other than perhaps as just like a tool or gimmick for getting to mysticism.

So personally I do not think that the Buddha was a vibhajaden even though Theravada did become vibhajada or the doctrine of analysis just like breaking things down into

smaller parts trying to single out causes and conditions and so forth which Abidama was dedicated to.

I really don't think that that is what the Buddha had in mind when he was setting the wheel of dharma in motion.

So yeah, he wasn't just a mystic.

I don't think any mystic is just a mystic.

So I think I'm just going to move on to Siovakad Zena's fourth question which is permitted because I omitted accidentally his three questions in the previous Q&A.

So he says in the kalaha we suta which I just recently did a video on the the video I uploaded right before this one

was in my studies in archaic Buddhism
series and I focused on the kalahawi
wasut the discourse on quarrels and
contentions but I just interrupted
myself I'll just return I'll start qu
start asking the question Again,
sea of action cipadira says in the
kalaha we wiwara suta. I thought the
Buddha would say paribana is better than
nibbana like the janes who say it's
better than even an omnisient tanker. I
know you said a person who asked such a
thing just doesn't get it. But I'm not
satisfied with that explanation and need
to dig deeper. I don't understand what
the Buddha means in his answer. So
having understood these to be dependent,

the sage an investigator having understood the ways of dependence. A released one having understood does not come to contention. The wise one does not attain to this or that existence quote unquote. Then section continues from my understanding what the Buddha is saying is that an arahant is not dependent on anything by not clinging to anything and whether there are aggregates to cling to or not is irrelevant. Thus there is no higher or lower states of conditions to them since they no longer depend on any condition or lack of conditions. Whether the arahant is in part in nibbana or alive

in nibbana only is a difference to people who cling to the things that make them different and proliferate based on that thoughts. Yeah, I would agree with that. Plus if you read the atawaga the dependence is dependence on anything including knowledge.

is dependent on perceptions, dependent on views, dependent on knowledge. So you get rid of all that dependence. I mean what distinction is there between

nibbana and par nibbana,

you know, you get rid of the perception and it's it's just utterly irrelevant.

It doesn't even get up to the level of irrelevance.

It's just blah blah blah.

So

yeah, I mean the one of the main themes of the atagawaga is just do not depend on anything including what you've seen, what you've heard, what you feel, you know, any view that you have, any philosophy.

Don't be dependent on any of that. And when you you get rid of all that dependence, all that's left is just liberation. And it doesn't matter, you know, what kind of conditions that an unenlightened person would apply to that liberation. That's just irrelevant.

So

maybe I answered that one.

Yeah, you just said thoughts. So any thoughts that that I emit that come out my mouth, I guess, would be the answer to that question.

See here.

Yeah.

Yeah, I think I'd pretty much agree with him. Although I mean it really

I mean even just trying to explain it is already kind of muddying the muddying the waters in a way because from the enlightened point of view I mean it's just you're not dependent on anything including your own thoughts.

So

I'm just going to move on to see action sepat's fifth and last question for this

episode.

He says another part of the same suta.

It says quote in stimulation are founded pleasant and unpleasant. In stimulation not being they do not exist non-existent and existence too whatever it means I tell you that they are founded in this unquote. And then Siovakian sepatna continues here in the suta saying that existence and non-existence are both founded in stimulation or now he says is the suta saying that existence and non-existence are both founded in stimulation or is it saying that existence is founded in stimulation while non-existence is founded in

non-stimulation. I'm bringing up the second interpretation because there are various sutas that describe nibbana as the cessation of existence or being and if this is the case then fetters like craving for aggregates continuing or samsara and aggregate ceasing or perinibbana. Thus this earlier part of the kalaha sutta might already be somewhat setting up for the later question about what state is hired.

Well, if you read it literally, it seems to me that what he's saying is that both existence and non-existence are reliant upon pa or contact or stimulation.

So, I mean the dichotomy first is the

dualistic dichotomy of existence and non-existence is a concept. I mean, people just really can't get this sort of thing that existence and non-existence are just kind of a illusory concept.

So it's like someone were to ask me if I believe in God even if I were like a theist. I mean still it would be like a trick question because God would transcend existence and non-existence. A capital G absolute God because existence and non-existence are both just concepts. I think the the Tibetan book of the great liberation or the yoga of knowing the mind and its nakedness also

brings up this point that existence and non-existence are both just concepts of mind.

And for someone who is just like stuck in perception, that makes no sense whatsoever.

And really, reality makes no sense. And so people that insist on stuff making sense are essentially insisting on samsara

because samsara is meaning. Sam samsara is perception.

So let's see here.

Yeah, it's let's see existence bat.

Let's see. There was something in here I was going to touch on here. Existence found in stone stimulation. I'm bringing

up the second interpretation because there are various sutures that describe nibbana as the cessation of existence or being. Yeah. Well, that's that's ba and ba in that case is essentially karma.

It's like the force of existence. I usually translate bwa in that sense as the force of existence which is like the karmic momentum of mental states that is just like pushing you pushing you forwards through samsara.

So that would be somewhat different from like the difference between existence and non-existence.

It's like the force of existence which is you know part of the the main it's

like one of the main things that a Buddhist should be contending with or dealing with is just the momentum of his own mental states the momentum of his samsara.

So,

let's see. Where is the question though? I don't know. Oh, here it is. See, is it saying that existence is founded in stimulation while non-existence is founded in non-stimulation? I don't think so.

I think that percept or like stimulation is kind of it's like stimulus response theory. you know, you have to have a stimulus before you can have a perception or at least to have like an

objective perception and then then you make judgments about you know existing and non-existing and so forth. So yeah, I do think that um the literal reading which is sort of counterintuitive, but the literal reading of the suta is that both existence and non-existence are founded in stimulation or pa and poly usually translated as contact although in this case in most cases I think pa might be more correctly or accurately translated as stimulation. So yeah, so um the duality of existence and non-existence is the response to a stimulus.

And I'm just going to move on next

question. And those answers may not make a lot of sense to like an intellectual who insists on everything being logically rigorous and making sense. But as I keep saying, sense is samsara.

Sense is delusional. meaning is delusional which to like head oriented people like probably most of the people who watch my videos I mean that's just how do you deal with that especially if you're not mystically oriented where you're just kind of some sorrow like mental samsara perception is all you've ever known except for like when you're in the middle of a sneeze you know when you're in the middle of a sneeze that's the closest that a lot of

people get to enlightenment in my opinion because you're wide awake and you're not thinking anything. But the thing is it's so brief and it's just considered to be a kind of anomaly so that generally like intellectuals will not try to integrate that experience into their world view. You know, it's just like this anomaly caused by the sneeze. It doesn't matter.

So, I think I answered that question. I hope I did because I'm moving on to the next question which is from Stellar Supreme. And this question also I missed in the previous Q&A.

Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Libra

Lamb, occasionally still known as Libra Lamb and by other names as well.

Furthermore, besides, and he says, "Do you believe that a portion of the children being trafficked in the US are being trafficked for the purpose of demonic sacrifice?" It wouldn't surprise me. I would guess that the percentage would be less than 1% of the children being trafficked for the purpose of some kind of human sacrifice. Not perpetrated by Hindus, I suspect, but by I don't know. I don't even know if they'd be Satanists. It's just there's like this a satanic element to it obviously.

But I mean to to murder a baby really, especially the baby that's already been born and is like wiggling and coupooing and and that sort of thing to to kill like someone who's totally innocent like that is very liinal. I mean that is you are disrupting the moral fabric of the universe by doing that which then allows powers to come through supposedly.

And some there are some people who are willing to utilize those powers or attempt to utilize those powers to further their own like their own career and to further like the polit political agenda of their group, that sort of thing. I assume that that does happen.

Not like a lot, but I assume it does happen. I was told by a jazz musician from St. Lewis that in order to make it big in the music industry, you've got to like what is what is the the deity baff you have to like worship bafflement which includes certain atrocities that are like disrupting the moral fabric of the universe so that the power of baffit I assume can come through into this world that kind of thing.

But I think most of the children being trafficked in the US, I mean, most of it is just, you know, sending illegal alien children to supposed family members. You know, it's it's probably, you know, not that big of a deal in in those cases.

Sometimes it's it's like slavery.

Sometimes it's sex slavery. And that would probably be above 1% with regard to like illegal alien children being trafficked into the United States. I would guess more than 1% of them are becoming like sex slaves.

And I did see a little bit of news about how the the Trump administration has located

uh several thousand of the many thousands of children that went missing.

And some of them were in fact sex slaves. Some of them were just plain old like work slaves. You know, some of them were dead.

But there are certain factions in American society and politics and in European society and politics that just don't care about this sort of thing.

It's just an embarrassment. Their side is responsible. They just want to sweep it under the rug and fake some outrage about some supposed atrocity perpetrated by the other side.

So I'm just going to move on to Stella Supreme formerly known as Libra Lam etc etc's next question is your decision to not meditate actually be not to meditate motivated by a sense that the meditation now would not be as potent as the meditation you were doing as a monk.

Yeah, that's that's the main reason

is that I mean it was like

I got into some relatively deep

meditative states as a monk and then it

kind of tapered off and

I mean now if I were to sit down and

meditate, you know, I might have some

lucid moments and so forth, but I don't

see how it could compare with when I was

a monk. It's like, you know, going back

to the ABCs

and it's just not satisfying.

I got as far as I could with it. So,

it's time to just do something else.

So, let's see. Did I answer that

question?

Yeah. I mean, that is essentially it.

Yeah. It's like the meditation I would do now as a lay person with a job and a mate and bills to pay and three dogs etc etc that it just would not do justice to the meditation I was doing as a monk especially when my meditation was at its peak like between the years 1999 and 2005

that was when my meditation was at its best

so that even when I was still a monk

After that, it just, you know, it was just

kind of stagnating. My meditation was not improving. It was, if anything, getting worse. And I was, it was sort of like being the red queen in Wonderland

where she had to run as fast as she could just to stay in the same place.

It's sort of like treading water, you know? You just keep grinding away at it, grinding, grinding, grinding just to lose ground as slowly as possible. That sort of thing.

So, I've moved on and I'm just going to move on to the next question here. This is from Tzasiz and Tzas says, "Are you ever jealous? I mean, after 30 years of training as a monk, not when you was young." So, am I jealous? I mean, there you can interpret jealous in two different ways. I mean, it could be sexual jealousy or it could just be, you

know, jealous of, you know, some
some person at work who, you know, gets
commended, you know, just that kind of
jealousy, you know, like envy or
resentment of other people doing well,
that kind of thing. I mean, being a
human,

uh, I mean, there can be just little
twinges of it that arise just kind of
through human instinct or something, but
I mean, it's not taken seriously.

And with regard to sexual jealousy, I
trust my woman, you know, I I know that
she's not messing around, has no
intention of messing around behind my
back. So, yeah. I mean, if I mean, we
don't go out much. We're neither one of

us is particularly social, but I mean, if we went to like a cocktail lounge or something and some guy is chatting her up and they're just kind of like laughing and talking and ignoring me, if that were to ever happen, it hasn't thus far, but if it were to ever happen, I probably wouldn't like it much. You know, I'd start getting a little bit of irritation from that.

But that situation just hasn't arisen.

And I mean, she I mean, I trust her more than she trusts me, I guess, just because I'm a more trusting person by nature, I think.

So, yeah. I mean, if there is any kind

of jealousy that I experience, it's just like little like initial twinges that are then dismissed.

And I'm just going to move on to Trareas's next question, which is, do you think something like collective species memory exists? Well, from a biological point of view, a collective species memory would be ingrained into instinct.

So, it's like a frog has this instinct that if it gets caught by a snake, it should inflate itself and start squealing. You know, inflating it makes it harder to swallow and squealing attracts larger predators that might be more interested in the snake than in the

frog. And over, you know, who knows how many hundreds of thousands or millions of years that there has been like a certain amount of success. You're more like a frog is more likely to survive if it inflates and starts squealing when caught by a snake. If it's caught by a bird, my experience is they don't inflate or squeal. When they're caught by a human, as a general rule, they don't inflate or squeal. But when they're caught by a snake, that is just default what they do. And so, in a way, that's kind of a collective species memory. If you're caught by a snake, inflate and squeal. And it's just built

in to their their psychology,
frog psychology.

So from a biological point of the
collective species memory would be
instinct of that spe the instincts of
that species with regard to something
more metaphysical than that then

I don't know it's possible. I don't know
how you could prove it or disprove it or
quantify it or measure it. So it
wouldn't really be scientific and I mean
I'm open-minded with regard to that sort
of thing. But

uh I think just the idea of animal
instinct this the instincts of a species
are like in a way at least to some
respect in to some extent the collective

species memory at least a kind of collective species memory.

So

I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is also from Tzas is and he says, "Do you think after you die you'll go to heaven realms?" And I really don't know. I don't even think about that. I don't really even like to think about that sort of thing. What's going to happen to me after I die? Whatever is appropriate is going to happen, you know? And I just take consolation in that, you know. It's like whatever ought to happen is what's going to happen. And so

I don't really think about am I gonna go to heaven? Am I going to be born as a human again? That sort of thing.

I just I just don't think about it much if at all. I remember before I became a monk, I was starting to think if there is such a thing as hell, I might be going there, which kind of helped spur me on to renounce the world. But

I just I just really don't think about it. I mean, I suspect that, you know, my spirit will continue to exist after I die, but I mean, it's I don't really have hopes about that sort of thing.

It's like when I was in school many years ago after I took a test, it was like I wouldn't worry like did I

did I get an A? Did I do well on the test? You know, it's like I wouldn't even think about it. And then that was the best attitude to take. You know, it's not like you've got any kind of like anxiety or worry or anything that's creating bad karma that's then going to maybe make it more likely that you didn't do well on the test retroactively somehow.

So, yeah, I'm just content that whatever happens to me after I die is what ought to happen. Everything happens the way it's supposed to happen. And so like wanting or just wondering that kind of thing. I I just for some reason it just

I just don't really go there.

So

I mean there's a chance of it I guess

but I mean if it's more appropriate for me to be reborn as a human then I'm fine with that too. whatever, you know, whatever is going to help me to work out my karma or or whatever it is.

So,

see, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from

Romeo. And Romeo says, "A couple of Q&As ago, you speculated that Adi

Shankaracharya might have contributed to

Buddhism's decline in India by putting a

Hindu spin on Buddhism with his Advaita

Vanta spirituality. As far as I can

tell, the main distinction between the two is that in Vdanta there does exist a self that is immutable and eternal as opposed to Buddhism's concept of anata where there is no self.

Can you further break down the similarities and differences between Buddhism and Advaita vānta? Well, I'm no authority on Advaita vānta. I've read the principal Upanishads and I've read some of Shankara's commentaries and I've read like learned articles and book chapters about Shankara that sort of thing most of it long long ago.

So I do think there is one other difference between Buddhism and you know

the more philosophical schools of
Hinduism is that in Hinduism they have
this concept of samsara or maya as leela
is like deva leela it's just divine play
you know it's like Shiva doing this
dance or whatever and definitely in
Buddhism it's not seen that way that it
is just seen as just sort of like
primordial ignorance and delusion is
causing samsara. It's not some godlike
vishnu lying on a on a lotus flower in
in the cosmos somewhere dreaming this
universe which is one of the one of the
kind of mythological interpretations of
this world that you find in Hinduism.
So uh I'm not 100% sure that vdanta
would adopt this you know maya being

like a divine projection rather than
just
ignorance and delusion.

But that is one difference that has
really struck me between at least some
Hindu philosophies and terra Buddhism.

But with regard to let's see
like further breaking down similarities
and differences between Buddhism and
Vita Vidanta. Well, I mean this the
similarities are like it's fairly
similar. I mean they they both believe
in like karma rebirth. uh you know
there's an absolute
although in Buddhism there's this wise
like

reluctance to reify the absolute you
know it's you're better to refer to the
absolute as just empty

śūnya śūnya

and leave it at that you know it's it's
what you should be working for working
towards

it's good it's like the goal But trying
to form a concept of it is just a fool's
errand. It's going to be an exercise in
futility. And so I mean I think Buddhism
has adopted the wiser course than vanta
which is reifying the absolute and at
the same time reifying the self which is
just the same you know atman is brahman.
I mean that's one of the main teachings
in the in the upaniṣads is that

your soul and God are the same that your soul is just you know the the aspect of God that happens to be you know in in in the center of you

and I think that Christianity would have really benefited from that

interpretation also but they went in a different direction

and uh I'm just making sure we recording cuz it's getting up close to an hour.

The little green bars are going back and forth which is good because it means the microphone is working.

So yeah, it was like Advaita Vanta and especially like Majamaka Mahayana

Buddhism, they became very similar with

regard to their metaphysics.

Um you know there's going to be some trappings that are different. you know, there's not going to be an emphasis on Buddhas in in Vdanta. There's going to be more of an emphasis on like upanachic sages, that kind of thing. But yeah, I mean, aside from uh reifying the absolute and by the same token reifying the self and just having this different concept of like Maya, you know, what is the cause of samsara? There's some some maybe subtle differences there.

um they are fairly similar and I have said before that if I weren't a Buddhist I'd probably be a vantist just because they are like very

philosophically

sophisticated and like satisfying. not fully satisfying because nothing is fully satisfying. But still, I mean, I could embrace that much more easily, that I could embrace Christianity, for example, that some Hebrew carpenter turned miracle rabbi who lived in the early Roman Empire, died for my sins, is the only begotten son of God Almighty, who is this being who gets pissed off regularly, etc., etc. Yeah, it's just Advita Vanta would be my second choice after Buddhism, I'm pretty sure.

Anyways, I guess I'm just going to move on to Romeo's next question, which is

did you ever explore Vdanta spirituality
yourself? And if so, what did you like
or dislike about it? Well, like I said,
I have read the principal upon read
about Vanta and so forth. Um I never
really investigated like vdantist
monasticism. I know there there there is
vdantist monasticism. There are like
vdantist ashrams and monasteries with
vdantist monks and I knew a person who
had been a vdantist monk just I mean
just like an internet acquaintance
and he really didn't divulge very much
of what it was like but I assume it'd be
fairly similar to being a Buddhist monk
just sort of like the the external
trappings would be different

some of them.

But I mean both originated in ancient northern India.

So I mean there's going to be a lot of similarities also.

Um

so yeah I mean I really don't know that much about

like vantage monastic practice you know

like the actual practice of it. I just

know the theory. I do not know the

practice of vidanta other than I'm sure

they've got like yogic techniques and

meditation and so forth. I just don't

know exactly what kind they are.

So what do I like about it? Well, I

already said, you know, if if it weren't a Buddhist, there's a good chance I would have chosen to be a vdanantist.

So, I mean, I like the the philosophical I I'm saying sophisticated or sophistication a lot in this episode.

This can be like the sophistication episode.

And yeah, I so I guess I already answered it.

Let's see. Did you ever explore vdananta spirituality yourself? And if so, what did you like or dislike about it? Yeah, I didn't really explore any of the actual practice of vdanantic spirituality. So, I'm just going to move on to Romeo's third question,

which is are there any other spiritual traditions besides vanta that are similar to Buddhism? Well, of course, Janism, you know, it also arose in ancient North India and it has roots going back into what I would assume is probably like the the Shramina tradition which originated in like the Indis Valley civilization or thereabouts. You know, it was like a an indigenous tradition that presumably existed before the Indo-Aran invasion around 1500 B.CE. So Janism yoga but uh yeah I guess yoga is different from vdanta. So there are certain schools of Hinduism besides vanta that do have some like spiritual

sophistication

and and philosophical sophistication. So yeah, yoga which originated also in the the shramana traditions of ancient India. It was called sanankia and then some of the sanankia philosophers um for whatever reasons they agreed to accept the vades as authoritative and they were absorbed into Hinduism and so yoga is now considered to be a kind of Hinduism but originally it was not. You just got two kinds of yoga or two kinds of sankha now. You've got atheistic sankha which I assume still exists in some kind of vestigial form in India and then you've got theistic sankha which is yoga which is absorbed in Hinduism. So

there's that also
um other spiritual traditions between
vanta that are similar. I mean, well,
even like I mean, the higher you go, the
more the systems converge. Like the
higher you go into like mysticism, like
advanced mysticism, you can have Roman
Catholicism getting close getting close
to Buddhism, like ad really advanced
Catholicism and really advanced
Buddhism. I mean, they're converging
towards the top of the mountain.

So, a lot of the stuff that St. John of
the cross says is is profound and he
came up with ideas similar to Buddhism.
Even just the idea that like someone who

has reached the stage of perfection which before reading St. John of the cross I mean I just wasn't expecting that in Christianity I mean Christianity it's like nobody is worthy of heaven is just by God's grace. Even Jesus himself in the New Testament like somebody calls him good sir or good teacher and he says why do you call me good? there's none good except God. So that even Jesus apparently was denying being perfect.

Whereas and then St. John of the Cross comes along and says there is a stage of perfection. There's there's three stages. You got the stage of the the beginner or the common worldling the puja in Buddhism. You've got the stage

of the adept who is anyone who has mastered contemplation like at least second genre from the Buddhist point of view. Anyone who's mastered at least second Janna would be considered an adept by St. John of the Cross. And then you've got the the perfect. And the perfect is someone who is no longer acting on their own self-will. They have mortified their self-will.

And so they become like this divine puppet. They're they're motivated by the will of God. But I mean that is very parallel to the Buddhist idea that an arant creates no karma because karma is

will. So St. John of the Cross and the Buddhists apparently independently of each other came up with this idea that an enlightened being someone who's reached the highest stage that a human can reach is not no longer has any will not of their own which is interesting. So it's like you get into spiritual traditions and at the at the lower levels they can be radically different from each other but you get higher and higher and higher they they're just all converging at the tip of the mountain so to speak. So even in Islam, you've got like Sufis that I wouldn't be surprised if there have been enlightened Sufi masters and like

enlightened beings, they might disagree with some of the the the really fun like the basic like surface stuff, the superficial stuff, the cultural stuff, but when you get up like into the ethereal realms, they're just agree more and more and more.

It's just that some religious systems really don't have that capacity like the Jehovah's Witnesses for example. I mean they have no concept of enlightenment you know they have no concept of like Janna or high contemplation anything like that you know they're just trying to be good boys and girls so that God will let them live in paradise after

they die.

And that's the way most religions are at just like the mass cultural level.

And so I guess I'd better just move on to the next question. This is from Frater Oculus or Brother.

And Brother I says, "How regularly does the beard need rebraiding?" Yeah, it's right here. I got a braided beard in case you didn't notice.

And

in general,

um, I go like every two days.

Um, and the second day, you know, after I've already taken a shower, it gets pretty rough. You know, there's I think technically they're called sticky

Audies. You know, hairs that are kind of like I got like this nimbus of loose hairs that are coming loose from the braid um on day two, which is good enough for going to work. I was It was good enough as far as I was concerned to do this video, but my woman didn't like that. You know, she wanted to rebraid it for me, so I let her do that. So it's it's looking kind of kind of neat now. But just few hours ago, there was like the the sticky Audi's there was just kind of broken loose. They had liberated themselves from the braid. But I wouldn't go more than two days, you know? It's like every other day at at

minimum for rebraiding it. But it's easy because I just present my my beloved woman with with a little rubber band and say here and it takes all of about a minute and a half for her to braid it for me. It's it's way easier than for me to braid it myself.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question and this is from Alba Coina and Alba Coina says what are your thoughts on Shri Dharma Provertica Acharia from Dharma Nation and I have watched several of his videos. Um in fact I remember when I was still a monk somebody told me that I was like the Buddhist version of him which after watching his videos I really don't see

it. I really don't think that as a monk I was like the Buddhist version of him. I mean both of us are kind of based in with regard to sort of more or less right-wing politics, at least non-leftist politics. I mean you could be like a complete centrist classical liberal and still be considered like a fascist and a Nazi by postmodern standards.

But I mean I think it's it's kind of interesting watching his videos but I do consider him to be very dogmatic. You know he he will just state like Hindu sonata dharmic arguments or or doctrines as just gospel truth. I mean a lot of it

he couldn't possibly know from his own experience but he just asserts that it's true. Period. And I mean I really don't swing that way. I'm I'm not that dogmatic.

Um so I mean I'm sure he's a good man and uh you know I'm wish him nothing but the best but I do think that he is rather dogmatic. You know that he is just um conveying as gospel truths like stuff that he doesn't really know if it's true or not. He just firmly believes it because of faith.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Arox, an extinct kind of cattle. And Arox says, "How doesn't how doesn't Buddhism fall into

some kind of meaningless nihilism when there is no self and reality is ultimately an illusion? Who is understanding the Buddhist truth about the nature of this reality if there is no self? And how can it be true if this knowledge is a part of an illusory reality? So I think this there's more than one question mark. So I guess that counts as more than one question. I'm just going to divide it up. So I'm just going to go up to the first question mark and stop for the first the first answer. So he says, "How doesn't Buddhism fall into some kind of meaningless nihilism when there is no

self and reality is ultimately an illusion?" Well, reality is not ultimately an illusion.

I mean that's that's just a contradiction in terms how could reality be an illusion other than the illusion has some basis in reality just like you can say uh a mirage

I mean it's not pure illusion because there is some kind of empirical basis to you know the the shimmering appearance of a a body of water in the distance in the desert so to speak you know it's it's caused by like like light refracted by heat and so forth that causes you to see something that's way off in the distance or like a lot of water

miragages like like on a hot day you're driving down the highway and you can see like shimmering surface of something that looks like a water in a dip in the road and then when you get closer it disappears that sort of thing but it's not pure illusion because there is some basis to that illusion there is something real causing the illusion you know at least from the scientific point of view.

So I mean reality can't ultimately be an illusion because then it wouldn't be reality. How can reality be an illusion unless again you're just talking about the like the the fundamental essence of

the illusion you know of the the mirage
or the dream or whatever it is.

So reality is reality. It's just that
you can't understand it intellectually.

You cannot know it perceptually.

You have to transcend the limitations of
your own human ape primate mental states
in order to get to the reality. It's

like Emanuel Kant. I mean, he believed
that there is a reality, but we can't
know it. All we can know is the

illusion. I mean, Kant, I don't know if
anyone called him a nihilist. You know,

he did acknowledge that there is the

thing in itself. It's just that we can't

possibly know it. But in Buddhism, you

can know it. You can know at least one

content thing in itself. And that is
the content thing in itself of your own
consciousness

without the the like the intermediary of
perception.

Because if you try to perceive
consciousness, it's not pure
consciousness anymore. It's perception.

And the perception is sort of like the
mirage. You know, it's like if you get
down to the nuts and bolts of that
mirage, what is actually causing it? You
get down to pure consciousness.

But with regard to no self, I mean, so
what I guess with regard to the no self,
I might be able to answer that better in

the second part. But Buddhism doesn't fall into meaningless nihilism.

Uh I mean, nihilism would be like nothing is true.

And that's that's not what Buddhism teaches. It's just that nothing that you can think is ultimately true and valid.

If you want to know the highest truth, you have to experience it directly.

And that would be like nibbana or nirvana.

But you're not going to get there by thinking about it. Unless maybe you're an Abhidharma scholar. Abhidharma scholars, they really took the wrong ball and just ran in the wrong direction with it. In my opinion, they think like in Burma,

the Abidama scholars think that they know ultimate reality because they have memorized the dogmas in these Abidama books. And so they're just their head is just full of these beliefs and they're no closer to reality than they were before probably unless they just do a lot of meditation and they get closer to reality in spite of all this dogma that they've been ingesting for decades and decades.

But like I was saying, I mean, meaning is delusion. Meaning is some sorrow.

So I mean, I guess to some degree, Buddhism at the highest level falls into some kind of meaninglessness because

meaning is delusional.

Meaning is perception. You take away perception, you take away meaning.

that meaning is just symbols representing or attempting to represent something else.

So

I guess I can just go on to the second question which will help me to answer the first question. So maybe it was a mistake to have separated them even though there's two different question marks here. He says, "Who is understanding the Buddhist truth about the nature of this reality if there is no self?" Okay, let's just stop there. Here he's got a comma after this but

that's that's a good stopping point who
is understanding the Buddhist truth
about the nature of this reality if
there is no self there is no who I mean
from the going with orthodox terravada
there is no self but there's still
mental states so I mean it's I mean even
western philosophers like like even a
worldly kind of western philosopher like
what's his name Russell Bertrren Russell
I mean he pointed out like with regard
to Decart that I mean the cojito go some
I think therefore I am is just bad
reasoning because there's no logical
necessity for there to be a self in
order for there to be thoughts even Bert

and Russell I mean this worldly western philosopher he he was saying that I mean there is no logical necessity that there has to be a self in order to have thoughts you know it's it'd be more correct if if Decart had just said there are thoughts that that would have come closer to the truth than I think therefore I am.

So I mean you can have thoughts you can't have mental states without there being an ultimately real self. I mean ultimately the mental states themselves are questionable but still logically there is no need for there to be a self in order for there to be perceptions or thoughts that the thoughts and the

perceptions can exist just due to
conditions

that there doesn't have to be this real
self generating these thoughts the
thoughts just arise according to
conditions and David Hume is another
western philosopher who came up with
something along the lines of Anata in
his magnum opus that he wrote in his his
20s

where you know there there is no self
that you can really pinpoint I mean
there's mental states obviously but the
self that is supposedly like the the
vessel of these mental states is not
apparent at all you can't point to it

you can't prove that it exists

so who is understanding the Buddhist

truth about the nature of this reality.

If there is no self, no there is no who.

The understanding can just arise due to conditions.

But

it's it's it does not logically

necessitate a self to be the owner of

these mental states or the generator of

these mental states. And then he he

continues all continues. And how can it

be true if this knowledge is a part of

an illusory reality? Well, real again

illusory reality is an oxymoron. It's a

contradiction in terms.

I mean the illusion can have a a

foundation or basis in reality and then you would understand that. So you'd see through the illusion in order to get to the reality.

So how can it be true if this knowledge is a part of an illusory reality? Well, any kind of like conceptual understanding is going to be like illusory to some degree. I mean it's just going to be illusory. I mean if you're trying to make sense of reality then that's going to be illusory because the reality cannot be made sense of. I mean, you cannot like intellectually understand ultimate reality because you're just

turning it into symbols. And as I keep saying, a symbol is radically different from what it attempts to represent. Like T r e e on a piece of paper is radically different from an actual tree or any kind of understanding of a tree is radically different from that tree. They're just worlds apart essentially. So we're dealing with illusion. That's what we've got to deal with because we're stuck in it. We're stuck in samsara. And there is uh some Mahayana text, I think it's a cardinal Mahayana Sutra that says something like the purpose of Lord Buddha's teaching is to liberate us from our thinking by means of our thinking. So it's like fighting

fire with fire. you know, you're using skillful means. So, you're you're taking your delusion and using it in a kind of somewhat less diluted manner to kind of like dilute itself down to get weaker and weaker until finally you can break free from it

and then you're in reality the container thing in it thing in itself.

So

Buddhism could fall into some kind of meaningless nihilism to someone who is just absolutely addicted to their own thoughts and just cannot I mean they cannot accept that there could be anything that lies beyond the scope of

their own intellectuality, their own perceptions.

So Buddhism can be called a kind of meaningless nihilism to people that really don't get mysticism that they're completely like addicted to thinking.

They're just completely trapped in their own head, that kind of thing. But they don't really understand dharma. At least they don't understand the higher levels of it. They can only be understood through practice and personal direct experience.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Phyes and Philes says are clouds mandelas. A cloud is a mandola only if the person looking

at the cloud decides to interpret it as
a mandelola.

That's it.

So clouds are not some sort of
metaphysical symbols.

They're just

they just arise due to conditions and
then somebody down on the ground

probably a new age type person looks up
and says ooh it's a mandelola

but it's and probably they mispronounce
it as mandala. I guess in as an English
word it might be correctly pronounced
mandala

although mandelola is a poly word

and I think it just means like a it can

mean like a circle although like a large panel on a monk's robes a monk's robes like a terra Buddhist monk's robes are cut up into big rectangles and small rectangles and the large rectangles are called mandelas the small rectangles are called ada mandelas which is a half mandelola. So it's just like a a large square

would be um like the meaning of mandelola at least in one sense in poly but you know the kind of symbolic meditation

subject or object. Um yeah it's just you could just sort of artificially impose mandelola hood onto a cloud but that's as far as it goes. Now I'm going to move

on to Phily's second question. Is imagination accusa? And ausula literally means unskillful and sometimes it's translated as unh wholesome. You know it's bad karma.

So is imagination bad karma? Well, if you're wallowing in it, yeah. Um like an enlightened being,

arguably. I mean, you don't really want to make like definitive statements about the mental states of an enlightened being, but an enlightened being probably has thoughts, you know, at least from like the the empirical point of view.

You could do like a like a PET scan on a fully enlightened being, assuming that

fully enlightened beings even mean anything in a some sort context, and there's probably activity going on in the brain, like thinking and so forth.

It's just that

when you're enlightened, I mean, you just don't identify with it anymore. You have transcended it. So, it's still there. You just transcend it. It's not like you you annihilate it.

It's it's still there. It's just that it's no you're no longer identified with it. You're no longer led astray by it. It's just nature taking its course. So, the wiser you are and the less you're just wallowing in imagination, the less accusal it is. But if you're just like

Walter Mide, some some of you might know
who Walter Mide is, you know, he's
there's this story by I think it's James
Thurber wrote this like back in the
1940s or something. This guy named
Walter Mide, the secret life of Walter
Mide, and he's just fantasizing about
being this hero just in various various
I mean just throughout the day. He's
just this inept boob who's completely
handpicked by his wife who's always on
his case because he keeps messing things
up, but he's just living in this
imaginary world where he's like James
Bond, you know?

So, I mean that kind of imagination I I

mean it can go even farther than that until you're just like psychotic just living completely in this imaginary world that doesn't really vibe or correspond with what's going on in the empirical world for most people.

So, yeah, the more wise the imagination gets, the more you're not attached to it and the less accusa it is. But really, if you if you're not enlightened and you're thinking about stuff and believing that they're real, even like in a different different context, then still there's at least a certain amount of delusion and thus a certain amount of accusula because anything that

is motivated by greed, hate or delusion, attraction, aversion, or semic-conscious stupidity is going to have an element of auseli in it. Bad karma.

Buddhism is just very finetuned mo
possibly the most finely tuned ethical system known to man
because it's not just you just do what the god says and you're doing good. You go against what the god says and you're doing bad. It's it's like entirely psychological. So that any delusion that is like
what's what's the term like infusing your thoughts and it's like all thoughts have at least illusion backing them up.

So long as you're not enlightened that just about anything that you think or do is going to have a certain amount of unskillfulness involved.

And it's like imagination is just to some degree it's creating sort of a miniature world. You know, it's like you're watching a movie too. It's like you're watching a movie. A part of you is assuming that movie is real. You know, if if you're not following along with the story and at least kind of semi like suspending disbelief, then I mean it's just pointless. Why watch the movie? I mean I mean you could be like a like a movie critic who's just watching how good of an acting job the

actors are doing or or like trying to like deconstruct the the plot lines and this kind of thing. I mean that would be kind of like what a Buddhist aesthetic is doing to everyday life to some degree. But still most people they're reading a story, they're watching a movie. They're just daydreaming and coming up with some scenario, having a dream at night. And you know, at least part of you is assuming that that is real, which is delusional.

I mean, you wouldn't get excited you're watching a scary movie if at least part of your mind wasn't assuming that it was real.

So, yeah. Is imagination accusal? Not necessarily, but usually. And for just about any unenlightened being, it's got at least a little bit. And the more attached to it you are, the more you're wallowing in it, the more accusal it's going to be. Especially if you're fantasizing about like killing your boss or something, then yeah, that would be even worse.

If you're just fantasizing about being a rock star or something, it might not be as bad as fantasizing about being someone who's blowing up entire cities. I'm just going to move on to Phil Lee's third question.

He says, "Are there infinite ways to

practice dharma?" Theoretically, yeah,
there would be an infinite there'd be
infinite ways to practice dharma in
theory,

but uh

yeah, I don't know if there have been
infinite ways that dhamma has been
practiced in this world because there
have only been a finite number of people
who have practiced dhamma in this world.
might be a very high number, hundreds of
millions,
maybe even a billion or so over the over
the the millennia,
but still you haven't gone up into
infinite numbers. So, it'd be

theoretically yes. And maybe if you consider the entire universe, all the possible worlds in all the possible realms, then yeah, we might be up to an infinite number.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from someone whose name looks like it should be pronounced creel but is actually pronounced throat warbler mangrove.

And throat warbler mangrove says why did the Buddha not allow women in the SA initially? Is it related to the fact that women in throat warbler mangroves opinion in general bring drama, need attention, are emotional, nag and play victim more than men? Why their

inclusion in the SA caused Buddhism to survive less according to Buddha? Well, that's kind of politically incorrect, isn't it, to ask such a question.

So the Buddha being male in a maledominated society like almost all societies were up until relatively recently.

Um you know he started the sangha for men for monks

and there were some female aestheticians.

There were some sects some ancient Indian schools that did allow female aestheticians.

And I think the main reason why the Buddha was reluctant to ordain nuns is

just that when you have monks and nuns interacting with each other, scandal inevitably arises. Not from every monk and every nun, of course, but the chances are you've got a monastery of celibate,

sexually frustrated men, and you've got a a convent like just right next door, maybe of celibate, sexually frustrated women,

nature is going to take its course sooner or later. It's going to result in scandal, which is going to bring disrepute onto the song. So I assume that was the main reason why the monk did not want to ordain nuns.

U also there there's like one reason

that you can find in the texts. You might take a little bit of reading between the lines, but it's fairly obvious that some women like after according to the texts after the the Buddha finally allowed bikunis or Buddhist nuns to be ordained, there were women who were just getting away from bad marriages. You know, they're just like escaping from an [__] husband by becoming nuns. And they did not have like a real vocation. They didn't really, you know, they didn't have a spiritual calling. They're just trying to get away from some jerk that their parents like betrothed her to when she

was a baby.

And you know, they're just that happened. So, it apparently was a thing even in the Buddhist time that some women that wanted to become nuns really were just trying to get away from a bad family situation.

And so I mean there's possibly some of that involved also. Uh according to the text, the Buddha did get talked into ordaining nuns by his his cousin Ananda, who was also his personal attendant at the time. Um by Ananda saying, "Well, can't women become enlightened just like men can?" And the Buddha had to admit, "Yes, actually women can become enlightened." So reluctantly

he said, "All right, all ordained nuns, but now you've done it because the song is only going to last half as long now. The true Dhamma will exist in this world for only 500 years instead of a thousand because of ordaining nuns." And probably again, it's just biology that men and women, sexually frustrated, celibate men and women who are interacting with each other, it just breeds scandal. It's just natural human nature. It's just the way it is. We are human. Even monks and nuns are human. They still have all those animal instincts that are called human nature in our species.

So I mean even a celibate monk, he sees a pretty woman, you know, it's like the the pupils dilate, you know, so it's just the way it is. And so probably it was best I mean in the Buddha's opinion at first just have men. I mean, it's going to be kind of like a fringe thing for women anyway. You know, there's not going to be nearly as many nuns as there are monks anyway. And so, best to just keep the men by themselves without these, you know, possible temptations interacting with them all the time.

So,

uh I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Salina.

And Sina says, "I know you are not confident in the authenticity of sotapana and sakadagami levels or anagami for that matter. But let's say you changed your mind or really have to try to advance or advocate that sodapana and sakadagami are the real Buddha's teachings and people really do reach this aran level. How would you explain it? Please, please try hard to advocate it. Um, I'm not exactly sure ex what Sina wants me to do here. I mean, I could just say what tradition says. You know, it's like you've got kind of like St. John of the Cross was was talked about. You got

three levels. You've got the be the
puja, the common worldling. Then you've
got the seikka which is the person in
training which is from going with
terraodin interpretation the the the
lower three levels of Buddhist
saintthood or aryahood soda pana
sakadagami and anagami and then you've
got the aca the one no longer in
training who is fully enlightened that
would that would correspond to St. John
of the cross's stage of perfection
and that I mean that is fairly
acceptable to me but when you divide the
seka into three categories where the
sodapana is someone who can't break any
of the five precepts I mean even if for

any reason they're just incapable of it and they are going to be born no more than seven times I think see I really have never really taken it very seriously. So, I'm not even sure exactly what are the exact specifications for a soda pana and a sakeami.

But the sodapana, I'm pretty sure it's no more than seven more rebirths before I mean you it's like you have reached the point of no return. There's no relapsing back into lower realms. You won't be born in hell or as an animal or a ghost, anything like that. And so you're going to be at least human level for no more than seven lives before you

become enlightened. And it's you have
this flash of insight which is like a a
the first little glimpse of nibbana. And
you know it's like that's it. Point of
no return. You can no longer tell lies
or any such thing. And

um

that's that's like the official
doctrine. there's certain feathers and
hindrances that they're cut off. I mean,
you don't have doubt. You don't have
self view anymore. That kind of thing.

Then the sakeami

is you have one more human life maximum
before you're enlightened. And then some
of the other hindrances or fetterss
become like attenuated.

And and really it's I mean it strikes me as largely arbitrary like this sakeami distinction and it's not mentioned at all in what are considered to be older texts but I'm supposed to be advocating hard for it.

So I mean my advocating hard for it is like well there have been lots and lots of wise teachers and in the text the Buddha himself advocated for it. So who am I to to be skeptical?

And then the anagami which in like the first sutas of the idi uh apparently anagami is used as a synonym for enlightenment which makes sense non- returnturner. You're not

coming back like just like intuitively if you came across that term you would assume that it means an enlightened being. But an anagami is someone who's going to be they're not going to be reborn on this planet anymore. They're going to spend one last life up in some very advanced heaven realm. The div was it the divine abodess, the happy realms.

And only good Buddhist saints can get up there, which is why the Hindus never discovered these these realms.

And then and then after that you've got Arhant fully enlightened and then just no more in Samsara. But yeah, let's say I change my mind. I really have to try

to advocate that soda pan and sakadami are real. Um, and the the real Buddhist teaching and people really do reach this orient level. How would I explain it? Well, I'd explain it the way the texts say, which is pretty much what I was saying.

Although the texts are much more precise and haven't forgotten, you know, exactly which states, you know, like that each stage overcomes that kind of thing. But I mean, I'd advocate it by saying, well, like I like I already said, I mean, it's like all these great Buddhist sages have believed it. The Buddha himself is recorded as having said it and taught it

and advocated it. So, who am I to be skeptical?

So that's about that's about the best I can do

and I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Gnostic

Rocker and Gnostic Rocker says, "Is

Terravada a mystical system or is it an aesthetic practice that can lead to

mysticism? And were most of the

monastics or Buddhist layman you

practiced with over the years mystics,

dogmatists, rule followers, or something

else?" Well, that's actually kind of two questions, isn't it? Huh. So, we're

going to have like four questions out of this. I'm going to separate these. Okay.

All right. So, first question is, is Terra a mystical system or is it an aesthetic practice that can lead to mysticism? Well, I think originally it was a mystical system and of course an aesthetic practice that can lead to mystical experiences, but the whole philosophical setup of like the atakawaga

is largely mystical where it's just saying don't believe anything. Don't like cling to perceptions. Don't don't even cling to like what you've seen and heard

that that's just all it's external. Even your own thoughts from the Buddhist

point of view are external. They're what
is it? What's the term? Uh visiting
adventitious I think is the term
incoming from outside.

So yeah, early Buddhism before terraata,
pre-terravvada

would be a mystical system that had an
aesthetic practice that was designed to
cultivate mysticism. But terraada
has already it's already like the post
mystical stage.

uh terravada like in the text sometimes
it's called vbajavvada the the the
doctrine of analysis which is
practically the opposite of mysticism.

So terravada orthodox terravada
is

I don't I don't know if the like the average orthodox terravada Buddhist even understands mysticism. I don't think the average terravada Buddhist monk is a mystic. But I think I've already I'm skipping to the next next part of that question.

So terraada let's just forget like what Buddhism originally was or like you know the atika waga even though it's contained in the terravada typica um terravada has this text called the the maha nidesa which just reinterprets the atagawaga into something more doctrinal for terra.

So the atawwaga is one of the few texts

in the polytopica that has a commentary that's so ancient that it's also canonical and there was a felt need for this kind of commentary early on because Terravada was diverging from the teachings of the atawaga. Atakawaga was too well known to edit out of the canon and so they had to reinterpret it by doing a lot of stretching and twisting and unless you're just a complete dogmatist with absolute faith then it's it's pretty questionable some of the interpretations in the ataga.

So anyways terravada is not really a mystical system anymore. I mean it can lead to mysticism almost inadvertently. I mean, second Janna, I would say

starting with second Janna, you're getting into mystical states because you're wide awake and not thinking anything.

So yeah, it can lead to mysticism while itself not having a particularly mystical philosophy because it had abandoned the the no perception, no view, don't believe anything attitude of the atikawaga and they just came up with this huge scholastic edifice of doctrines and the doctrine of analysis where you divide everything up into all its parts and you analyze all the causes and conditions you single them out and try to understand how they

interact in all this which is practically the opposite of mysticism. So the second part of the question is and were most of the monastics or Buddhist layman you practice with over the years mystics, dogmatists, rule followers or something else. Very few mystics very few. Most of them I mean the Burmese are just like preeminent dogmatists that even the scholars like a Burmese monastic scholar they can just be phenomenal with regard to their memory. They just master the text. They know what the texts say forwards and backwards. They have almost no independent thought. They don't dare to

question any of it. They're like like
like medieval Catholic theologians, you
know, it's like they cannot question any
of it. It's all true. So, they just
master what the book says. So, they're
definitely dog dogmatists.

Um they're they're way better at
dogmatizing than at rule following
because most Theravada Buddhist monks
don't follow the rules very well. very
few Theravada Buddhist monks, maybe 2%
especially in Burma will actually try to
follow the rules of monastic discipline
correctly.

So yeah, dogmatists would probably be
the best the best answer for that one.

Although in Thailand, they tend to be a little bit less dogmatic, a little bit more into following rules, possibly even a little more mystical.

Although they don't meditate as much in Thailand as they do in Burma or so I've been led to understand.

But you get into the meditation masters.

The meditation masters are going to be more mystical. The more advanced you get, the more mystical you get. That's just the way it works. And it's it works that way. Not just for Buddhism, but like I was saying, Christianity, Hinduism, whatever. The more advanced you get and the more you just converge in mysticism.

So, I'm just going to move on to Nostic Rucker's next question here, which is, "What were your most botific meaningful experiences as a monastic?" It would have to be like in that period between 1999 and 2004 when my meditation was at its zenith, so to speak. And I don't really want to go into a lot of like I don't know like recounting these experiences, but like uh what should I what should I mention? I mean just like like I I think it was the the previous Q&A I was saying that you know you get into one of these this expansive crystalclear meditative states where I mean the thoughts have just stopped. You

know, every once in a while a thought will start to arise. You'll see this sort of like little ripples starting to appear on the surface of a pond and then you you're aware of it immediately and it just calms back out again. It just flattens back out and your mind remains silent. So there's like a few initial movements of a thought trying to start to arise. You just you just see it immediately and it just flattens back out again. crystal clarity, silence, just expansive consciousness. And you have no doubt at all that five minutes of that is worth 15 years of struggling and floundering and just it's it's better than 15 years of breathing in,

breathing out, breathing in, breathing out, breathing in, breathing out.

And then there was the experience I had like going down the the stone steps in the rain, having like gut cramps from something I ate earlier that day that I won't go into the details, but I remember talking about that once at some Dharma or just public talk in in America and some new age guy came up to me afterwards and says, "You were describing an enlightenment experience." He was really impressed by that of the story of me going down the steps in the rain with gut cramps and it was like I was my meditation was at it was was

really good at the time and just just spontaneous mindfulness you know it's like down at the well getting a bucket of water you're just aware of you know the the the feeling of the rope against your hands and the the tightening of the muscles and the the breeze on your skin you. It's like this heightened state of awareness.

And then going down the stairs, it was like I just reached this point where I just like transcended the the the being rained on and just being doubled over with abdominal cramps from eating like spoiled shrimp curry or something. And it was just like the center of my consciousness, so to speak, was like

deep down just below the surface. And up at the surface, you had all these waves of gut cramps and being rained on and so forth. But where like the center of my consciousness was was just stillness, you know? It was all fine. It's just like commotion up there up at the surface that didn't even matter. And I mean, it was such an intense experience. I was I mean I was almost weeping with joy and gratitude while at the same time anyone who saw me would think that I was dying because I was still like doubled over grimacing in pain from from the stomach cramps and being rained on. So yeah, the most botific meaningful

experiences as a as a monastic, I mean I might get rid of meaningful because of course meaning is delusion, but the most bayotific experiences as a monastic were like when my meditation was at its best which is kind of should not be too surprising.

So I think I'm just going to move on to the next question also from Nasi Rocker which is as follows. I think someone should release a compilation of biblical teachings that are potentially at least Buddhist or Greco Roman pagan in essence. I wonder how would a Buddhist read or interpret the following from Corinthians. Quote, this is Paul of Tarsus speaking. Quote, for now we see

through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known."

Well, seeing through a glass darkly, yeah, that's kind of delusion or ignorance. Um I think a Buddhist wouldn't be saying that when you become enlightened then you you see face to face

because I mean it's the faces are just part of the papancha or kind of the delusionfueled

differentiation of the world into this and that you know just separating things and and like considering different aspects of what you've separated as real

entities

but yeah so I wouldn't say it's
completely a Buddhist statement.

Um, but I mean the part about seeing
through a glass darkly, yeah, I mean
that's that's a Buddhist statement. You
can say that or a Hindu statement. You
know, they believe in Maya or illusion,
that kind of thing.

[Music]

So

yeah, see, I wonder how would a Buddhist
read or interpret the following from
Corinthians.

Okay. Yeah. seeing through the glass
darkly. It's a metaphor. I mean, a
Buddhist would interpret it somewhat

differently.

It's like I mean, you're seeing clearly and then just like cluttering up what you've seen with like perceptual interpretations which then obscure the view.

So, yeah, then face to face would be like when you're enlightened, you're no longer obscuring the view with all these perceptual symbolic interpretations. Now I know in part, but then I shall know even as also I am known. Yeah, that could be like now I'm ignorant but after I become enlightened then I'll know the truth. That sort of thing. So yeah, I mean for the most part it could be

interpreted in a Buddhist sense.

But I think like uh a compilation of biblical teachings that are Buddhist would be different from a compilation of biblical teachings that are Greco Roman pagan since a lot of the the Bible teachings really are Grecoman pagan like in the beginning was the word and you know I mean that's Greco Roman pagan right there. That's like neoplatanism that got converted into Christianity, but that wouldn't really be Buddhist, but it would be Greco Roman pagan.

I think I'm just going to move on. Next question here. And we are kind of getting sort of down towards the bottom sort of. See, we've been going for Yes,

it'll be less than three hours. So,
that's relatively short, I guess.

So next question is from Xenithoid and
Xenithoid says are devout lay Buddhists
walking contradictions. I struggle to
understand the idea of really believing
Buddhism seriously and still not taking
it to its logical conclusion which is to
become a beu. Well, when I read this,
when I was compiling the list,
I immediately thought of Schopenhau
because Schopenhau taught a philosophy
similar to Buddhism as he himself
admitted, but also he himself admitted
to not being able to live up to the
ideals of his own philosophy because I

mean that was one of the main arguments against Schopenhauer is he's talking about saintly renunciation and so forth when he was still a relatively worldly person. But I mean, that's not necessarily being a hypocrite. It's just that he was able to see

uh like a spiritual path that he knew he wasn't advanced enough to follow yet. I mean, you can read a text and say that says, you know, don't be angry, and you can agree with that. Sure, being angry is is unskillful. you know, it's bad karma, but still you're going to be angry just because you still have human nature.

So, I mean, it's not necessarily a walking contradiction. I was told so many times when I was in Burma that a lot of like Burmese lay people would would come up to me and they'd they'd say how much they respected me because uh I came from a foreign country that wasn't a Buddhist country. I came halfway around the world to practice Buddhism at a higher level than than they were able to practice. You know, it's like Buddhist lay people. It's like, yeah, they know that monks are supposed to renounce the world and all that, but they just can't bring themselves to do it just because their

attachments are too strong or whatever it is.

like Schopenhauer, you know, he he came up with a relatively wise philosophy and he just flat out admitted that he wasn't wise enough, at least in his practice, you know, he wasn't free enough of defilements

to live up to the exaltation of his own philosophy. And that's fine. I mean just even a monk even if you're a monk you you still haven't reached the logical conclusion of dharma which is don't have greed hate or delusion you know it's like even a monk is often struggling if he's a conscientious monk to free himself of greed hate and delusion and

most monks fail. We're just stuck being human. No matter what you do there you are. You're still human. And some humans have stronger passions, stronger attachments than others.

So you can acknowledge that something is true and still not be able to follow it. You can acknowledge that you're better off never feeling anger and still you're going to get angry sometimes cuz you're human.

So I'm just going to move on to Xenosord's next question

is which is a difficult one. Who is the most spiritually advanced terravada lay Buddhist you have ever met? And I really

I have no idea. I have no clue. Partly because in order to know how spiritually advanced somebody is, you got to see them at their worst. You know, you got to see them when everything is going wrong. You got to see them when they're triggered or see if they're just immune to being triggered. And as a as a monk, for example, I mean, you're seeing people on their best behavior. They're not going to be like beating their kids or screaming at their wife in front of you.

So,

I really can't say who the most spiritually advanced terra lay Buddhist

is that I have ever met. I've met a few wise ones um in America, like American ones. I'm not going to name any names. I don't want them to get like conceited or anything that which might then just ruin their status as one of the most spiritually advanced terab Buddhists I've ever met.

Um it could be that the most spiritually advanced terablay Buddhists that I've ever met was had been a monk for several years before they they disroed and became a lay Buddhist. Yeah, that's that's possible.

But again, I really shouldn't name names with regard to that. And still it's just

really hard to say how spiritually
advanced somebody is if you haven't like
seen them under the worst circumstances
when most people would be losing their

[—]

So

I guess I answer that because I really
can't answer the question because I
really can't say I don't know.

So the next question is what did their
lay practice consist of? Well, if they
were Burmese Buddhists, they kept five
precepts and meditated daily. And I
mean, some of them were celibate.

Um

gosh,

what did their lay practice consist of?

You know, it'd be like the the typical devout lay Buddhist practice in in Burma. You know, they'd attend meditation retreats. Sometimes they do their their malas, you know, their their Buddhist rosaries a lot. That kind of thing, you know, it' be like kind of like medieval Roman Catholic Europeans. But the wisest terraota lay people that I have come across, you know, as a general rule, you know, they keep five precepts and meditate. But I mean really it's hard to say because as a monk meeting with lay people then I mean you're not seeing their their usual daily life again

you're just seeing them on their best behavior at a monastery.

So it's it's really hard to say but the standard devout lay Buddhist practice of Burma

keep five precepts meditate daily you know offer food to the monks that kind of thing donate to the monasteries to like within your means you know if you can afford it you can build you can offer a meditation cabin or something at a monastery that kind of thing um the men would generally become donas or temporary monks from time to time. Some um there's one old fellow, he was one of my main supporters in Burma. Um you know, he'd been a a Don Laba monk like

dozens of times probably over the course of his life.

He built this building in his backyard just for monks to stay when they came to came to to Rangon on business, that sort of thing.

Um,

so it's it's pretty basic. It's it's just standard. You know, the the lay duties of a terra Buddhist in Burma anyway

in in America is probably a little more variable and eclectic.

But those are tough questions because it's hard to say. And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is

I don't think this is kind of a semiqu
question. This is from a priestly monk.
And the semiqu question is about conceit
I guess and he says the conceit of I am
comes from clinging to one two several
or all of the five aggregates form
feeling perception fabrication
consciousness. So instead of I and you
or other it's just cause and effect in
regards to mind-made phenomena. There is
no there is no self here in these five
aggregates. There is no self there. you
in the five aggregates.

A dāsa

once asked the Buddha about this. Would
an awakened one still say words like
I and you? The Buddha said they would

knowing full well that they are
conventions of speech and would be able
to see the ultimate truth behind them.
So then he's priopistic monk is quoting
a suta and first a deva a small g god
superhuman being says he who is an
arahant his work achieved free from
taints in final body clad that monk
might still use such words as I still
per chance might say they call this mine
would such a monk be prone to vain
conceits

then the Buddha says is bonds are gone
for him without conceits. All delusions
chains are cast aside. Truly wise, he's
gone beyond such thoughts. That monk

still might use such words as I still
per chance might say they call this
mine. Well aware of common worldly
speech, he would speak conforming to
such use. And then that's that's the end
of the the suta. And then priapistic
monk monk says no question per se just
wondering if your take on the consistent
conceit phrase holds true.

So the consistent conceit phrase I'm not
exactly sure what exactly that is. It's
like the dva is asking would such a monk
be prone to vain conceits because he's
using words like I and me and you. And
then the Buddhist says
um he would speak conforming to such you
wait

I guess

there's no vain con oh bonds are gone

for him without conceits

and the poly word that is translated as

conceit is mana and mana literally means

measuring generally like measuring

yourself up against others and in the

atawaga it says that to consider

yourself superior to others

is mana or conceit. To consider yourself

to be equal to others is mana or

conceit. And to consider yourself to be

inferior to others is mana or conceit.

So any kind of self- regard would be

mana.

At least going with the context of that

suta in the atawaga.

So bonds are gone for him without conceits. It's like he no longer has self view. He's no longer like creating contrast between himself and some external entity or phenomena.

So

yeah, I mean that's sort of what's creating samsara. It's like the the basic delusion is I am. From a Buddhist point of view, that is the root of all delusion and suffering is just the idea, the belief I am.

And that is conceit.

because you really have to like compare yourself with something that isn't yourself in order for yourself to have

meaning.

Arguably, I think some people could take issue with that, especially if they're like pantheists or something that just kind of like a Hindu who considers the self to just be everything, you know, just the absolute god everywhere.

But let's see.

No question per se. Just wondering if your take on the consistent conceit phrase holds true.

Yeah, I'm not even I don't really fully understand this semiqu question to tell you the truth.

Gosh. But like an enlightened being, it's like I've said, you know, they they

can still like empirically appear to be having thoughts, appear to be having beliefs even, and they'll be saying words like I and me and you and and yours and and us and and you know, that person and this person, you know, they still use language like that. It's just that they have transcended it. You know, they're no longer considering it to be ultimately real. you know, it's like their mind presumably is aware of ultimate reality and this is just kind of like a puppet show going on and because you know they've they're somewhat inhabiting one of the puppets you know it's sort of like in the zoo which is a Chinese dōwist text it says

the sage conducts himself as a man
because he was born into the body of a
man I mean that's that's just what you
do and

So even if you're enlightened, I mean
you're still using worldly language
because you have to use worldly language
to communicate, but still it doesn't
mean that you're taking it seriously and
and believing it as some kind of
ultimate truth because you've just gone
beyond that. You know, it's still in the
picture. It's just not it's just not the
main point of the picture anymore. is
just kind of like like a superficial
kind of a thing that is largely

irrelevant to like really reality
and I think I'm just going to move on
next question partly because I did not
fully understand the last question and
this is from Yugu who is our last
question here and Yugo says is it
beneficial to be looking forward to
state of enlightenment

And then he says, "Seeing this everyday
mind struggle with some Saric problems."
Okay, that's just sort of like a little
commentary. So the question is, is it
beneficial to be looking forward to the
state of enlightenment? Well, ultimately
it's still delusional. I mean like in
the text, the monk should not be
aspiring to any existence to this or

that existence, not even the existence of being an enlightened sage. You know, it's like be here now. Attend to what is here now. Don't be worrying about the future. Don't be worrying about the past. Just be here now. Don't don't bother with what isn't here now.

To the extent that you're able.

So, I mean, it can be beneficial even though it's like somewhat delusional and unskillful. I mean, it's like just because something is somewhat immoral or unethical or delusional doesn't mean that it can't be helpful because it may be that you're you're becoming less delusional. You know, it's like let's

say someone's really stingy. They don't want to share with anybody and then finally one time they share kind of grudgingly. they kind of, you know, they kind of don't want to do it, but they force themselves to do it and they kind of regret it afterwards. It's like, I should have just kept that. They're just going to [__] waste it or whatever. Still, even though that is like a delusional attached, you know, kind of like defilementladen action and attitude. Still, it was an improvement over just being completely stingy. At least they they shared something even though they didn't like doing it and they were like like

regretting it afterwards. Still, it was like a step in the right direction or like my father, you know, he had this past life regression before the past before he was put into a hypnotic trance. You know, he he had this objective. He wanted to know what was the point in his past lives that was pivotal in making him the person that he is today. And then he goes back into this hypnotic past life regression where he is an ancient soldier armed with a little sword like this, possibly a Roman. and his outfit, his troop, you know, his legion has been ordered to just exterminate

every man, woman, and child in this barbarian village. And the barbarians had like long kind of fair hair, possibly Germanic.

So, he's the soldier out there. He's obeying orders and he's just killing people. He's he's massacring this village with his fellow soldiers until he gets this teenage boy.

The boy is on his knees. He's got him by the hair. He's about ready to to finish him off with this sword. And then he realizes that this boy isn't struggling and screaming and fighting and trying to get away like all the rest of them. That he's has just given up. He just has this world of sadness in his eyes. He's just

he's not even trying to defend himself,
you know? is just it's just this he's
just overwhelmed with sorrow
and my father this this ancient soldier
feels compassion for him. He feels sorry
for the kid and so he just like lets go
of him and just kind of pushes him and
like points to this points to the
forest, you know, just goes like this,
you know, just go. And so the kid kind
of like snaps out of this days, realizes
that he has a chance and just takes off
running. And then my father says after
that he had like feelings of like he had
failed in his duty. He actually went out
looking for that kid in order to kill

him but he couldn't find him because the kid was long gone. But that was like the first opening of his heart you know the first stirrings of the heart chakra in his spiritual evolution at least according to him.

So the whole point of of what I'm saying is that I mean it wasn't particularly virtuous. I mean he wasn't being saintly or anything but still it was a step in that direction maybe a baby step towards being somewhat less you know delusional and and full of defilements and so forth. So from that point of view it can be beneficial to look forward to the state of enlightenment you know just kind of have that as an ideal

you know like be working towards that
you know have that as like the horizon
that you're working towards that sort of
thing you that can work that can be
skillful means even though ultimately
you'd be better off just being here
right now in the present moment
preferably not believing anything you
know just being like in this state of
like atawaga style like mystical
I don't know what you call it
practically like soypism but it's not
even soypism it's just you're you're
just like a pane of glass and phenomena
are just like going through you and with
with no obstruction

but it can be beneficial to look forward to the state of enlightenment at least if you're considering that to be a worthy ideal that you're working towards. Then I mean ultimately you have to let it go the the the looking forwards part. So it can be beneficial. It can help you even though ultimately it's not an enlightened state because the an enlightened being has no aspirations to any kind of existence any kind of future existence. No aspiration whatsoever.

So, I'm just going to move on to Yugoo's next question, which is the last question of this Q&A.

And Yugu says,

"What did Buddha mean by that there is some perception in an enlightened mind? You mentioned this in your last video. Kind of a Zen coon." Yeah. Okay. So, that's again referring to the video I did just recently on the Kalaha Wiiwada Suta. And I've already discussed this probably two or three times over the course of this video. How you have perception like an enlightened being just empirically.

You know, you could look at an enlightened being or you do a brain scan on an enlightened being and you're going to find like activity in there. I mean, they're not going to be just completely

empty. Their mind is not going to be
like silent and just
like total mystical union and rapture.
you know, they're still going to have to
be carrying out conversations and so
forth. But I'm assuming it could be that
they really are. It's just nothing going
on in there that they're just like this
like a reflection like Rahm Das used to
say about Maharaji that the better you
got to know him the more you realize
that there was nobody there that he was
just like a mirror reflecting your own
karma back at you. So at some level an
enlightened being may be like that but
going with this [__] like verse in the
kalahawi wasuta like the enlightened

being his mental state is such that he has no perception of perception he has no perception of non-perception he is not without perception and he has no perception of void

so for one who has become thus form becomes void etc etc so I mean that is pretty obviously

um the Buddha in this text is describing the mental states of an enlightened being. He has no perception of perception. He has no perception of non-perception. He is not without perception. He has no perception of void which would seem to rule out all possibilities. So it's it's a kind of

paradox.

But I think the paradox is explained by the fact like I've already been saying in this video that there is a kind of perception but it's just that he is not seeing it at the level of perception the enlightened being. He's like transcended the illusion or the meaning of this perception. It's just nature taking its course. But it's like again if you you can you say that consciousness is water and mental states like perceptions are the waves on the surface of the water. The enlightened being still might have the waves. It's just that he's seeing it all as water.

You know it's like

is this ceramic or is this cup? Well it's both. You know the the ceramic is the essence. The cup is the form or function. And so you can focus on one or the other. And the unenlightened person is function is is focusing on function and form. Whereas the enlightened being is is dealing at the level of essence. I just hit the microphone in my hand while gesturing wildly.

And again, it's like for people that they're I mean, they just have to think like intellectually, they have to understand and make sense of things intellectually in order for it to be useful to them, in order for it to be

meaningful in any way. It's it's they're not going to get it

because you have to transcend

the like the content of perception, the symbolic content of perception.

is sort of like a painting. Let's just

say the Mona Lisa. It's a famous

painting. So, you can look at that and

you see there's this, you know,

relatively upper class Italian woman of

the Renaissance with this enigmatic

smile and her eyebrows shaved off.

Or you could look at it from the point

of view of like some painter or even

like a chemist just analyzing the style,

the like the the painting style, how the

brush strokes were made. You're not even

really focusing on this woman. You're just dealing with like the elements. What kind of paint is used? What kind of pigments are in the paint? You know, it's like that sort of thing. You just kind of deconstruct it into this assemblage of canvas and and and like oil paints with pigments in them, you know? It's like what is it? Uh what kind of oil is is paint? It's uh the same stuff lenolium was made out of.

Gosh.

H flax. Flax seed. I I it's it's escaping me. But anyways, I mean, you can look at that painting from that

level of just sort of like the essence
of it and and just completely ignore
that, you know, it's like the the
Renaissance Italian lady with the
enigmatic smile and no eyebrows.

So I mean it's it's still you could say
that the perception is still there but
you could even look at perceptions like
you have this belief I mean you can just
identify with the belief and that's your
reality in which case you're it's a
samsauric existence or you can just
examine the mental state as it arises
and you know it's just it's not you it's
just this mental state arising and you
can just sort of analyze or not even
analyze but observe it just like with

detachment

and and then not attribute any kind of
real like symbolic meaning to it and
then that would be a more enlightened
way of looking at it and that's kind of
that's like the enlightened
like answer to the paradox of you know
he has no perception of perception no
perception of non-perception but he's
also not without perception so there is
perception there.

But it's it's just sort of like this
transcended perception like
the symbolic meaning is no longer really
the point of it. You know, it's no
longer believed in as some kind of

reality. It's just nature taking its course because brains generate perceptions at least in this version of samsara.

And I mean, I can answer the same question over and over and over and over again, but for people, I mean, I'm not saying that Yugao is like this, but for people that really are just like addicted to thinking, you know, they just identify the world through their intellectual interpretation, just through their mental states. They they they really have no experience extending beyond this self-contained like artificial world of symbols. So they consider that to be reality and

that or even if they acknowledge that they're not fully enlightened, still they think that somehow enlightenment is going to occur within the context of of this

body of of symbols, these mental symbols. And it just doesn't work like that. It's like you have to escape from the prison.

And after you escape from the prison or Plato's cave, you have to escape from Plato's cave. After you escape, you can come back in again. It's going to be a completely different experience because you're not going to be chained up looking at the wall anymore. You can

still see the reflections on the wall,
but you see them for what they are.
They're just shadows flickering on a
wall.

But even that is not going far enough in
an attempt to try to explain an
enlightened being and his attitude. I
mean, it's just it's still there. It's
just kind of empty,
you know? It's just I it's hard to
explain. You can't really even explain
it. The Buddha himself couldn't really
explain it.

So yeah, it's just that the perceptions
are there. It's just that they are
transcended and are no longer the center
of your attention.

That you're you're looking past the
waves and just seeing water,
so to speak.

So I guess I'm done. I really guess that
I'm really done. And so like I should
always say at the beginning never do
except once you think I can answer a
question especially about dharma you
know early Buddhism terravada Buddhism
meditation that sort of thing you know
other other realms biology western
philosophy to some degree like western
classical literature that kind of thing
I might be able to answer then again I
might not and so no more than three
questions per person per episode, please

and like and subscribe if you liked this
and would like to see more. And uh be
happy. And now I'm going to push this
button that is going to cause me to stop
recording.

Alrighty then.

Hello. I'm just checking. I'm check
doing like the the equipment check after
I've already started recording here.

Okay. Yeah, it looks like it's all
working. Hello and welcome to episode
number 162 of question and answer. I am
your host Po Basa and this is my
beverage which is good old southernstyle
sweet tea.

There was an a guy in the news just
recently from South Carolina who was
actually hospitalized for drinking
unsweetened tea.

There is few there are few if any
beverages that are better for hot

weather than sweet tea for some reason.

I don't know why that is.

So anyways, as you may deduce from the fact that my fish tank is already in moonlight mode,

this is going to be a late one for me.

It's like it's probably going to be after midnight by the time I'm done, which is kind of too bad because due to it being in midnight mode, you don't get to see my new fish. Attila III.

The first two Aillas have passed on.

And he's actually a wild type male dwarf gourami that I've been trying to acquire for over a year. So let's just see how well he does.

But that is for later. And I suppose I

should just start answering questions here. And the first question is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "Every now and then you mention how aside from mindfulness of your daily activities and chanting an occasional om to yourself, you no longer meditate. Can you please explain the history, meaning, and benefits of reciting the M chant?

What is it about this particular sound that is so special and spiritually significant?"

Well, by golly, um, I'm really not familiar with the history of the syllable.

I do know that possibly the earliest literature in which is mentioned would be some of the upanishads. In fact, there's one upanishana, I don't remember which one, that divides or rather into its three constituent sounds because O in Sanskrit is au like polymma becomes godmma with g au in Sanskrit. And in Burma, O in pi is still pronounced like a dip thong. It's actually two sounds. Oh, you know, it's like your mouth is changing when you're saying it. So, I think the correct pronunciation of M wouldn't be with a hard O, like it's more of a looser. So, that you're making like three sounds.

And like I just said, there is an upanishad that divides up the three sounds of M and attributes them to the three states of of consciousness or some such. We don't need to get into that.

Presumably M was known since before the upanishads were composed. I doubt that the author or authors of that or those upanishads just invented it.

So I don't know what the origin of M would be. It could be prehistoric for all I know.

So can I please explain the history?

Well, that's about the best history I know of is that it be got incorporated

into vadicism

through the upupanads. I'm pretty sure
um I've never read the Brahmanas, so it
might even be earlier than the
Upanishads in Vadic literature. I'm
pretty sure it's not found in the
original vadas.

So, with regard to the meaning of M,
like I said before in a in a previous
Q&A, I think that the original meaning
of M is just it's it's like a sort of a
a symbolic reproduction of just sort of
like the background hum of the universe.
sort of like the the pervasive presence
of God throughout the entire universe.
So that would be my best guess. Although
like I just mentioned um there's one

upanachad that divides m into three different you know three different levels. It's like one is waking consciousness, one is dreaming consciousness and and one is like dreamless sleep. And then there's like different upanishad that comes up with a fourth state of consciousness called the fourth that we don't need to get to.

So the benefits of reciting the M chant or rather the M mantra is

um you know it's just a convenient thing to direct your attention towards like Jay Krishna Murdy said that I mean it doesn't really matter what the mantra is

if you're meditating on a mantra it can
be Ram it can be m it can be CocaCola
so there is some truth to that although
it can also be that

certain syllables have a certain vibe to
them which then help you to kind of be
more in harmony with that sort of vibe.

And also

like Rahm Doss said in one of his early
books that so many people have been
meditating like really advanced
meditation masters have been like doing
Om or Ram. So that if you get into a
certain mental state in a way it's like
you're kind of tuning in on this like
these millions of people that have all
done this same chant or the same mantra

I should say. So Rahm Doss in one of his early books was talking about how he was given a certain mantra by one of his teachers and he got to this state where it was like the entire Mormon tabernacle choir was like reciting the mantra along with him and so he asked his teacher and he says well you've just kind of tuned in to you know all the other meditation masters mainly I guess that were doing this same mantra and you just sort of kind of gotten into that wavelength or frequency or whatever.

But it is a convenient way of meditating. For some people, it can work better than meditation on your breath.

Partly because it takes a certain amount of conscious effort to M. You know, it's like breathing. You're doing that even when you're in a dreamless sleep. You know, it's just sort of a physiological thing that happens automatically. So your mind can completely drift away from the breathing when you're meditating.

Whereas m because you're having to deliberately m it helps to keep your mind on the object of meditation makes it a little more difficult to wander away. And you of course you can do m when you're doing anything like driving a forklift for example. Im while driving a forklift sometimes or just standing in line. People don't stand in lines nearly

as much as they used to because of like
you don't have to stand in line at the
bank anymore because it's all done
online for example
or you don't have to stand in line at
fast food places so much because people
just have Door Dash have it delivered to
them or they just go through the
drive-through window or whatever.

So anyways,

I do think M does have just like a
calming effect on me and sort of a let's
see a centering effect if you don't mind
me using a little woo woo new age
jargon.

So what is it about this particular

sound that is so special and spiritually significant? Well, I mean it's it's a religious word. I mean you can call it a word, I guess, even though it may not have any actual meaning. You know, maybe that's like the point of it. It's just sort of a symbolic version of just sort of the the spiritual background hum of the entire universe.

And so it's kind of special because of that, I guess. I mean, whether something is special or not. I mean, it's just a matter of perception. How people feel about something, you know, what how they perceive that something. So, and spiritually significant is similar. I mean it's spiritually significant for

Hindus and for some Buddhists especially Mahayana Buddhists simply because it's like incorporated into their scriptures. But as I said it is a good meditation object for some people possibly better than breathing in breathing out breathing in breathing out.

And uh I don't know I was just there was one of the first meditations I ever did like when I was in high school you know I went through my rebellion phase had to go see a youth counselor and the youth counselor was into Ramdas so he gives me books by Ramdas to read and for some reason M appealed to me more than Ram Ram was like the name of some ancient

Vedic hero who became deified whereas M
in a way it doesn't really mean
anything. So to my to my character, to
my way of thinking, it was more
appealing that way as it it really
didn't have an obvious meaning.

And I sucked at meditating when I was in
high school. You know, I went through
this phase where I would sit on the
floor cross-legged and try to meditate
for like 15 minutes before going to
school and, you know, my mind would just
be wandering all over the place. But at
least the the deliberate oming did keep
at least one little splinter of my mind
still focused on M.

But I would guess that a Hindu might be

able to give you a better answer about the you know the specialness and significance and meaning of the syllable.

So I mean it's still you can do a kind of anapana while coming too. It's just you just breathe out. I mean the outbreath is an M. The inbreath is not an M usually. Also while doing walking meditation I did this a lot as a monk. I think it was I had it worked out like every sixth step or every eighth step would be an M

just because I don't breathe as fast as my legs move when I'm walking.

So I guess I'm just going to move on to

the next question. This is from Austin and Austin says, "Is the mind born and does it die?" And this is kind of a trick question. I mean, what do you mean by mind? Like the individual person's mind in a way it's born, you know, the individual person is born. Um but

there is like this continuum like it's like rebirth linking consciousness is the first mind moment of this particular life but it's just one moment after the last waking moment of your previous life. So there's like a continuum also. And so the unenlightened mind in a way is born but it's born over and over and over again.

And also the unenlightened mind from a Buddhist point of view there's no discernable beginning to like this lineage of you know karmic successions that we call rebirths.

So um you might argue some people might argue that you know even the unenlightened mind is not born because there's this infinite regress of past lives although it is possible that you know there is a first unenlightened life which would be something very primitive is the the most primitive perceptual mind

but I mean we don't really have to get into that and the unenlightened mind

would I mean going with orthodox
Theravada Buddhism it would die when the
enlightened being dies and then the
enlightened being because they're
enlightened they don't take rebirth and
so that would be the cut off point for
the unenlightened mind with regard to
just mind with a capital M sort of like
vanta is is claiming you know that god
is infinite consciousness and there were
like I keep saying there are two obscure
fragments of some older tradition found
in Theravada texts. One in the
Dighanikaya, one in the Majjhimanikaya. That
does imply pretty obviously that Nirvana
as a metaphysical state, not just an
ethical state of being enlightened, but

a metaphysical state of like ultimate reality is infinite formless consciousness. And assuming for the sake of argument that that kind of infinite formless consciousness does exist, you know, pervading the universe with the syllable,

for example, then yeah, that would not be born and it would not die.

So I guess I should just move on to the next question also from Austin. And

Austin says, "Is it adharmic or the opposite of dharmic adharmic? Is it adheric to advocate for the death penalty for Charlie Kirk's killer?" And going with Buddhism. Yeah. I mean, to

advocate the killing of any sentient being is a dharma. for a monk. It could be even parajika if anyone follows up on any sort of proposal from a monk. Like I've mentioned before, there is a story in Vinaya in the rules of monastic discipline about a compassionate monk who was advising the the king's royal executioner. Not that he executed kings, but he was the official executioner in the the capital city of the kingdom. that this compassionate monk was advising him, keep your axe sharp and try to finish off your victims, you know, the the criminals that are to be executed with one one chop, you know, just do it quick and as painlessly as

you can. And that monk, I think he was he might have been the OG. So it might be that he didn't he wasn't part of Jika but I mean I don't remember the exact details of what happened to that monk who advised him but it was denounced you know it was declared to be improper um by the Buddha himself and it may be that he was actually excommunicated for giving that advice and the executioner followed up on his advice because that made this monk kind of an accessory to murder.

So yeah, I mean it's still the killing of a sentient being from a Buddhist point of view. The killing of sentient

beings is

wrong. So that would include war. It would include the death penalty. It would include abortion because according to Theravada Buddhism, life begins at conception.

I mean it would apply to even you know slapping mosquitoes.

So yeah, from a purely Dharmic point of view, yeah, advocating for the death penalty is advocating for killing sentient beings, which is a no no in Buddhism as a general rule.

Um, but from a political point of view, I mean, you can have completely different arguments that are just as I mean, they'd be even

more valid perhaps from a purely
political point of view,
like war, for example. I mean, if you
have a nation of saints, like
enlightened beings who are just going to
let themselves be killed, you know,
rather than hurt the other, like the
invading barbarians or whatever. Well, I
mean,
saints can afford that sort of thing.
But in a nation of unenlightened beings,
which all nations thus far have been,
then as a general rule, you fight to
defend your families, to defend
yourself, to defend your home, your
homeland. And that's from a political

point of view, it makes perfect sense.

And so like from a political point of view, the death penalty may make sense.

But from a purely Buddhist like saintly uncompromisingly

dharmic renunciant sort of point of view, no. Even killing animals is out.

Slapping a mosquito is out.

Although even a monk is allowed to strike out in self-defense, quote unquote,

but that doesn't that would not involve just deliberate killing. I mean, it would be more like uh oh, what's his name? Kyle Writtenhouse. Just you're not trying to kill so much as you're trying to eliminate the threat. Doing whatever

is necessary to eliminate the threat.

And if the person dies while you're defending yourself from them and I mean it's not your intention to like kill them, but it is your intention to eliminate the threat. then maybe you would not be culpable of murder from a purely Buddhist point of view. Although a judge and a jury may have different ideas.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Clefy and Clefy says in your sitting practice did you have a feeling of being an impostor? The same feeling artists and writers have sometimes and apparently

not because I don't fully understand the question being an impostor. I mean, sometimes I've had this feeling ever since I was a kid, just just being struck by just the absolute miraculous, bizarre, strangeness of, you know, being in this meat puppet and dealing with all this varated stuff.

You know, every once in a while, I'll just be hit by it. Even ever since I was a kid, just every once in a while, just boom, this is just so weird that this even exists.

It's happened to me a few times at work driving a forklift just boom. It's like I mean how is it even possible really

other than you know the the imaginary statues and the uncarved block of marble and all that.

So yeah, I don't think I really had a feeling of being an impostor other than maybe having a feeling of you know my conception of self being illusory.

And I my I just noticed my collar is sort of asymmetrical. I hope I hope it's not bothering any people with obsessive compulsive disorder out there. Any autists that just can't bear to look at my collar that's kind of sticking out more on one side than on the other. Just close your eyes and just listen to the the soothing tones, the soothing

resonant tones of my voice.

or just just go to the podcast. Um, a supporter actually did go to the trouble of having my Q&A videos and some other videos also converted automatically over into podcasts. So, I guess there's a way of downloading those now. Then you can listen to the podcast without having to watch the video and being disturbed by my collar or my braided beard or or any such thing.

So, I guess I better just move on to the next question. This is from Stellar Supreme. formerly and occasionally still known as Libra lamb and seller supreme etc etc says if I have at least a bit of acne at any given morning

does that give a consistent
justification

to use a handheld mirror to check sores
as a monk and he's referring to this
obscure rule of monastic discipline that
most monks ignore that says it is
against viney a duca offense an offense
of wrongdoing to look into a mirror,
unless you are investigating a sore on
your face or some such.

So, I mean, if you're going to
investigate your acne, let's say you
want to squeeze a pimple or some such,
and it's it sounds disgusting to talk
about it, although probably everybody
has done it. You know, it's sort of like

taking a dump or some such. It's just one of those things that you're kind of embarrassed about and it sounds gross and all that, but everybody does it.

So, um I mean, if you're going to look into the mirror to investigate some acne blemish, I mean you can do that. Sure. I mean, if you if you just kind of use that as a convenient excuse to gaze upon your own continents, your countenance, I guess would be the correct pronunciation, your visage, then yeah, I mean, you're just kind of like cheating, you know, you're just playing games, you know, you're trying to find loopholes, you like the Burmese saying, we need that chat that, which

means if you're skillful at vineia, you can kill a chicken because you know all the loopholes. so that you can get around things like Thai monks like John Tenisero's famous book on monastic discipline where there's a rule that says you can only keep one set of robes. If you get an extra an extra robe in addition to the the allowable three then you have to get rid of it within 10 days. You have to get rid of one of the the the four robes you've got. Otherwise, you're committing a nisia offense. But if you just call it accessory cloth, then you can keep as many robes as you like. I mean, you're

calling them robes still. You're wearing them as robes. But if you if you like officially designated as accessory cloth, you can keep as many as you want. So that's that's sort of like cheating on the rules. Or I went to a Zen monastery once when I was kind of monastery shopping and in the afternoon they had what was called the medicine meal. So they still knew that according to ancient Buddhist monastic discipline, monks were not allowed to eat in the afternoon. So they just call it medicine. You know, you can take medicine in the afternoon. You just can't eat food in the afternoon. So they don't call it food, they call it

medicine.

It's like that. Which I mean since I brought up we need that jet that it reminds me of one of my favorite Burmese sayings which is dolin pazonte which means when the sun shines in September the shrimp die.

Anyways getting back here to the question.

Yeah, I mean there is an old guide to monastic discipline, one of the only ones in English before Ajan Tonisro came out with his that was by the Tai Sanga Raja of like the early 20th century, venerable Vajira Varasa and he said that you can look into a

mirror to shave when when you're technically not looking for sores or investigating sores. or anything like that. And that was good enough for me. So that was like for years that was the only veneer rule that I was willing to even fudge on was I would look into a mirror to shave myself. And in a way it's kind of preventative because you're more likely to cut yourself if you can't see what you're doing.

So I mean it's it's kind of like the rule that says you can't build a fire to warm yourself unless you're sick.

And then but I mean if it's like subzero temperatures, you could build a fire just to prevent from dying of

hypothermia even though you're not sick yet. So it's kind of a preventative thing. So looking into a mirror when you're shaving could be seen as a kind of preventative being on the lookout for any sores that might happen when you cut yourself shaving. And I I was always a klutz and I would nick myself shaving all the time.

So yeah, I guess the the main gist of the answer to this question is if you're looking to investigate a sore on your face, you can look into a mirror. But if you're just just looking to a mirror to gaze upon your own facial features while thinking, well, you might find a sore,

you know, which which is kind of cheating, kind of being dishonest with yourself, then yeah, that probably wouldn't be the best way of going about it. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Trzasquez and it's also a monastic discipline question kind of a personal one.

Traasquez says, "Did you ever broke sana number three, which is with a Burmese pronunciation of polyu

and I mean let's see in English it would be and whatever Biku

depraved with a perverted mind were to speak

insinuatingly

to a woman with using crude language. If

he were to speak using crude language to a woman like a young man speaks to a young woman uh with connection to sexuality.

That is a sana offense. an offense requiring initial and subsequent meeting of the SA.

It's the second most like what's the word grave offense that a monk can commit is a sada offense. There are 13 of them. This is number three.

for a monk to essentially use like sexual language to a woman. Um, not just like objectively answering a question, you like is it immoral to masturbate? Something like that. You

know, you can if someone asks that in good faith, a female asks that in good faith, a monk could answer in good faith. But if he's just bringing it up on his own because he wants to talk, you know, sexy to a woman, then that would be against the rules. And in answer to the questions, I have broken that rule before.

So I won't go into details. Even if people ask me to go into details, not your business. But I have broken that rule before. I've broken others, too.

So anyways, Tresasquez is a second question. Is living for five years under your Oh, this is another this is another

monastic discipline question. This is
this is kind of nice. Is living for five
years under your preceptor or other
senior monk in Vineia. When let's say I
would ordain and as a monk in the next
day took off to a wilderness alone
without asking anybody, would it be
breaking any vine rule? Yeah, it would.
In fact, this it's called Nissia or
dependence and it's emphasized. It's not
just mentioned. It's not just a rule. It
is emphasized in Muvenia or monastic
discipline. In fact, there are other
rules that kind of spin off from it.
Like for example,
um

like it's at least five years. I mean nowadays it's just sort of an automatic five rainy seasons once you've spent your fifth the Wasa. You're a free agent. You're now a Majimabiku. You're no longer a Navakabiku. You're no longer a beginner. You're no longer a newcomer. You're you're a intermediate or medium standing, not really a senior monk, which would be a terra.

And so I mean you in addition to at least five rainy seasons as a monk, you also have to uh show that you are proficient in in like certain aspects of of of the monk's life like meditating, knowing how to bake a bowl, knowing how to sew robes. Also, you have to

according to the rules, you have to be able to recite the entire biku pad mocha by heart and also the bikuni pad mocha by heart, which almost nobody does anymore because in conservative terra Buddhist countries, the general consensus is there are no more bikunis. They are extinct.

So in addition to that there is a a rule that says if a a a junior monk who's still living in dependence he takes delight in solitude in the forest then he can with his preceptor or acharia's permission whoever he's taken dependence on with their permission he can go off and live alone in the forest except

during the rains retreat during the rains retreat he has to come back and stay with his preceptor or acharia until he has completed his dependence which is at least five rainy seasons.

So

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ruie and I I don't completely understand this question. Ruie says, "What would be your domic take on the notion that time might flow or unfold from the future to the past?" And I don't fully understand this. Um he's asking is it possible for time to go backwards? And there were some physicists I think even Stephven Hawking for a while was under the

impression that when the universe is expanding time goes forwards and when it starts contracting again assuming that it contracts time would then start would go in reverse and back you know it go everything would be like going backwards.

Um but I don't know if Ruie is asking I mean is it possible that even now time is actually going from future to past and I don't think so. I mean

I mean I did read a book a long time ago was uh it was like oh something about times arrow it was considered to be like this classic scientific book one of the few science classic scientific books I

ever read along with Charles Darwin.

uh time and no time's arrow but it was about entropy and this this scientist was arguing that it is entropy that is really determining the flow of time you know the entropy goes in one direction from order to disorder and so I mean even if someone is building something you know creating order out of disorder still like Stephen Hawking used to say I mean it's like 10,000 times as much disorder as order is actually being created. Which reminds me of Burmese carpenters who might fix this one thing here, but there's like this, you know, 20 foot like circumference of a radius of destruction all around what they're

fixing.

But then I have to do a a dharmic take on this. I mean, I don't I don't think it would be possible subjectively for time to go backwards. I mean in a way like in ancient some ancient cultures they had this idea that we're backing up through time because we can see the past we just can't see the future. So it's like we're just kind of moving backwards into the future but still we're we're you know we're facing towards the past. We don't have eyes that can see into the future. So in a way that's kind of going backwards through time bass backwards but still it wouldn't be the

same as uh time flowing from future to
past and I don't fully understand if
Ruie was asking if I think that that's
possible now that we might right now be
going from future to past um or if he's
asking if it's even possible
hypothetically

And I mean it's possible hypothetically
I guess from a like a a physical like
the point of view of a physicist
although subjectively I don't know if we
we'd even be aware of it.

I don't know.

I mean it's really not a dharmic kind of
question or not a domic terravada
Buddhist question because
uh terra Buddhism they really didn't

have much of a conception of like you
know this kind of understanding of time
you know terra Buddhist metaphysics to
some degree is more Newtonian than
Einsteinian

and they didn't really understand how
gravity worked apparently The Abidama
scholars assume that throughout the
entire cosmos there's the same up- down
orientation.

They just

for whatever reason they didn't bother
to to really try to to understand that
part because I mean they just didn't
have the

they just didn't have what it takes I

guess at the time at that point in history to really get some sort of grip on how gravity works.

So yeah, time would be similar I guess.

Um

so I mean from from the point of view of Teravāda Buddhism I really don't think that there was anyone even considered the possibility of time going backwards unless I mean it's like maybe some person with deva or clairvoyance could like look into the past which might be kind of a going backwards in time to I mean it could be viewed that way I suppose although in Theravāda Buddhism all that exists is the future. The future moment anyway or I mean the

present moment anyway.

I do like my sweet tea.

So yeah, I mean it's it's it's

kind of a strange question and I don't
fully understand what Rua was trying to
get at,

but uh it might be a little bit more
like

scientifically sophisticated maybe. I
mean at least from from a the point of
view of physics for ancient Indian
Buddhist philosophers to to really
wrangle with or like from a just a
subjective point of view. It would be
hard to imagine what it would be like
subjectively

just starting at at like you're dying of old age or whatever and then just going backwards until you're being conceived in the back of a car somewhere.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from PSA.

And I should point out that a lot of like there has been a lot of upheaval and uproar and so forth going on over the past few days. Like earlier in the week, you had this beautiful young Ukrainian woman, a a refugee from the Russia Ukraine war was on a train in I think it was South Carolina or North Carolina and some

um like a schizophrenic black guy who had already been arrested 14 times and

just the last time he was just let loose. It was maybe not even with any bail.

He just stabs her in the neck and kills her. So that caused like a strange uproar. Like in a way it was sort of like a a black fatigue moment where white people and maybe even other non-black persons are just saying enough is enough of this [_]

And then just a few days ago at at the time of recording this, this conservative

activist named Charlie Kirk was shot through the neck. Although there are some conspiracy theorists who are

thinking it was all staged and so forth. Then nobody seems to think that the Ukrainian girl being stabbed in the neck was staged. Although they have like a similar effects, not the same effect, but like with regard to the Ukrainian woman being stabbed in the neck, it's like the pro- Ukraine people on the left apparently were silent. I never saw anything like on X anything like that of the Democrat any Democrat or leftist person you know speaking out about this because you know it's just like this horrible dilemma that they're in. They have to either support a Ukrainian refugee who's a white person or this poor mentally ill black this oppressed

black person who murdered her. So, I mean, they just like, well, it was just like an inconvenience for a lot of them, I assume. Just they don't even want to go there.

With regard to Charlie Kirk,

um,

in in a way it was you had a lot of people

I mean, it was just sort of like the the left were at first especially saying that look at his family. He had a the the shooter, the alleged shooter had a conservative family. Therefore, he was conservative and he shot Charlie Kirk just because Charlie Kirk wasn't viewed

as conservative enough. And then later evidence comes out that supposedly he had like Antifa and kind of like furry homoadjacent

stuff engraved on his ammo. and he was like involved in Antifa and he had a transgirlfriend and so forth. So that kind of went nowhere. I guess you know the left immediately wanting to blame the right for for this particular this particular homicide.

But also, um, there was been just this, it's like a a spate, I guess you could call it, of leftist people on X or Tik Tok or whatever social media, Facebook, Instagram, whatever, who were like gloating and celebrating that Charlie

Kirk got shot through the neck with a 306 rifle.

And so the right started using cancel culture against the left. The left was using cancel culture for like a decade.

Just people that like they wouldn't they wouldn't get the the jab, for example, they lose their job or, you know, they speak out in in some conservative manner that is opposed. you know, it's it's no longer in the Overton window for, you know, social justice kind of people that, you know, they they would get called out and they'd get, you know, their boss would be called, you know, that this person is a fascist, they're

they're promoting hate, this kind of stuff. And a lot of the time these people, even though they were just saying stuff that would just be common sense, like in the 1980s, you know, they're getting their careers and reputations destroyed. And now the right who who's who appear to be actually starting to really fight back in earnest, especially since Trump got his second term that they're using this same cancel culture to call out people gloating and cheering and celebrating because Charlie Kirk was unalived by um an assassin.

But I'm not haven't even started answering the question yet really. This

is just kind of a sort of a setting the
setting the
setting the scene.

So, what do I think about what happened
to Charlie Kirk? Um, I'm willing I mean,
there are conspiracy theories and you
really can't 100% believe anything you
see in the news. So, I have to admit it
is good to have a certain amount of
healthy skepticism, and I'd be willing
to say that there's maybe at least a 20%
chance that this is some kind of staged
SCOP that there's one person on my
Discord server that's saying that
Charlie Kirk probably wasn't even shot,
that it was all faked. But I mean, even

if he really was shot, I mean, there's still, you know, any number of factions that would want him out of the way. And so, you know, it could be that, you know, engraving pro- Antifa like kind of mods or symbols onto the ammo is just too convenient. I mean, you could argue that. And I do have a certain amount of skepticism with regard to conspiracy theories. Not all conspiracy theories are false. In fact, quite a few of them have been coming true lately.

But as just the standard working hypothesis that I'm going with, I do assume that you had this young man who was very intelligent, maybe a bit on the spectrum,

who was nevertheless very intelligent, who went to I mean maybe even before he went to college, you know, just through Reddit and and whatever other social media, he started being kind of radicalized. He got involved in Antifa apparently. you know, he had um a a roommate who was sort of a love interest apparently who was kind of trans and also a furry.

And so probably what happened is you have this very intelligent, somewhat autistic young man who gets radicalized uh either in college or in high school and then

I mean he he becomes involved in Antifa,

takes it all seriously because he has this romantic or emotional attachment for this kind of trans person that he's living with that, you know, he's very much, you you know, sort of anti-anti-trans Charlie Kirk. It was when Charlie Kirk was actually at his talk, his fateful talk, mentioning, you know, this upswing of like mass shooters who happen to be trans. That's when he got shot when he was he was bringing that up. So, it seems to me probable, not necessarily true. You know, it could all be some kind of scop for all I know, but this I'm going with the working hypothesis. Some radicalized young man rebelss

against his family's conservative values, joins Antifa, and decides he's going to be a hero by taking out this hate speech spewing fascist. And Charlie Kirk was relatively benign. You know, he had Christian views, which are now considered to be fascistic, you know, hate speech.

But still, Charlie Kirk was one of the main people on the right who was going to college campuses and just asking for for open discussion. You know, he'd let the leftists have their say and then he would respond.

But apparently some people don't want that.

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to PSA's next question, which is with regard to the other like very high-profile homicide in the news lately. He says, "The white Ukrainian girl, they got stabbed and killed by a black American man in the subway. What are your thoughts on that? I guess the woke left isn't standing with the Ukraine on this one." Yeah, I I pretty much already kind of covered that.

Uh, you know, it's fairly straightforward. This one I I haven't heard of anybody claiming that there was some sort of, you know, scop conspiracy involved. You know, it seemed relatively straightforward. You had this beautiful

young blonde woman sitting on a train
looking at her phone and this homeless
looking scy black guy who, like I said,
had already been arrested 14 times. see
for 14 times just pulls out his He's
sitting on the on the seat behind her,
pulls out his pocketk knife, unfolds it,
and then just
stabs it into her neck like three times.
And I saw way too much of that on X, you
know? It's like it was just you doom
scrolling or whatever on X, you know,
you're just going down the scroll and
it's just picture after picture after
picture of this girl right before or
right after she gets stabbed. And I just

didn't like that. And that was one of the few dimly bright sides of Charlie Kirk getting getting shot because it just replaced that whole that whole narrative with this new narrative.

So I mean this Ukrainian woman is just old news now even though it happened probably less than a week ago.

So what are my thoughts on that? I guess I already already shared those those thoughts.

Yeah, and I do agree that the the woke left isn't standing with Ukraine nearly as much on this particular issue, but I do think that it's kind of the left's idea that there should be equity in law enforcement,

which means you shouldn't have more black people arrested than white people. Even though you know just the old say you got like approximately 5% of the population which is like black men or like from 14 to 50 black males from like 14 to 50 are committing approximately 50% of the violent crimes. I mean that's just like a like a trope at this point. So, I mean, when you've got, you know, different cognitive abilities and like a what is it like a 20% higher level of testosterone, which conditions like impulse control or lack of same, that kind of thing, that this kind of thing is I mean, you're not going to have

equity. You're not going to have all the races committing the same proportion of crimes and being punished for I mean at the same the same proportions like per capita or whatever. It's just not going to happen. People are different.

Different ethnicities are different.

So I mean this is this it's all like very controversial

and I mean now things are kind of reached the the turning point to some degree like like some people are saying that this week is just like a gamechanger where but but I mean it started before this where stuff that used to be absolutely taboo you would get your career and your reputation destroyed by

leftist cancel culture. Now people are just saying it openly because for a lot of people just enough is enough. The left has just gone insane that they are on the side of the criminals more than on the victims.

Unless the criminal is white and the victim is not white. And in which case of course they want, you know, complete revenge on the criminal.

So anyways,

enough of that

and I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from S Papaalapa and S. Papa says, "I'm sure I can look it up and find out if the texts have

anything to say about animals attaining nirvana, but I figured I'd ask you if there is anything about that or if you think it's possible for an animal might jump into emptiness."

Well, first of I might as well mention Echart Tollah who has this idea that all animals except for a few domesticated pets are already enlightened because you know be here now and the power of now. Animals are like in the present moment. They're not worried about the future. They're not stewing over the past you know right here in the present moment. So they're enlightened except for like I say a few like pampered what is it? the [__] and freeze dog that this old lady

has and or like uh what is it? Maltese dogs. They're particularly neurotic, I think.

But I think I just uh confused myself by by saying [__] and freeze.

So yeah, so just setting aside Echartol claiming that almost all nonhuman animals are already enlightened. Um the terraotta Buddhist point of view is that animals are not fully enlightened and you know they're in a lower realm and in a way it's kind of like ancient anthropocentrism where they've got you know humans in one group and then they've got like apes and dolphins and mosquitoes

all like in in a in their own group. You know, it's like a m a human is much closer to a chimpanzee than a chimpanzee is to a mosquito like cognitively as well as physically and genetically.

But just going with ancient, you know, premodern anthropocentrism, you know, just animals are just their own group and we are not in that group. We are people. We are humans and from the terra Buddhist point of view, animals cannot become enlightened. There are a few cases on the record of animals becoming I mean they've they're able to go to heaven.

There's just a few cases as a general

rule animals can't even get to heaven.

In fact, there's the famous discourse in the sutas where, you know, there's like the the simile of this blind sea turtle that only comes up for air every hundred years. And you've got this yolk which is kind of shaped and sized like a like a toilet seat. So, let's just call it a toilet seat because people can relate to that. You don't see yolks very much anymore, but everybody sees toilet seats. So you got this toilet seat floating around in the ocean and every hundred years this this blind sea turtle comes up for air and according to the Buddha in this discourse, it is easier

or more likely that that blind sea
turtle just swimming at random through
the ocean is going to come up with his
head right in the middle of that toilet
seat or yoke than it is for an animal to
be to get out of the animal realm and be
reborn as a human.

Personally, I'm a little bit skeptical
of that idea, but
um going with Orthodox Terra, animals
just cannot make significant spiritual
um progress, especially to the point of
being enlightened. For example, there's
this story of a Naga, which is a kind of
shape-shifting cobra dragon with human
intelligence,
and it can assume the form of a human.

And so this cobra dragon assumed the form of a human and was ordained as a monk.

And the thing is when these cobra dragons, these nagas fall asleep, when they're unconscious, they revert to their natural form. So one night at the monastery, some other monk was walking by, maybe had to go out and pee or something, and he sees just these giant scaly coils just hanging out the windows of this little hut because the giant cobra dragon reverted to its natural form when it was sleeping. And so the Buddha heard about it and then he told this this cobra

dragon monk, "I'm sorry, but you can't be a monk because animals, including uh animals with human intelligence, apparently just cannot become enlightened."

So yeah, going with orthodox terra animals can't become enlightened.

Although a few in a few cases, they can go to heaven. Like I' I've mentioned this frog. There's the frog god. What is it? Manduka deva I think it's called. Is that the word for frog and poly manduka? Something like that. Anyways, there's this frog and the Buddha is giving a discourse and there's a frog there and the frog can't understand what the Buddha is saying, but just the soothing

the soothing tones of the Buddha's voice
have this frog in a state of frog
exaltation. You know, the the the frog
is just kind of blissed out. you can't
understand what the Buddha is saying,
but just sort of like the, you know, the
vibe in the air, you know, the
atmosphere, just the the the raising of
consciousness near the Buddha was enough
to cause this frog to just be like in a
an expanded state of consciousness. And
then some kind of herdsman who has one
of those crooks, you know, the the stick
used for for like hering animals, he he
with just accidentally by pure accident,
he sets it down right on the frog's head

right when the frog was in this state of of exaltation and because the frog was in such a state, it got reborn. I think it was in Toatimsa heaven and became a kind of of dava up there.

So, that's kind of a long- winded way of answering this question. Um, but then again, it's it's saying, let's see. I figure I'd ask you if there is anything about that. Yeah. Or if you think it's possible that an animal might jump into emptiness. Um, I think it's theoretically possible. I think just about anything is possible. You know, just to say, you know, always or never. Uh, you got to be careful with that sort of thing. Um, what's his uh what's his

name?

the Indian sage

um gosh

Raman Maharshi Raman Maharshi

notoriously had a best friend who was a

cow I think the cow was named Lakshmi

and Ramana Maharshi apparently had this

ability he was apparently fully

enlightened that when someone was dying

he could like put his hand on their head

another one like on their heart or

something and kind of get this

enlightened vibe going through them And

then they could become enlightened at at

the moment of death. And according to

tradition, he did this to his his cow

friend. When the cow was dying, you know, he did the thing that caused the cow to just kind of wink out at death with no rebirth.

So

maybe

I mean I'm I'm really no authority. I mean I mean I have a degree in biology but they don't really teach you whether you know tardigrades can become enlightened or not. I guess a tardigrade would be already enlightened because it doesn't probably doesn't even have a perceptual mind.

I mean you have to have perceptions in order to be delusional in order to be in some sorrow. So something like a

mosquito

in my personal opinion they may have
like consciousness and feeling you know
wana and ven but I don't think that they
have perception.

So I think a mosquito is just like a
little terminator. It it really
subjectively it's not there even though
objectively it apparently is.

Okay. So, I guess I answered that one. I
mean, any honest answer would have to be
like it all depends on how you look at
it or I don't know.

At least that would have to be included
in the answer somehow.

But I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is from the Proto Pseudo Monk. And I'm checking to make sure we actually are recording. It says 58 minutes. So, that's that's a good sign. The little green bars are going back and forth when I talk, which is also a good sign.

And the proto pseudomkong says, "Soon I will be doing my very first intensive meditation course, 21 days on mahasi.

What do you think of the 28 mahasi touching points for noting? And would it make sense to spend your entire life meditating on these from an orthodox Buddhist perspective? That is, what would the Buddhist say? And what do you think of the 16 stages of insight

knowledges and their correspondence or relationship to enlightenment in general or the four stages of enlightenment in particular? Okay, this is actually three questions I suppose. So I should separate these.

Okay,

so the first question after I say sadu sadu to the proto monk who's going to be doing his first intensive meditation course.

What do I think of the 28 Mahasi touching points for noting? Well, I mean, I have practiced the Mahasi method. I' I've spent time at Mahasi meditation centers. Ma, the Mahasi

method is probably the best known meditation method in Burma. And I have never heard of this. I've never heard of the 28 touching points for noting. It sounds more like the Ginka method where you're like scanning through you know various parts of your body and you know as soon as you experience some kind of sensation in this you know this sector or zone of your body then you move on to the next. I mean it sounds more like ginka than mahasi.

28 mahasi touching points. I've never heard of it. And I've spent time at I and I've spent time at Pandita Rama, spent time at Chan Yeta, spent time at Sanyata, spent a lot of time there up in

Mona in Burma, spent time at other mahasi methods. I went to a meditation retreat in San Jose led by one of the disciples of Upandita. Just orthodox mahasi method, nothing on 28 touching points. So it could be that you've got an eclectic teacher who is coming up with, you know, some variation on the Mahasi method that I've just never heard of.

So that would be what I think about the 28 Mahasi touching points is that it's it's a very well-kept secret kept apparently it's it's a well-kept secret even from most disciples or practitioners of the Mahasi method as

far as I know unless it's referring to something obscure that that I'm just not thinking of.

But mostly in in the mahasi method the main meditation technique is pend pande which is a kind of anapana except instead of focusing on the touch of air at the nose you're focusing on the expansion and contraction of your abdomen as you breathe you know sort of like a diaphragbased anapana rather than nostril-based but I remember I was having difficulty with that at pandama up himself told me just meditate on the sitting posture which I didn't like at all because the sitting posture really is not an

ultimate reality like like according to
um Abidama you know vana is an ultimate
reality the touch touch sensation is
ultimately real from the point of view
of orthodox tiraava sitting posture is
not one of the 28 ultimate ultimately
real like physical aspects of samsara
But I guess there's 28. Um, yeah, that
just reminds me there, according to
Abidama, there are 28 different kinds of
physical matter or rupa. But I mean, you
couldn't meditate on all of them. And
I've never heard of any teacher of the
Masi method even attempting to get
anybody to meditate on the 28 different
kinds of rupa, the four elements, you

know, air, water, wind, and fire. Maybe,
but like
like the femininity,
you know, like according to Abidama,
maleness and femaleness are ultimately
real and distinct
or nose sensitivity. I mean, you could
you could focus on that, you know, the
four elements, that sort of thing. But
yeah, I've never heard of it, so I guess
I shouldn't say very much more about it.
And I'm just going to move on to the
protose pseudomonk's next question which
is and would it make sense to spend your
entire life meditating on these from an
orthodox Buddhist perspective? I.e. what
would the Buddhist say? I I don't think

the Buddha I mean there's no mention in the sutas or in any of the literature of the Mahasi method or the Mahasi tradition that I've ever read including like transcripts of Mahasi's own like sermons.

No mention of the 28 touching points for noting.

So would it make sense to spend your entire life meditating on these? Well, I mean, if you're making significant progress, then even if the Buddha didn't teach it, still you can go ahead. I mean, the Buddha didn't teach either as far as I know, but I've still done that and gotten some benefit from it.

Um but from an orthodox Buddhist perspective I'm like I say I was a monk for 30 years

quite familiar with the Mahasi method have practiced the Mahasi method you know under various teachers in various centers never heard of the 28 see what is it the 28 mahasi touching points but I mean if you're making significant progress from doing it then it would make sense to do it until you stop making significant progress.

And so I'm just going to move on to the third question here. And what do you think of the 16 stages of insight knowledges and their correspondence or relationship to enlightenment in general

or the four stages of enlightenment in particular? Well, the in there is the I didn't know it was 16. I mean, I never had much interest in it, but I don't I'm not aware of it being 16 stages of insight knowledge. I thought it was like 10 I thought it was like the 10 insight knowledges that you were supposed to experience in sequence. The Mahasi method is heavily based on that. It's like when you're when you're giving a like at a meditation interview with with venerable upandit who has passed on to whatever he has passed on to that um mostly you know you're just telling your experiences while you meditate and he

might harump every now and then or he'll say stop waving your arms around when you talk or he'll say stop generalizing or he would say please summarize you know it's like most of what you're saying he doesn't have any use for it. But if you say something about experiencing something in on this the the 10 or however many insight knowledges which in Burma is called Nyanzin. It's like knowledge list. That's what Nyanzin literally means like knowledge sequence or knowledge list. Then then he would like really harump and and maybe even write something down on on like a little tablet that he had and then in a way that would be giving

subtle cues to the meditator. It's like
ah that's what I should be doing or
that's what I should be experiencing.
But these the the nyanzen or the the
sequence of insight knowledges as far as
I know is nowhere in the sutas. you know
this also it's it's a like a
commentarial artifact sort of like there
I mean there's a number of commentarial
artifacts like um neighborhood
concentration upachara samadei that is
considered to be absolutely necessary
before you can attain janna you know you
have to see the what is it the uh nima
you know you got to see some kind of
image in your mind which indicates

you've reached this this neighborhood

concentration or access concentration

It's not mentioned in the sutas

how something that important I mean you

can't experience Janna till you get to

this stage

why that isn't mentioned at all in the

sutas

that's that's a good question and the

the vipasa insight knowledges the

sequence that you're supposed to

experience in sequence like if you get

something out of sequence and you you

like report that to upandit he'd say no

you didn't experience that because you

didn't do it in the right sequence

sequence you couldn't possibly having

just skipped over two and three and get directly to four

although there is one when I was at upandita I did have one of the weasna insight knowledges or at least that's how I interpreted it was namarupa

paricha nyana it's one of the early ones and namarupa paricha nyana is the weasna insight knowledge of distinguishing mind from matter

But it wasn't really that. I mean, it was really kind of remarkable how clear it was, how it was like the the pain in my knee, for example. I don't remember exactly the circumstances, but it was like pain in my knee and then there's

the noting of the pain in my knee. And according to like the commentarial tradition, the pain in your knee is rupa. And the noting of the pain in your knee is nama. So it's mind and matter. You're distinguishing mind and matter. But it didn't seem that way at all to me at all because pain is not rupa pain is not physical manner that is a feeling. So really it was it's not so much it's the knowledge of distinguishing feeling from perception or just like the initial datim from the interpretation or the response to that datim. you know,

stimulus and response.

So,

what do I think of the 16 stages of insight knowledges? I do think it's a commentarial artifact and I do not think it's nearly as important as a lot of terra Buddhist dogmatists might maintain. And with regard to the four stages of enlightenment, I mean, I've said many times I'm rather skeptical of that even like, you know, you're supposed to have the four stages of aryahood. When you become a a Buddhist saint, you are an Arya. Which is one reason why some white nationalist types actually like Buddhism, you know, like

Julius Evola and all that, you know,
it's as if the four noble truths are
the four Arian truths because the word
noble is generally a translation of
Arya.

So the four stages of enlightenment,
um, I'm rather skeptical of that. I mean
it's like sodapana probably originally
meant someone who is just a new convert
to Buddhism you know they've just
entered upon the the the dharmic path
you know so and then a non- returner
um GC Pande in his book studies and the
origins of Buddhism points out that like
in in the some of the the very first
sutras of the idi which is an obscure
text in the um kudakanikaya

that apparently non- returnturners are identified as Arhans, which is something you would expect. A non- returnturner is just someone who just doesn't get born again.

And Sakuragami, according to Pande, isn't mentioned at all in what appear to be the earliest texts. And also it is kind of an um significant bit of evidence that the sa palasuta which probably you know if I get around to it will be my next uh study in my studies in archaic Buddhism because it's an important well-known text and also relatively old relatively early suta

and in this text in this discourse the
Buddha is explaining explaining to King
Ajata

um you know what are the advantages of
becoming a monk renouncing the world and
it starts off with superficial stuff you
get more respect and so forth and he
gets all the way to enlightenment and
you know he goes through the four Jonas
not the eight Jonas but the four Jonas
and then he gets into psychic powers and
then there's no mention at all of these
four stages which you'd think would be
something that would be significant a
significant benefit benefit of
renouncing the world and practicing
dharma intensively. No mention of it,

which could just be kind of a an
oversight,
but

I don't know. So, I am relatively
skeptical of the four stages of
aryahood.

Um, and one of one of the main arguments
that works for me against the four
stages of arihood being like original,
you know, what the Buddha taught is that
no other system that I know of has these
four stages. And I just do not believe
that Terra Buddhism has a monopoly on
enlightenment.

There have been
in my opinion very assuming that

enlightenment can even exist in the
context of samsara

that there have been like Catholics

there have been Hindus there have been

possibly Sufis you know other Christians

like uh like orthodox Christians that

have I mean just because they're like a

spiritual genius born into a non

Buddhist culture still in spite of their

their religion sometimes they can become

enlightened

and none of these other traditions

mention anything like the four stages

there's the three stages of in in Pauli

you've got the puja the common worldling

you've got the seka or the one in

training which would be the lower three

levels of being an arya and then you've got the aka or one no longer in training which would be a fully enlightened being St. John of the Cross apparently independently of Terra Buddhism came up with essentially the same kind of of system where you've got the beginner, you've got the adept and you've got the perfect.

So yeah, I really am quite skeptical of the authenticity of however many stages of weasa insight knowledge there are.

And also I mean not that there there can't be stages of insight knowledge.

It's just that I am skeptical that there's this list that you have to

experience in sequence before you become enlightened. In fact, I mean, you just look at the stories in this in the text where some people they they're listening to a discourse of the Buddha or some such and they just boom, they become enlightened. So, are they going to go through the whole the whole list like in a in a matter of just a few moments?

It's just not in the sutas. Although the four stages of of Aryahood are in the sutas, but still I don't consider it to be I I consider to be probably not authentic teachings of the Buddha. And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Yugao.

and Yugahoo

um due to the uh the high-profile homicides and uproar and chaos and so forth recently has asked a similar question to one or two that have already been asked. He says let's talk about the current situation in USA

um i.e. the first two amendments from the Buddhist standpoint. And how bad is the idea of going around saying whatever comes to your mind, offending people and ideas no matter what, then dying for said ideas just so other people can defend that ideas to protect them amendments.

Are they doing more harm than good? So

apparently this was inspired by Charlie Kirk, I'm guessing. But the thing is you have the first amendment in America which is mainly freedom of speech. It also includes freedom of religion and so forth. And I mean you you can't just say anything. For example, I mean lie or slander are still illegal. I mean you can't just accuse somebody of committing some crime, formally accuse them, lie under oath, that kind of thing. I mean, that's still illegal. Even though there's freedom of speech or like the classic example, yelling fire in a crowded theater, you're not allowed to do that.

So, I mean, freedom of speech isn't just

complete cart blanch on saying anything you want to say.

Let's see. But still, it's in my opinion, it's a good idea. I mean, silencing disscent is one of the first things that a totalitarian government does.

And that's what like the EU or the UK are doing. People are going to prison for for tweets.

It may be that some Muslim migrant can molest women, even children, and he just gets a slap on the wrist if anything, but somebody complains about it on X, they're the one that get punished.

So yeah, I mean, silencing disscent is

really a dictatorial move.

And we haven't really gotten nearly as far in that direction regardless of some of the the propagandist kind of tweets or just ignorant tweets you see on on X that you know Trump is a dictator. He's shutting down all descent and all that.

Well, just look at the UK and you see like an order of magnitude worse than you're seeing in America right now.

So,

let's see. So you how bad is the idea of going around saying whatever comes to your mind, offending people and ideas no matter what, then dying for said ideas.

Well, I mean, there's no law that says you're that murder is okay.

Second amendment is the right to bear arms. So the first amendment mainly is freedom of speech, freedom of religion, that kind of thing. And the second amendment to the US Constitution is the right to bear arms. And both of them from a political point of view are a good idea. Even though they may create chaos, they may cause some people to feel unsafe.

I mean, if you're just going to say something, if it's going to be illegal, for example, to hurt somebody's feelings, then people are going to be pretending to have their feelings hurt, it's called crybullying, just to just to

get revenge on somebody.

So, I mean, even though I'm a Buddhist, um, I'm still from a political point of view endorse the Second Amendment, that people should have the right to bear arms.

And it causes like like Charlie Kirk is known to have said that it causes it may cause more people to get shot, but still in the long term, in the the overall view, the big view, it's still worth it.

Because that's another thing that that like totalitarian governments do.

Confiscate firearms. The only people that that are armed are the people in the government. And what happens when the government is is not on your side.

So that's the main reason why the second amendment exists in America is not so that people can like go hunting even though that's included. It's not so that people can defend themselves even against burglars or wild Indians, although that's that's also in there.

But the main reason the main like philosophical reason for granting people or just allowing people the right to bear arms is so that people can rise up and fight against a tyrannical government.

That's how America was born. America was born from people rising up against what they perceived to be a tyrannical

government.

And most of the murders are happening in like gun-free zones, like especially mass shootings and so forth. Mass shooters tend to avoid places where the people they're shooting at might have guns, too.

you know, they'll single out like schools and churches and so forth that are gun-free supposedly.

So, let's see here. What's I might be straying from the actual question here.

So, let's I'm just going to bear with me. I'm going to read Yugao's question again. Let's talk about the current situation in USA,

i.e. the first two amendments from the

Buddhist standpoint. Yeah, from the Buddhist standpoint, then why have guns? Unless you're just going to shoot him in the air in celebration on the 4th of July or something. And how bad is the idea of going around saying whatever comes to your mind, offending people and ideas no matter what, then dying for said ideas just so other people can defend that ideas to protect them.

Amendments. Well, I mean from the Buddhist point of view, I mean you shouldn't deliberately hurt people's feelings. That'd be perusa, you know, harsh speech. But I mean you got to separate religion from politics.

I mean if politics is going to make anything immoral illegal

then yeah if lying is illegal I mean pretty much everybody's going to get punished for that at some point or another

unless you just you get a ticket. You know I'm sorry I heard you say it untruth just now. here. Sign here. It's going to be 50 bucks.

So, yeah. I mean, the abuse of the alternative, the abuse of having an unarmed populace, the abuse of policing other people's expressed opinions is much worse than having a certain amount of this chaotic liberty, which is a little bit dangerous. I think it was um

Benjamin Franklin, one of the founding fathers of the United States, who made a statement to the effect of I don't remember the exact quote, but it's like people who vote away their freedoms for the sake of security are going to get neither and they're worthy of neither.

So, I think in America it's better to have a little bit of a spine, have a little bit of a thick skin and not just melt down if somebody says something that you don't like. You know, if they're yelling fire in a crowded theater or accusing you of a crime you didn't commit, then fine. You

know, they might be uh um prosecuted and arrested for using that kind of speech.

But just to just to say, you know, you think that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a bad idea. I mean, especially if you're going to give your reasons why you think that, then yeah, there's no problem with that.

Calling somebody stupid to their face probably shouldn't even be illegal, even though it's definitely bad manners. I mean, it's bad karma.

So yeah, I definitely uh am in favor of the first and second amendments.

Maybe not from a purely Buddhist point of view, but I'm not a pure Buddhist.

If I were a pure Buddhist, I'd renounce

the world and be living alone in a cave, which I did for for many years, but I'm not doing it now. I am now a responsible citizen participating in the civic process. And so I have more of a political approach to certain things.

Let's see. So are the first and second amendments doing more harm than good?

No. They're definitely call doing more good than harm in my opinion.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Sedar

Talohhittita

who asked a relatively easy question that I'll probably spend half an hour answering just because that is my way.

Sedar Tlohachita says, "Have you ever been in Europe?" And like I've mentioned before, the closest I have ever been to actually being in Europe was um the summer of my 21st birthday. I was working on a Polish um a Polish commercial twler off the coast of Oregon, the the Sagittita. And so I was technically on European soil because when I got off the ship I had to go through customs. So like legally I was on Polish soil working on this Polish fishing vessel, the Sagitta, which is Polish for Sagittarius, I think.

So yeah, that's the closest I've ever

been to Europe. I've never even been to Mexico. Been to Canada lots of times.

I've been to several Asian countries.

That's about it. So, I'm just going to move on to Sedart Loha's next question.

Buddhism is sometimes criticized for

being too focused on individual

liberation rather than community

responsibilities. How do you see this

balance between personal practice and

communal duties? Well, I mean, the

purpose of Buddhism has never been to

stabilize society. At least the original

purpose of Buddhism was not to stabilize

society. The original purpose of

Buddhism was to renounce society. Like

even today, like in

Burma for example, arguably the most devoutly Buddhist country on earth, like marriages, monks don't participate in weddings. Marriage is just purely a secular thing.

Um I mean monks may come to funerals but it's

it's the purpose of of Buddhism is liberation like the Buddha taught in the sutas he teaches two things duka and the sessation of duca you know suffering and how to stop suffering that that's all that he was really concerned with so I mean it just depends I mean you could criticize like lots of things you could criticize is tennis, for example.

It's a dumb example. Let's go with it.

Tennis, well, I mean, you can criticize tennis for being too focused on hitting a ball back and forth instead of community responsibilities.

But something like Hinduism, for example, it's much more socially oriented. You know, there's the renunciation aspect, but still it's like you're supposed to go through the ashramadhamas,

you know, ashram dhamas, I should say.

you know, you you're the celibate student and then you get married and you have kids and there's, you know, these protocols or traditions about, you know,

how to be a good householder and so forth. A little bit of that in the polyutas, but not much. And then after your kids are grown, you renounce the world and you move on to the more advanced stuff. And Buddhism just dispensed with that. I mean, the purpose of Buddhism is not to teach you how to be a good citizens. It's how to teach you how to renounce being a citizen. go off alone somewhere and become enlightened. Just get off the wheel.

Like this community responsibility stuff is essentially pro- samsara.

It's like, well, yeah, you should liberate yourself from samsara, but here's here's how to structure samsara

and and be in it and wallow in it.

Most religions are like Christianity,
for example. I mean, probably based on
what I've read in the New Testament,
I've read the entire New Testament.

Jesus was teaching something kind of
similar in with regard to conduct that
the Buddha was teaching. It's like give
all that you, you know, sell all that
you have, give the money to the poor,
and follow me. It's like renunciation.

But you're not going to have a major
like a a popular religion that doesn't
deal with what people are supposed like
lay people are supposed to do.

Christianity really took the ball and

ran with that. And Terra Buddhism is still rather minimal. Like for example, I mean it's just right in the rules of monastic discipline. Any monk who participates in a in a wedding is guilty of a sana offense. the second most grave category of monastic offense because that's just not what Buddhism is about. You shouldn't be encouraging people to wallow in samsara.

So Buddhism may be criticized for being too focused on individual liberation, but the people who are criticizing is people who are just not committed to personal liberation. They want to wallow in samsara. So Buddhism doesn't doesn't want us to wallow in samsara enough. It

seems to be essentially the argument.

So I mean if you want more I mean you
can apply Buddhist ethics to lay life
but you should water down those Buddhist
ethics because if you're just going to
let your kid be eaten alive by lice
because you don't want to harm the poor
little lice then

I mean it's just not realistic.

You're certainly a piss poor parent if
you behave that way.

So

yeah, I don't know. I'm not sure. I'm
not sure what to say about this other
than the fact that I've already said a
whole bunch about it.

Huh. I guess maybe I should just move on to the next question. Yeah, that's what I'll do. With all due respects to Sedarta Loha, I think I'm just going to move on to the next question here. And so the next question is from Siovak and Sipad Zida. And Siovak and Sipad Zidna says, "Were you ever afraid of wild animals attacking you in the Burmese wilderness?" And there's only one real time that I was I don't know. I guess there would be a little bit of fear, you know, more like sort of intense weariness.

And that was when I was for for a while I was hiking through Alando Katapa National Park. And there are tigers in

Alando Cathabot National Park. There are leopards. There are wild elephants there. But the the most dangerous animal in in like a tropical wilderness like that, tropical Asian wilderness, aside from the anophles mosquito, the anophles mosquito wins the prize of being the most dangerous animal in the forest. And and just set aside humans. We don't need to do those those wildlife show tropes of you know people are the most dangerous animal anything like that but I have been told that wild pigs are more dangerous than tigers and the main reason why wild pigs are more dangerous than tigers is there's so many there's

so much more of them you're much more likely to come across like a herd of wild pigs than a tiger. Tigers have learned to be afraid of people, but wild pigs aren't necessarily that afraid of people. And I've been told that the boores will charge you, you know. I mean, boar hunting in like ancient Greece, that was like macho thrill sport, you know, like in early medieval Europe, even to some degree nowadays is like it was like the macho thrill sport that you do. I mean, unless you're like a knight and jousting is what you do. That's that's your macho thrill sport. For the average guy, even including like ancient Athenian aristocrats,

then boar hunting with spears was like I mean, you proved your manhood with that sort of thing because wild pigs are dangerous.

So, I would I would hike from the center of Alando Cosbot National Park, 16 miles as the crow flies through sometimes non-existent trails

to get to uh the the overhanging rock ledge at the northern boundary of Alando Cathma National Park. And so at night especially,

I would uh I'd always be careful. I'd always be sure to sleep in a relatively secure place, like at the very least under an easily climbable tree.

And I mean, it's against the rules for a monk to even build a campfire just to just because you like campfires. So, I'd be sitting there in the dark kind of meditating in this tigerinfested jungle. Well, I mean, it wasn't really a jungle, but it was deep forest.

And I mean occasionally it's like you hear a twig snap or something. It's like what was that? I remember one time I slept um I mean the trail was really hard to follow when I when I'd hike from the center of Alando Caspa National Park to the northern boundary. It would be right at the end of the cold season and the park service such that it was had not like fix the trails from the

monsoons. So there'd be places where the trail was just washed out. And um I took the trail usually, but I mean it's it's like these

subliminal animal instincts that were lying dormant would come to the surface. Either that or it was like past life stuff from having been a like a a stone age tractor or something. You get really good at following almost non-existent trails. You know, it's like the the moss is a little bit dirty or a little bit worn on these rocks here. And I mean, you don't look directly at it. You just kind of look forwards and like your peripheral vision can sort of construct

a a kind of path for you to follow. I still got lost a couple times, but still, I mean, it's um it was it was tricky. So one one year I just followed the creek, you know, Pollon Creek to from from the center of the park to where I was going at the north northern boundary. And that was that was really dicey cuz there's some places where it's just like cliffs or like slimy slimy rocks that you have to cross and you slip and fall and it's like down this little this little drop off onto rocks like alone in the middle of this tropical forest.

So one the one year I was going along the creek.

I I camped one night. It's usually I'd spend one night on the trail and um I climbed up on these rocks and I I had a human skull with me just because, you know, I was like, who doesn't go hiking with a human skull? So, I put the human skull sort of as sort of a protector, the the most convenient way of climbing up just in case like a bear or a leopard or something tried to get me when I was sleeping. But yeah, that was the like the one time I would feel insecure about wild animals was when I was hiking through Alando Kazaba National Park, which as I say had tigers and leopards and wild elephants

and wild boars and and bears and all kinds of stuff.

Although I never actually saw any of those those dangerous animals. I did see a cat track that was the size of the palm of my hand. So that's a big cat track. I mean, it's probably either an adult leopard or maybe like a juvenile tiger that left that track.

More likely a leopard, I guess, if their paws get as big as the paw in my hand. I have relatively large hands.

Anyways, I'm just going to move on to Seov's

next question. He says, "If you never become a monk, maybe got rejected, what do you think you would have done

otherwise?" Well, academically,
um, I was kind of moving in the
direction of, um, if I hadn't become a
monk, I probably would have gone for my
masters in like marine ecology. So, I
probably would have wound up being like
there's a good chance I'd be like an
unemployed college professor because I
mean I'd become a college professor and
then the woke stuff would hit, you know,
around 2015, 2016

where professors can just lose their
job, have their careers destroyed for
misgendering a [__] And as a
biologist,

you know, I mean, I'm entitled to have

my like honest objective opinion of who is male and who is female, for example. So, yeah, there's a good chance I'd be an unemployed college professor or I mean, I could have started working for like NOAA, you know, they've got like PhD scientist types working for like the National Marine Fisheries Service or something. So I could have possibly gone that route. But yeah, definitely the the the direction I was heading before I kind of opted out to become a monk instead was, you know, just sort of an academic pursuit of, you know, studying marine ecology.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question, especially benthic marine

ecology. So I'm just going to move on to the next question. You said this is still sea cad now. You said you had attained a state where you felt like all your years of suffering the the wilderness made it worth it. How many years of practice did it take to get there? And does it match any state mentioned in the texts? Well, I first discovered um my more advanced meditation technique practically by accident when I was at Pandidama, you know, in the Mahasi tradition. This was like the winter of 199798 if I remember correctly

and it was like some of you who have been in meditation retreats know that your mind can just rebel against meditation. You know it's like trying to ride a bucking bronco just trying to keep your mind on the the primary object of meditation. So finally I just thought okay I'm just going to clear my mind and whatever arises I'll note it. So I sat I cleared my mind and waited for something to arise and waited for something to arise and waited for something to arise and it's just the fact that you were like expecting something to arise and you were going to catch it that it it in a way it sort of inhibited anything from arising. So I wound up in this state of

just like

clarity and spaciousness and then I started getting excited. I'd never experienced that sort of thing before and I started getting excited which then of course got me all agitated and derailed the meditation but that was how I learned about it you know it wasn't even from books even though you can find it in the text like essentially that kind of meditation is like the story of pointless potila where you've got this monk he's a it's it's kind of an anacronistic story I think it's in the dhamapata commentary where pointless potila or just potula

there's this monk named Otila in the Buddhist time who is a scholar you know he's he's an authority on the Buddhist texts even though there were no Buddhist texts really at the time and so the Buddha kept calling him tucha which means like pointless or you know futile in vain pota and just you know here comes pointless potula there goes pointless pota come here and have a seat pointless pota the Buddha is always talking this way so potula you know he's he's not stupid you know he's a great scholar He realizes the Buddha is calling me this because I don't really practice all that much. I'm devoting too much of my energies to just studying the

texts that really don't exist yet.

So he decided he was going to go and find a meditation teacher. He was just going to go to some remote area and just practice meditation. So he finally he wanders like hundreds of miles according to the story and gets to this remote meditation or this monastery and he just goes to the abbot and asks for meditation instruction and the abbot kind of backs off says oh you're you're an elder I mean you know the Buddha personally you're a great scholar who am I to presume to teach you anything so then he you know so he declines and then so poila goes to the next senior ior

monk who gets and he gets the same reaction. He just goes all the way down the roster till he gets to a 9-year-old novice who is an arant. This novice became enlightened as soon as the razor touched his head the first time he got his head shaved. And then this novice teaches him essentially the kind of meditation that I had discovered on my own which is I mean I've told this story many times before that you know you've got a termite mound usually translated as antill but it's a termite mound and it's got like six big holes and there's a lizard that runs away from you. You're hunting this lizard. the lizard runs away, gets into

this into this termite mound. And so the way you catch that lizard is first of all, you block off five of the holes.

And then you just watch that last hole where the lizard will have to come out if it's going to come out. And as soon as the lizard comes out, you grab it.

And this is all a kind of metaphor for you're like

um what's the word? kind of suppressing the five senses so that the only sense you've got left that's still functioning is mind. You know, it's like you're in a quiet place. You're meditating, eyes closed, you know, it's just you're not dealing with commotion or anything.

You're just observing your own mind carefully. And then when a thought arises, you catch it or you note it. And in a way that it stifles thought because apparently the same part of your brain going with physiology that that notes is same is the same as the the thinking mind. So you can't think and note yourself thinking at the same time. The noting causes the the thought to evaporate.

And just waiting for a thought to arise also kind of suppresses the likelihood that thoughts will arise for whatever reason.

So I mean it wasn't the state but that was like the meditation technique. It

wasn't even the highest meditation technique that I came across. It was like I called it third gear. There was still another gear above that which was just effortless. You know there's no waiting to try and catch anything. It's just it's like your mind is in a completely alert but also is just effortless. You're not doing anything. So the actual state I mean maybe description of Janna might

I mean it might match to some degree the state that I was experiencing of just this you know sometimes at first especially

there'll be all this pey involved where like the very first time where you just get excited you know it's like you know it's like it's just excellent you know, and then you start getting excited and enthusiastic and then that kind of blows the meditation.

Well, let's see.

Uh, how many years of practice did it take for me to get there? Well, I was a monk for like seven years when I first started like first discovered the the meditation that would actually get me there.

And does it match any statement mentioned in the text? Kind of. I mean like

I mean you can find kind of mentions
here and there you know like like the
the baja suta where the the where the
Buddha is saying you know in the scene
there's only the scene in the herd there
is only the herd that kind of thing you
know it's just there's no response to
the stimulus there's no reaction
and that that reduces the stimuli too
somehow you know it's like the momentum
of thinking the the stream of
consciousness it it just largely stops.
So you can you can find mentions kind of
at least kind of applicable passages
here and there in the texts and I'm just
going to move on next question and this

is from a person called I should be dead soon which is kind of a morbid name. I hope they're not taking that seriously. And it could be somebody who just changed their name recently. Not sure exactly who it is, but I should be dead soon. Says, "In the spirit of gross questions, I've heard hemorrhoids called the sitter's disease. Is this mentioned in the sutas?" Well, hemorrhoids being called the sitter's disease isn't mentioned in the sutas. Although hemorrhoids are mentioned in the rules of monastic discipline because it happened to people even back then in the Buddhist time. So there's actually a rule preventing

a monk from having his hemorrhoids
operated upon by a doctor. And um
there's like this kind of kind of a
horrible sort of story associated with
this in the text where a monk goes to
some medical practitioner and has his
hemorrhoids like cut off, you know, the
ones sticking out anyway. And then the
the medical practitioner apparently was
not a devout Buddhist. And then
uh at some later time he sees the monk
coming and he calls out something like,
"Hey, that monk has got an anus that
looks like a lizard's mouth."
Which caused the Buddha to make this
rule against monks having that very

tender narrow area operated upon by like
non-mongs,
you know, by by like secular doctors and
so forth.

Um,

but it does say in in the the rules of
manassing discipline that if a monk has
a problem with that that the appropriate
thing to do is to take a large sharp
crystal of salt and you just you can cut
it off yourself with this large sharp
salt crystal.

Um, so yeah, that's it is mentioned in
the sutas

and let's see. So I guess I'll just move
on to the next question in this in this
little mineries of hemorrhoid

questions.

He says, "Is this a common irritant among monks?" Well, apparently it it it was not entirely unknown even in the Buddhist time. You know, ancient India it happened. So yeah, I mean I've I have known monks that I have mentioned, you know, I mean we didn't have long drawn out conversations about it, but I mean the fact that they were experiencing this was mentioned.

So yeah, I mean it does happen.

Um and then the third question is are you familiar with any remedies? Well, there is the the large sharpened salt crystal.

Um but the thing is getting back to the the very first kind of little intro to these questions where it's called the sitter's disease. My experience um especially with a friend of mine who was a monk in Burma. Um I mean he was not Burmese, he was he was a uh ingalate ingate monk.

Um

it wasn't because of sitting so much. I never had problems from sitting so much that the problem that that hemorrhoids often occur due to strain, you know, it's like it's it's varicose veins in like the the rectal area and that's caused by straining which increases the blood pressure there. And so the two

main things that cause it are constipation where you have to strain a lot or diarrhea where you're straining not to poop yourself.

And then in my friend's case, it was the latter. He he had he was having Monzuma's revenge or King Tibbo's revenge and just the continual strain to to avoid pooping himself was what was causing it.

So, I mean, it just from sitting a lot. I've had problems with like I think they're called bed sores. And I think there's like a a more official medical name for them now, but um just sitting all the time with robes that are not the

cleanest because you're only allowed one lower robe if you're following Vineia strictly.

So, you know, just you get like a pressure sore or something and it's very difficult for them to go away. They stay they stay I mean making them go away.

you you have to just do lots and lots of walking meditation

because at the time I was even doing the sitter's practice the dutanga where you sit you sleep in a sitting position so I was sitting pretty much all the time and you just can't wash your lower robe every single day so you know there's bacteria and all this kind of stuff that are like exacerbating the problem so the

remedies

just not straining in fact there's a rule of monastic discipline that a monk is not supposed to strain unless he is more constipated than usual. So you can learn all kinds of fascinating things from the rules of monastic discipline.

So yeah, so that would I mean preventative medicine is the best. I mean whatever whatever western medication that you can use preparation

H

probably works.

So yeah, I mean technically it's against the rules for a monk to have like an operation from a doctor on that to to

have anybody cutting at it. Maybe a monk
another monk who used to be a doctor or
something. Maybe that would be
allowable. Maybe I can't remember now,
but you're able to cut it off yourself
with a sharpened large salt crystal,
which it would be I I guess it'd be like
a uh what's the was a stringent that
would you know this the salt I suppose
would help to prevent excessive bleeding
or something.

But western western remedies short of
like amputation of the turtle head
appendage that's what's that's what
hemorrhoids are called in Burmese the
turtle head disease late gone yoga
so yeah plus just preventative medic

meditate preventative

medication of just try to avoid

constipation and diarrhea

because those are mainly the things that
cause it at least.

according to my understanding.

So I'm just going to move on to the next
question. This is from Gnostic Rocker
and Gnostic Rocker says,

"It seems obviously true that in a
numinal sense or what could be termed
absolute truth which is not dependent on
fickle subjectivity that the teaching of
anata or no self is true. It's fair to
say that intensive samata as well as
weasana

can confirm this to the practitioner.

That has long seemed axiomatic to me.

However,

we live in the rough marketplace of the

world in the conventional sphere,

the phenomenal sphere in which entirely

other rules of action and engagement

with others operate.

And since all major psychologist and

psychotherapists stress the absolute

urgency of developing a healthy notion

of self and a sense of continuity of

that self, then isn't teaching no self,

true as it may be in absolute terms,

actually doing the pupil a disservice

and actually endangering them since

according to modern psychotherapy, they

would be deprived of a means of navigating the world effectively.

Well, part of the thing is I mean I've known a lot of Buddhists. I don't know of any that was really harmed by believing anata that they don't really exist. I mean we obviously exist in some saric context. Even the Buddha would talk about me and you and him and this person and that person as though they had a self.

So it's I don't see that it's really been a problem. I mean it could I would assume that it has occurred on multiple occasions that you have someone who is maybe mentally not particularly robust

who might be like driven into some fugue state or something by just dwelling on anata or no self. But the thing is Buddhism was not really designed for the weak. Buddhism was not designed as some kind of stress relief technique for people that are messed up. Buddhism was designed for the strong. It was designed for like like spiritual heroes, you know, like the spiritual elite like Evola stressed so much in his book on Buddhism where it's it's like the people that are like the creme de la creme were the ones that were expected to become monks, especially in the Buddhist time, you know, the heavy hitters, the spiritual heavy hitters.

So for them anata was was beneficial and helped them in their practice. I'm sure. But if you've got somebody who's just like living a worldly life and they're, you know, they're just not very strong mentally, you know, they feel unsafe if people say things that they disagree with, that kind of thing, then I mean there are quite a few of those in Dharmmahols in the West, then yeah, I mean, it could theoretically be harmful, but overall it causes much more good than harm in my opinion.

And it just because let's see where does it say modern psychotherapy.

Let's see where's where's the other part

here. He's talking about oh yeah all major psychologists and psychotherapists stress the absolute urgency of developing a healthy notion of self.

Well first of all they're worldly people. It may be that if you have a devoutly Buddhist psychologist or psychotherapist, they might have different ideas, but u the worldly secular especially like Freudians, yeah, of course they're going to be wallowing in it. And so it's, you know, it's almost like niche where it's just you try to master samsara or like an occultist where you're not trying to escape from samsara, you're just trying to master it.

Let's see. So what what exactly is the question? Oh, could it be actually doing the pupil a disservice? Some pupils might be harmed through like an unhealthy misunderstanding of no self.

But I mean, you're going to have an ego just naturally by default. That's the default setting of a human in samsara is you've got an ego and a sense of self.

And so the way most Buddhists deal with the situation is when they're philosophizing

then they're thinking about no self.

When they're not philosophizing, it's self.

So

yeah, I I think that the harm would come to a few people who are easily harmed and for the most part it's it's does more good than harm.

Kind of like I was talking about the second the first and second amendments earlier on.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question from Gnostic Rocker here. Just out of interest, where are most of your viewers from? I assume your YouTube page gives you these stats. I'm curious as to whether most of your listeners are East Asian, Southeast Asian, continental Europeans, and Eastern Europeans or British or from the Americas or

elsewhere. Well, the like the audience is kind of similar to the audience on my blog when I was writing my blog. I actually came up with an idea for blog post last night while in the shower, which might result in me actually adding a new blog post to my blog after years of just kind of letting it sit. But um about half of my viewers on YouTube are from America and then the other half is very just scattershot across the globe. I think probably the main countries after America would be Canada, Australia, and the UK. So, it's mainly the Anglosphere, English-speaking countries, you know, are like the main

viewers of my YouTube videos, which is understandable, I guess. And the two main non um non-English-speaking countries that I get viewers from are Poland and Germany. Also, I get a few views from Russia also.

So, not really a whole lot of Asians.

It's mostly Westerners watching my videos. But, I mean, as I say, I mean, there's people from like Singapore and and I don't know about Burma. There there's some Burmese people who leave comments occasionally, that kind of thing, but they could be like expats in some other country where they have better internet access. I don't know.

So, I'm just going to move on to the to

Gnostic Rucker's next question and I learned something from this question myself. His question is, was the thesis's paradox the ship of Theseus simile comparable in its dialectical reasoning to the Melinda Pa's discourse in which Nagasena uses the chariot analogy to explain anatta?

So I didn't know what the uh the ship of Theseus paradox was. So I looked it up and so I got this explanation here which I will I will quote. The ship of Theseus all known also known as Theosius's paradox is a paradox and common thought experiment about whether an object is the same object after having all of its

original components replaced over time. typically one after the other. In Greek mythology, Theseus, the mythical king of the city of Athens, rescued the children of Athens from King Minos after slaying the Minotaur and then escaped onto a ship going to Delos. Each year, the Athenians would commemorate this by taking the ship on a pilgrimage to Delos to honor Apollo. A question was raised by ancient philosophers. If no pieces of the original made no pieces of the original made up the current ship, was it still the ship of Theseus?

Furthermore, if it was no longer the same, then had it ceased existing as the original ship? Thomas Hobbes raised the

further question of how to consider a second ship that had been built entirely from pieces removed from the original.

Okay. Now, that was from Wikipedia.

So, I had never heard of the ship of Theseus paradox, so this was new for me.

But I mean, there's obvious similarities. It's not exactly the same argument because apparently the ancient Greeks weren't questioning whether there was a ship there at all.

That's kind of the whole point of the Buddhist like the simile of the chariot.

You know, you got a chariot. So, you remove one wheel and put a different wheel on it. Is it the same chariot? You

take all the pieces apart, take the the
the chariot apart, you got a pile of
chariot parts. Is that the chariot? So,
it's not just the sum of its parts that
makes a chariot. And it's not like
having the parts in the right order
necessarily because you can take off one
of the parts and put a different
entirely different one on and it's
considered to be the same chariot. So
the the Buddhist argument like the the
parable or the the simile of the chariot
which is found in the in the sutas also
it's found in the sutinikaya at least
not just um the the meinda pa
that
um you know really chariot is just a

convenient

perception like it's a generalization of just a certain assemblage of of parts parts. And so I mean the the Buddhist argument is that chariot there is no real chariot that it's just a convenient use of language or of like perceptual generalizations.

And you know you can change out parts this kind of thing you still call it the same chariot. Whereas with the ship of Theseus it seems to me that the Greeks really weren't questioning whether there really was a ship there. you know, they had too much Plato, you know, pl according to Plato, probably up in

heaven, you've got like the ideal ship
and that all ships on earth are
partaking of this ideal shipness.

So, I think the Greeks were more
samsaric in their philosophy. They
didn't question whether there really was
a ship there or not. They're just asking
if it's the same ship, then when you
swapping parts out.

So there's obvious obviously a
similarity in the argumentation but it's
not exactly the same argument seems to
me.

So let's see I guess I answered the
question. Let's see what exactly was the
question here.

Was the thesis paradox simile comparable

comparable in its dialectical reasoning to the meinda pa discourse? uh to explain anata. Yeah, I think the main difference is that anata it's arguing against the reality the ultimate reality of a chariot whereas the the Greek ship of Theseus paradox doesn't seem to be questioning whether or not there really is a ship there. They seem to accept that it really is a ship. It's just that is it the same ship when you start swapping parts out.

So, that would be the main difference, it seems to me. And I'm going to move on to the next question, which is from Fred.

And the thing is, I was I was considering just skipping this weekend, not doing a Q&A because it seemed like there were so few questions. But then when I started compiling them, it seems like, yeah, we're we got about 30 questions, which is kind of in the the the average, you know, the the the mean of of question asking. So anyways, Fred says, "You think karma-wise about the Charlie Kirk assassination?"

So what would be the the karma of Charlie Kirk getting shot in the neck? Um, I guess that's the question. What would be Charlie Kirk's karma with regard to that? Well, I mean, it's hard to say because, you know, some karma is

coming from past lives going with
Buddhist philosophy. So, I mean, it
could be that, you know, in in the
Middle Ages, he was some kind of peasant
soldier in in like the hundred years war
who shot someone through the neck with
an arrow. And it wasn't until this life,
you know, completely irrespective of his
conservative Christian like teachings
and so forth that it was just the
fruition of that karma that finally, you
know, the opportunity arose for it to
reach fruition. I mean, it could be
something like that
or it could be that Charlie Kirk I mean
I mean he gave people an opportunity to

speaking out against him then he would address their arguments and so forth. So he was much more into open discourse and just friendly interaction. Charlie Kirk insisted that there has to be communication between left and right.

For example, you know, he says like even with a marriage when people when they when the husband and wife stop communicating that results in divorce in a society when half of the country stops communicating with the other half you wind up with civil war. Charlie Kirk used to say this kind of stuff. And so, I mean, he wanted discourse. He wanted debate. And the problem is the left really couldn't win their debate with

him. And so, they resorted to violence. At least one person did. You know, it's it's really too easy and it's it's not entirely honest, a little bit hysterical to just say, you know, the left killed Johnny uh Charlie Kirk, you know, it's like they're they're they're all evil. This kind of stuff. That's that's that's not good. It's It's not realistic. So, I mean, Charlie Kirk, even though he promoted open discourse and allowed his opponents to have their say before addressing their their arguments and so forth, still he was causing a lot of unhappiness in other people just partly just through truth bombs.

And so, you know, he'd probably be aware of this sort of building catalog of upset people that he has caused that might cause some sort of, I don't know, some sort of karmic pressure that resulted in just the an explosion, that kind of thing. But going from the Buddhist point of view, you know, the orthodox terra Buddhist point of view, I mean, there's no way, you can't really figure out exactly the mechanism of how karma is working in this or that case. And like I said, it could be that he was some peasant soldier in the hundred years war who shot someone through the neck with an arrow. And it's only now that that's coming to fruition, which

would have practically nothing to do with him going to college campuses and upsetting left-wing college students and their teachers.

Who knows? But I mean, it was his karma.

According to Orthodox Terra, every feeling that you experience, painful or pleasant, is the fruition of karma.

So it certainly was his karma. It was the fruition of his karma. I mean he may not have felt much pain even. So it was just sort of like just that's the end of this stream of consciousness.

You know it just got cut off.

It's hard to say according to the to the texts. You can go insane trying to

understand the ramifications and permutations of karma.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question and this is our last question here. Jeffrey who asked two questions and this is the first one.

Jeffrey says is it the responsibility of monks to maintain the temples beyond cleaning as in building and repairs. So if you read the the poly texts like rules of monastic discipline then monks certainly were sometimes building their own huts. There's one story of a monk who is trying to build a brick wall and it keeps falling over because he's not a skilled mason and so it's kind of kind of crooked like this and it just gets

out of balance and falls over. So even in ancient India monks were um you know building I mean their huts were pretty primitive you know they weren't very big or but they would be building larger things building walls brick walls that kind of thing. So they were doing work. I mean, you couldn't cut, you couldn't damage vegetation. It's against the rules for a monk to to even pull a green leaf off of a living plant.

So you couldn't do some of the work. A lot of the stuff like, you know, mowing lawns or pulling weeds, you know, clearing the area before you build something there. It there'd have to be

like a lay person like a monastery attendant or just devout Buddhist visitors who are willing to do that like on up days, that kind of thing.

But monks did do a lot of their work.

Um, nowadays, I mean, it's

not so much. I mean, I was I was like doing work when I was when I was a monk.

I mean, it wasn't all just chop wood, carry water. Um, like I had to build a retaining wall. There was outside of my cave, there was like this platform that was an artificial flat area that was mainly the contents of the cave. It was an artificially dug cave. So instead of a slope like this, which it was naturally, um they had built up like a a

platform outside the cave with, you know, the stuff that they were hauling out of the cave and heavy rains were causing that to erode. And there was starting to be more and more of this, I don't know what you'd call it, just the the the dirt and everything was just getting washed down the into this gully. So I had to have a retaining wall built and I was helping to some degree. Mo mainly I was just sort of supervising and directing but a lot of a lot of the villagers came to help with that. There was uh one junior monk down below who was coming up. He was helping to carry rocks up the hill to build the retaining

wall. That kind of thing. So it does happen. Although most of the the building and manual labor going on with regard to construction and so forth um is done by lay people especially like skilled carpenters and so forth um who who would do a better job anyway. Um I did know a monk he was the abbot of a monastery I stayed at. he was still relatively young who moved to a different place closer to his hometown and he had a there was some building being built there. I mean practically every monastery in Burma is under construction somehow or another. There's always I mean monks inappropriately collecting donations and then that goes

to the building of the thing mainly through car professional carpenters. But he was walking around on some scaffolding just inspecting what was being done and he fell off the scaffold and landed crossways across like a a brick wall and broke his back and was paralyzed after that which is not good I suppose. I don't know why I even mentioned that. It just came to mind. So I guess the easy answer to Jeffrey here is the responsibility of monks to maintain the temples beyond cleaning as in building and repairs in the past more so than now although it still happens. But if you got lay people volunteering

to do it, you might as well let them do it. Especially with regard to the stuff that monks aren't allowed to do like digging the ground or like clearing vegetation, that's against the rules for a monk to do.

Clearing the ground or digging the ground is against the rules because there are all kinds of little creatures living in the soil. Nematode worms for example that are being killed by doing the digging and clearing the vegetation according to ancient India ancient Indian beliefs

and uh a plant is an aandria ja or it's one faculty life. They don't have sense faculties like we do other than just

touch.

And so it was considered to be killing some kind of being some kind of conscious being very kind of primitive level of consciousness but still there was consciousness there. So in ancient India it was considered inappropriate for any kind of spiritual renunciant to be killing plants or digging the ground. So let's see. I guess I should just go on to Jeffrey's next question which is have you participated in building projects for temples when you were living in the forest as in do they put out word that a temple needs labor and monks fulfill the need? Well, it's I've

never heard of a case where you've got one monastery that is like building a new congregation hall or a meditation cabin and then monks from other monasteries will come to help. I never heard of that. But monks do work on things. The the the the next abbot, that one abbot who fell and after he moved away, he fell and hurt himself badly. Um the next abbot, he was always working on stuff. He would he would brag about he can fix anything except a helicopter or a nuclear submarine. You can't fix one of those. Anything else, I mean, he was like an expert at like wiring. he'd be troubleshooting the wiring of these old buildings where, you

know, the lights stopped working and that kind of thing. Um, when I was there, I helped to design at least uh a big water tank that I It was a good idea. We I lived in this big congregation hall, just in this little room off the side of the congregation hall. And in Burma, it's there's just torrential rainfall um during the rainy season, sometimes other times a year. So, all you have to do is just take the the gutters from that roof um just have like pipes just leading down to this water tank next to the building and after two or three heavy rainfalls it'd be full. It was just hundreds and

hundreds of gallons. It was thousands probably. It was a big tank of rainwater. So I mean mainly it was it was like

um

just kind of like supervising and giving instructions although the the new Abbott was the one who put the engraving on the side. He was very skillful at lettering and so forth you know so you have to always have to include the names of the donors that kind of thing and the year that it was constructed and all that.

So yeah it does happen. I mean, I've helped with, you know, carrying rocks and just

just various kind of grunt labor,

but mainly it's lay people that do it if
if the the monastery is well known and
respected enough to get lay people to
volunteer for that sort of thing. And
that's it. We're done. And it's a
relatively short one again, which is
which is fine. And so like I should
always say at the beginning and I never
do except one time that I can remember.
If you have any questions you think I
can answer especially about early
Buddhism, Terravada Buddhism,
meditation,
spirituality in general, philosophy in
general even that kind of thing feel
free to ask and there's a good chance

I'll be able to answer. Maybe not to your satisfaction but there's a good chance I'll be able to answer. And no more than three questions per person per episode, please. And smash the like button. Just just really just mess it up. And subscribe if you have not done so already. And be happy.

Alrighty then. It's working. It seems to be recording.

This is like my third or fourth try so far. I've got to I've got to mess with stuff in order to make sure that it works. Apparently, it's working.

So, with that as a little intro, hello and welcome to episode

163 of question and answer. I am your host Ponyo Bosa and 163 is a prime number. This is my beverage

and we don't have a whole lot of questions. So,

this may be a relatively short one and I think I need to like adjust this a little bit like that.

So, let's just commence to uh answering questions, shall we?

Did I mention that I am your host

Ponybasa?

Because I am. Anyways, first question is from Maximin.

And Maxim says, "I've memorized some of the Parita chants these past few years and have listened to some of your chanting. Why is your cadence or is it cadense faster than usual?" And I really don't think my cadence or cadance is faster than usual. It's like

That doesn't seem really fast to me. I I tend to talk kind of slow, too. But um yeah, I'm not sure how Maximman got the idea that I chant fast, unless maybe

it's just Burmese chanting is faster than Thai chanting. That's possible. Or Sri Lankan chanting. I'm not sure about. But with regard to Burmese chanting, my speed is way slower than a lot of Burmese monks. I've I've chanted parita with Burmese monks in Burma before that weren't in the Tomulu tradition. And it was like speed chanting. I could hardly keep up.

So in the tonulu tradition in Burma, the chanting is a little bit slower than a lot of other monks like parita chanting just let alone the the biku pad mocha because the biku pad mocha I mean there are some monks who chant it so fast

their mouth is going faster than my ear.
My ear cannot keep up with their mouth.
It's like they can recite the the entire
potty mocha rules including the
introduction with in about 20 to 25
minutes. And even if I went as fast as I
could back when I had it down and could
recite the whole thing, the fastest I
could do is maybe 35 minutes because my
mouth just would not move that fast.
So why I chant faster than Maximon is
used to with regard to people chanting
parita and poly. Um I don't know maybe
he just doesn't get around very much
because a lot of a lot of Burmese monks
chanted I mean almost twice as fast as I
could even possibly chant and it doesn't

make much sense to me. It seems like with regard to like the biku padim mocha mainly they're just trying to get it over with as soon as quickly as possible. Partly because everybody is squatting while while the ceremon is going on and to squat to remain in a squatting position for like 45 minutes can be damned painful.

I I guess in Thailand in in Burma also a lot of monks just sit instead of squatting. But uh maybe they're not in as much of a hurry because they're already kind of comfortable.

So yeah, I I don't know exactly why my chanting is faster than what

Maximan would consider to be usual

because like in in Burmese, I would be a relatively slow chanter.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "Many people claim that historically Christianity civilized what was a once savage Europe. They contend that pre-Christian pagan European culture was barbarous and devoid of any morality and ethics compared to after it was Christianized. Is this historically accurate?" And there may be a little bit of truth to it, but for the most part, it's not accurate. It's like pre-Christian religion in the west, you know, like classical paganism

really wasn't particularly like
ethicsoriented.

It was appeasing the gods, you know,
maintaining the pax deorum so that you
know the gods will be on your side. And
I mean there was a certain amount of
morality involved. You know, you
shouldn't be perpetrating atrocity. You
shouldn't be breaking oaths, things that
the gods don't like. But for the most
part, it was you conduct the sacri
sacrifices and the required rituals and
then the gods smile upon you. So in like
ancient Greece and Rome, ethics like
morality was more the province of
philosophy than religion. And so the

more moral or ethical religious systems would be the more philosophical ones like Pythagoreanism or like the Orphic mystery cults, that sort of thing. There would be more ethics involved instead of just propitiating the gods with sacrifices and so forth. And I mean you read the meditations of Marcus Aurelius for example or just read you know some of the other like ancient philosophers and I mean they were mainly concerned with you know what is reality you know what is the the primordial substance from which the cosmos is created. Um but also there was a lot of ethics involved like stoicism for example, epicurionism both of them were essentially

practiceoriented

but most people weren't really

philosophers or philosophical which is

true even today. So I think

the main thing I mean it before I get to

the main thing it's like I have read

texts you know you you read Homer for

example or much later than Homer you

just read stuff from like the early

Roman time Roman Empire and you see that

people were much less sympathetic you

know they were more hardened than now

they were less compassionate you know it

was

They weren't really interested in

uplifting everyone in society. You know,

slavery was fine according to them. And like the poor and even Jesus saying the poor will always be with you. And the pagan Greeks and Romans, they're quite happy to accept that. You know, they weren't going for some sort of utopia where everybody is equal. you know, maybe all male citizens might be equal, but I mean, they weren't they weren't going to be freeing the slaves and and giving women the vote and that kind of thing. So, I guess what Christianity really brought about was like compassion. I' I've mentioned before that like Christianity like the Roman Empire converting to Christianity was like the first the first opening of the

heart chakra you know the chakra of
compassion in mainstream western
civilization

because Christianity much like like
socialists lefties in general today you
know it championed the weak and the poor
were, you know, and and to some degree
demonized the the rich and the strong,
you know, but it's still happening
today. And it's not so much Christians
doing it as like progressives that are
demonizing the strong and just sort of
glorifying
weakness and dysfunction, which is one
reason why the left is just doomed,
especially the way it is now. At least

the early Christians did have a kind of moral high ground. you know, they emphasized, you know, like compassion and so forth um and and morality like s like avoiding excess and sensuality that kind of thing that even when lots and lots of Christians would ignore that at least it was or at least they wouldn't ignore it but you know they wouldn't follow it but at least it'd be giving a certain amount of lip service to it. I mean it was like the ideal was still in the mainstream culture at that point.

So

when you've got 90% of the population being poor and weak, at least weak

politically and economically, then those 90% of weaklings can be stronger than the 10% of strong people, which is I mean certain politicians capitalize on that. Julius Caesar was a populist.

At least he was a member of the party that was called the popular which sort of catered to the poor, you know, and just used sheer numbers to overwhelm the the much smaller numbers of the rich and powerful.

Even though Julius Caesar himself, ironically, was rich and powerful. kind of like Donald Trump today, billionaire, but nevertheless, you know, he's looking out for like the working class,

bluecollar type people, and it has served him well thus far.

So

yeah,

like early Christianity was sort of like the Roman Empire's version of a progressive movement, except as I say, the Christians really did have a kind of moral high ground because like we already mentioned, the early pagans weren't so much concerned with morality so much as just appeasing the gods through rituals.

So let's see here. Have I left anything out here?

Yeah. I mean there was morality before Christianity. It wasn't as much

compassionoriented.

You know, it was more philosophical, looking for the good life, cultivating, you know, peace of mind, adoxia, that kind of thing.

But Christianity kind of brought into the mainstream of Western civilization a concern for the poor and the weak and the helpless and that sort of thing.

So yeah, I mean that that amount of it would be true.

So I think I'm just going to move on to Romeo's second question. He says,

"Considering that the West seems to be on a downward trajectory currently, what kind of effect do you think a widespread

return to some form of its original pagan roots would have on it?" And I mean, I really don't see that happening.

I just cannot see Western civilization anything other than a fringe. I don't I just do not see mainstream western civilization reverting to classical paganism or anything even heavily influenced by classical paganism other than Christianity itself. Christianity was heavily influenced by classical paganism

like Platonism for example.

So what kind of effect do I think a widespread return to some form of its original pagan roots would have on it? Well, I do think sort of a downplaying

of this compassion to the extent of trying to raise up to equality people who just couldn't be equal on their own. You know, the weak and dysfunctional to some degree have to remain weak and dysfunctional

because trying to just make a like a completely equal society, you've got to push down the strong and you've got a lower standards. you're going to have a much more dysfunctional society because of it. One that is much less competitive against other societies.

So

I do think a certain amount of increased ruthlessness

just an acceptance of a certain amount of stratification in society. I do think that class stratification is a good idea. so long as you've got a certain mobility between classes. So like you someone in a lower class who is brilliant and talented and so forth should be able to move upwards. And it was like that to some degree in like the Roman Empire. You could have freed slaves suddenly becoming emperors even. Um but then I just lost the thread of what I was going to say. Oh, and also like someone who's completely worthless, who's of the patrician class, you know, the senatorial class or something, if they're just worthless, you know, like a

Hunter Biden type, then they should be able to move downwards in the class hierarchy, which to some degree happened in Rome, but not as much as would be optimal, I think.

So yeah, to bring back a certain amount of just I don't give a [__] ruthlessness like like Trump is actually doing with regard to kicking out illegal aliens.

It's like disrupting families, tough luck. They're criminals. You know, you arrest a a citizen, they're going to get separated from their family, too. and just having to like everyone has to walk on eggshells to

avoid offending just the most hyper sensitive dysfunctional people. I mean just you might as well just get rid of that at least to some degree.

So yeah, I don't think that the West is going to return to some sort of previously existing religious system, you know, like like classical paganism or like Germanic paganism in Northern Europe, that sort of thing. Um, I mean, we're better off without human sacrifices, for example. Um, I just do not think that society would be willing under just about any circumstance to go back to worshiping Zeus and Apollo.

So, it's going to something's going to something's going to happen. I cannot

really predict what it's going to be,
but I mean we we we really do seem to be
at a kind of inflection point. Not not
like so much even a political one as
just sort of a cultural one where like
the old value systems of like
Christianity
appear to be in this precipitous
decline.

In America, there's much stronger
Christianity than you're going to find
like in Europe. In Europe, most people
are atheists, I'm pretty sure. So, I
mean, something is going to have to come
along that's going to largely unify
society again. Some shared world view,

some shared value system, but I don't think it's going to be found in pre-Christian paganism. And I mean, it could be I mean, it could be caused by a resurgence of Christianity.

That's a possibility.

But we're just going to have to wait and see what happens because it's going to depend on the unpredictable. Like as a general rule, these kind of things tend to be inspired by a very inspired kind of spiritual demagogue kind of person.

So it's going to depend on what they are. You know, it's like what kind of system are they promoting in their charismatic and very popular manner? Who knows?

So, let's see. What kind of effect do you think a widespread return to some form of its original pagan roots would have on it? make it a little healthier in the sense of being less concerned with

trying to bring the lowest strata up to a level of equality with everybody else, which also involves demonizing the rich and and powerful, pushing them down, trying to get everybody equal, you know, or just essentially everybody the same except with regard to their tattoos and piercings and and hair dye colors.

So, let's see here. I guess I answered that question more or less. I'm going to

move on to Romeo's third question, which is kind of a continuation of the second one. Can you ever see a neopagan revival realistically gaining any substantial ground in the West in the foreseeable future? No, I don't I don't think so. I mean, you'd have to have some kind of just totally charismatic, inspired, genius neopagan who was able to get, you know, large large amounts of people to start supporting him and get some momentum going in the culture. And in all likelihood, it's if somebody does that, it's they're not going to be a neopagan.

maybe a Christian, maybe even like some I mean it could be a kind of

neopaganism

that's neo in the sense that it's not even really resembling what came before.

You know, it's just something that's just newly invented.

And I have no idea what that would be.

So, I really can't say what it is that's going to replace

Christianity and a kind of common sense liberal scientism

um as sort of the unifying world view. I mean it used to be like in America like the United States it was like American values you know the land of opportunity and certain amount of equality not enforced sameness but at least equality

of you know rights and liberties that
kind of thing equality of opportunity
supposedly although that's not entirely
the case

so yeah I mean the easy answer to that
third question from Romeo would just be
no. I I I do not foresee any kind of
neopagan revival gaining any substantial
ground in the west in the foreseeable
future.

Could even be something like Buddhism,
but it would have to be a kind of
Buddhism that is less saintly than the
kind of Buddhism you find in the texts.
that in order for a society to be
vigorous and strong, there has to be a
certain amount of this ruthlessness

against enemies

like foreign or domestic.

And it may be that something like what Donald Trump is attempting with this increased ruthlessness towards enemies, perceived enemies, foreign or domestic, that it's going to result in increased prosperity, which is going to get more people on on board. They're going to see that it actually works. And so, I mean, it could cause some movement in that sort of direction that will just continue long after the time of Donald Trump.

So, we're just going to have to wait and see because I don't really know. And I'm

just going to move on to this question.

This is from Phil's.

And Phil says, "Do you think

Schopenhauer's ontology is correct? And if

not, then how does it substantially

differ from Buddhism?"

Well, ontology is like

the the branch of philosophy that deals

with like ultimate reality. You know,

what is what is genuine being? That kind

of thing. You know, what is reality is

essentially what ontology is about. And

Schopenhauer's ontology was largely

idealistic. You know, he did not believe

that physical matter has like an

intrinsically real existence. that I

mean just going with the title of his

most famous book the world as will and representation he considered samsara I mean like the Buddhist translation of that would be samsara as chidana and sya you know it's like the phenomenal world as will and perception which are both mental states vana and sya will and representation are all mental sohar was an idealist and early Buddhism like orthodox terravada like the the schools the pre- Mahayana schools as a general rule accepted the reality of physical matter. Uh I'm not sure that the Buddha ever declared that physical matter is real. He was just kind of not

dealing with metaphysics at all. I mean he was dealing with suffering and liberation from suffering.

like in the text that is what the Buddha says like the uh the alagupamasuta you know the Buddha teaches two things duka and the sessation of duca.

So um I think that early schools of Buddhism accepting physical matter as ultimately real was more of a cultural thing than what the Buddha was really teaching. It was just sort of accepted in Indian mainstream philosophy sort of that physical matter was real.

So the early schools of Buddhism adopted this idea even though the historical goal Buddha may not have endorsed it.

But then when you get into Mahayana Buddhism um that had sort of a more sophisticated kind of philosophy, you know, the philosophy had been like evolving and developing for hundreds of years at this point. Um so in to some degree it was more sophisticated you know hundreds of years of debating against non Buddhists had sort of strengthened certain aspects of the philosophy and some Hayan Buddhists especially like the yoga school were idealists pretty much like Schopenhau and Schopenhau's will comes relatively close to the Buddhist concept of karma you know karma is volition

kami monk I say that kama is volition or will.

So I mean that's like the main agreement between schopenhau and Buddhism is just sort of the central position of karma as sort of the generator of some sorrow.

Although Buddhism would take it farther and say it is delusion that causes the karma. And Schopenhau doesn't I mean I'm sure he talks about it but for him will is just sort of like this primordial force. I don't think Schopenhau really put much emphasis on the notion that will itself is sort of like a side effect or byproduct of ignorance.

Um so I mean how does Schopenhau's ontology compare with Buddhism? I mean

that depends on what kind of Buddhism
like Majamaka Buddhism, another one of
the main philosophical branches of
Mahayana. Um I mean they kind of don't
even have an ontology.

It's all I mean anything that you can
direct your attention towards, anything
that you can discuss is just going to be
like fake,
you know? It's going to be just sort of
delusional anyway.

So yeah, Buddhism

I guess like Orthodox Terravada does
except that will and representation are
ultimate realities. But then they they
include a whole bunch more than

Schopenhauer does. And when by the time
you get into philosophical idealism in
Buddhism, which is with Mahayana schools
mainly, then

um it would come closer to Schopenhauer at
that point. I guess but still Buddhism
would consider will itself to be a kind
of byproduct or side effect of something
else whereas Schopenhauer I mean has it as
a kind of primordial
you know just entity

I guess just based on my imperfect
understanding of Schopenhauer I have read
like the world as will and
representation many years ago in a cave
But

um I don't recall if Schopenhauer did

assert that will itself was the product of something else or if he just started with that as just sort of the force that generates this world.

So

um but like orthodox terra it it accepts four ultimate realities. You got mind, matter, mental states, and nibbana itself.

And Schopenhauer wouldn't adopt that four-fold

uh categorization of ultimate reality.

I'm pretty sure.

So, I guess uh after saying so one more time, I'll move on to Phil Lee's second question. He says, "Is working on ships

hectic?"

And I mean, it can be. It depends on what kind of ship. For example, if you're just on like a like a a tanker or a cargo ship crossing the ocean, I I would guess that a lot of those sailors are just like playing video games or reading books, that kind of thing most of the time. But I mean, I worked on twers

like when I was a young man, and I mean, that can be hectic when the when the net's coming in, you have an outburst of hectic activity.

And some of the smaller vessels, they're just it can be just every few hours they're they're hauling in the nets. And

so there's you get your sleep, you just take catnaps throughout the day, which kind of sucked.

But yeah, I mean, it can be. It's, as a general rule, it's not as hectic as my current job as as a forklift operator.

That's that's a hectic job, much more so than I really recall um working on ships, except for just like unusual circumstances that were exceptions to the rule. Then you could have hectic activity on a ship.

So, I guess I'll just move on to Phil Lee's third question, which is an easy one. Have you seen Mandelola or Mandala? And then in parenthesis it says 1981

which I guess is a movie and no I haven't seen it. I saw a movie that came out like it was called Samsara. It was like an art movie. I saw that but not Mandelola or Mandala. I guess Mandala is the correct English way of mispronouncing Mandelola.

I'm just going to move on. question.

This is from Cherasiz

and Chzas says, "I don't get it why monks are so autistically legalistic when it comes to terraod nuns. Buddha did allow them. They were in vignia and sutas. They are there. Even procedures how to ordain them. Can they allow from lack of other nuns to ordain new nuns by monks alone?" And that would do it.

Probably Ajan Brahm did that way or similar. So monks are autistically legalistic when it comes to terabot and nuns partly because to be a monk is vineia. I mean you you're supposed to follow the rules and if it's not in accordance with the rules it's not valid. Like with regard to the terravada nuns you I mean there have been attempts to revive the order. People in the west will just assert that bikunis exist even though the majority of terra Buddhists most of whom are Asian would say no there there are no bikunis anymore and according to the rules they have to be

ordained by a sa of nuns and a sa of monks and so if the nuns go extinct there's no sa of nuns to ordain new nuns and there really was no provision in the text for what to do if the nuns become extinct. In fact, according to Trzas is here and according to the text, the Buddha did allow them, but he allowed them reluctantly.

He did not want to allow them at first. He just refused to ordain nuns up until his cousin Ananda, who was also his personal attendant at the time, persuaded him. Ananda this in the text has a reputation for having a soft spot for women in his heart. You know he was compassionate towards women. And so he

persuaded the Buddha. And then the Buddha says, "All right, but now you've done it. True. The true Dharma will exist only half as long now because nuns are being ordained."

And I mean, you could argue maybe the Buddha really didn't ordain nuns, that it was just something that was introduced later or whatever, or he did and the reluctance part was added later. I mean, there was obviously a certain amount of disagreement in in like early pre-terra Buddhist monks about whether nuns really should be allowed or not. And there were rules that were much stricter for for nuns in certain ways

than for monks. In a few ways, nuns had it easier than monks. Like they were allowed to cook their own food, for example.

But

there were like very strict rules that was one of the purposes of these stricter rules for nuns was just to prevent women from being ordained just to get away from like an [__] husband that they never wanted to marry. Their parents just set them up, you know, they arranged the marriage. She's stuck with this man she doesn't love who maybe beats on her and that sort of thing. So, she tries to escape just by becoming a nun.

um even though she really doesn't have a spiritual calling, that sort of thing.

So there have been various

ways that they've tried to um reordain

nuns, you know, try to revive the Bikuni

order. I think the way Ajam Brah did it

was in all typicality for Ajam Brah he

just

claimed for himself the authority of God

Buddha and just said monks monks are

enough essentially

others have tried to use like I think

it's Korean Buddhist nuns possibly

Taiwanese I think it's Korean Buddhist

nuns who supposedly are ordained in like

a Dharma Gupta Vineia which was a school

you know that was an early school pre Mahayana but the main problem with that is in order for an ordination ceremony to be valid it has to be done correctly according to the texts and if they're doing all their chanting in Korean for example instead of in Pali or you know Buddhist Sanskrit or whatever then I mean that may be enough to disqualify the validity in which case I mean they might be genuine Mahayana nuns but they would not be considered genuine Bhikkhunis from the point of view of Theravada and from my experience

I mean these bhikkhunis for the most part they want official status I mean that's this whole argument over whether their

bikunis are really beunis or not. Is this desire for official status which is really a nonspiritual rather bogus and political

argument to make or a reason for wanting to be a fully ordained buni. But I mean they don't even follow the rules.

The the rules are strict against bucunis. And so you got these women who want like equality for women. That's that's one of the main reasons why they want to be considered beunis. They want equality with men. It's like a political thing and then they don't even follow the rules correctly because those rules are very strict. Like even a senior

bikuni has to bow to a very junior monk
and they just don't want to do that.

Like a bikuni isn't even allowed to sit
in the presence of a monk. She has to
remain standing which they just don't
do. It's against the rules for a beuni
to sit cross-legged.

They do it anyway. They don't care.

They're willing to just do this
controversial act that most terra
Buddhists don't accept in order to claim
themselves to be fully ordained terra
bikunis. And then they they don't even
follow the rules that they they insist
upon being subjected to.

So it it makes sense to me that any
group of women can form an order where

they can adjust the rules to fit modern times and like western cultures and so forth. They can dress however they please, follow whatever rules they want. The only thing they can't do is to call themselves fully ordained beonies. But that's what they insist on. that is more important than like following rules correctly, that sort of thing.

So, I'm of the I'm of the the uh faction, I guess, that really thinks that the Terra Bikuni order is extinct, regardless of the claims of people like Ajan Braum or these shaven headed women whose name starts with Aya, that they're essentially laring

and not laring very convincingly because they're not even following the rules as a general rule.

So let's see what's the actual question though. Can they allow from lack of other nuns to ordain new nuns by monks alone and that would do it? Well, it' be against the rules. Somebody like John Braum who is very free in his interpretation of rules doesn't have a problem with that. But I mean certain things have to be just above suspicion you know like Caesar's wife they has to be above suspicion one is like parajika if you got to know for sure if a monk has excommunicated himself or not you know there's a story about like you

steal something worth a certain amount of money you steal something valuable enough that you can get arrested for it you're excommunicated for the rest of your life. So there's the story of a monk who finds a roll of cloth like in a public square and he just picks it up and takes off with it. So then he has like like remorse or you know his conscience gets the better of him. He goes and and like admits or confesses to his preceptor, I stole this. So then the preceptor, he actually goes out and looks for the previous owner and then he asks, you know, he he like has a conversation with the the previous owner

of this roll of cloth and it turns out that that previous owner of that roll of cloth had lost it. You know, they dropped it somehow and then they just they just wrote it off. So it's like they abandoned any claim to it by just saying, "Well, I don't have that anymore." And so it turns out this monk wasn't really excommunicated. He was still a monk. But you have to know for sure if this person is a monk or not. I mean, it definitely very valuable, especially if they're going to be participating in ordination ceremonies and so forth. It's it's really important to know if somebody is excommunicated or not. And so like in the Vineia texts

they go into really excruciating detail
just like law books so that you know
exactly whether

a monk doing a certain thing is
excommunicated or not. And it's just as
important to know if somebody really is
validly ordained or not.

So I mean I have said before I mean I
used to be much more interested in this
back when I was a monk and it was sort
of a hot issue at the time especially in
the west in Burma it's hardly an issue
at all

but the way to do it like the
uncontroversial way of like
reviving the bikuni order would be to

have a great council. You know, you've got the SA of the four quarters sending representatives to this great council where they agree that they're going to bend the rules this one time to allow nuns to be ordained, thereby reviving the Bikuni order. But it's not going to happen because the monks who participate in these great councils for the most part are old conservative traditionalist Asian monks who don't even want the Bikuni order. So you got like modern western leftist or post-modern western leftist Buddhists who really think democracy is important. You know this and that and the other is a threat to our democracy but they don't

give a [—] about democracy when it comes to ordaining bukunis in which the democratic majority of the sangha is against it.

When I was a monk, I was told more than once the only way that the Bhikkhuni order could be revived would be if you had at least five monks instantaneously turn into women. because it does state somewhere in the text, possibly just the commentaries, that if a monk just instantaneously is like metamorphosed into woman without any sort of intermediate stage of being in between, just one moment male, the next moment female, then then they would be a fully

ordained Bikuni and then they can start ordaining other nuns. having monks go through like transition,

then that's not going to work either.

So, I mean, I have no problem with

Bikun's not being fully ordained or

being really valid. You know, my main

problem is these women are just

regardless of the validity of it just

insisting that they're been mainly for

like social and political reasons and

not spiritual ones. and then they don't

even follow the rules correctly.

So,

I mean, you have to be autistically

legalistic in like like a court of law,

you know, is this person like

punishable? I mean, are they guilty or are they not guilty? You know, it's like do they get the death penalty or not? I mean, that's important stuff. It's not just trivial.

But like I said, any group of women can dress any way they please, follow any group, any any list of rules that they please. The only thing they couldn't do is declare themselves to be fully ordained mikunis. And that's the one thing that they particularly insist on doing.

So I'm just going to move on to Trzask because there's a second question which is he says are equivalents of

words PMA and SA

in classical Greek and then he's got

filia agapee aeros he's got a word that

I assume is pronounced like a Greek word

but in English it would be pronounced

storage

and ludus

and I I never really heard of Greek

words for love that are Dorag or or

storage and Ludus. I mean you you mainly

hear of the main three. You know it's

like you've got Agapee Filia or Felos

and Aeros.

So anyways getting continuing with the

question

Tris says which one would be the closest

match to Pa and Sineha which are like a

sensual attachment like affection like
you know sensually charged affection.

So like romantic love would go under PMA
or Sineha. I mean Pa and Sineha are like
two more or less synonyms in poly that
mean love but it's not the sort of
exalted spiritual kind of love you know
it's sort of more sensual
crude vulgar emotional attached kind of
love

so I mean seems pretty obvious to me
that I mean it would be more eros than
agapee or felos

That meta in Pali in Theravada Buddhism that
would come closer to agapee you know at
the highest and probably felos a little

lower down you know felos is like
brotherly love and meta I mean literally
it means friendliness you know meta and
and mita mita in pi is friend meta is
this usually translated as loving
kindness but literally it would be
something like friendliness.

So I mean there was a certain amount of
discussion or debate going on on the
discord server with regard to the nature
of spiritual love and terra Buddhism
really does not have any concept of
spiritual love higher than meta and meta
is still a relatively crude state. I
mean it's it's wholesome. You can get to
third Janna meditating on it. You can't
get to fourth Janna though. But you can

get to third Janna meditating on meta.

But still this idea like some spiritual systems have even to some degree

Christianity that that pure love is essentially God. And it's like you can say like the highest the absolute could be interpreted interpreted as just pure absolute love. I think Echarollah talks about this also.

And you know it's like when the New Testament says God is love. It's not saying God is an emotion or that God feels love. It's saying God is love which is you know just like one way of interpreting this absolute. But one reason why you don't have this kind of

concept in terra Buddhism is that in
terabana Buddhism you just don't reify
the absolute. You don't try to attribute
qualities to ultimate reality which is
just totally off the samsaric scale.

that words just don't apply to it. Any
explanation or description is going to
be invalid anyway.

And of course, Terra Buddhism is very
headoriented anyhow, more philosophical
than religious in certain ways,
much more headoriented than hear
oriented as a general rule despite the
efforts of postmodern lefty western
Buddhists.

So

yeah, I do think that the the uh the

fundamental essence of love is acceptance. Just having an open heart, knocking down Pink Floyd's wall, at least to some degree, you know, just eliminating the distinction between the self and other. And so a fully enlightened being would have that perfectly even though it's not really a Tibetan Buddhist concept.

But in answer to the questions, I do think that the sensual kinds of love mentioned in the Pali texts would be alien in Greek.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from section 1.1. And so of action separately says

how do you argue against someone who says that the Buddha was a beggar who didn't work a living and instead was like an entitled bgeoa who freeloaded off others. I have heard this sentiment before and didn't know how to answer it.

Well, I mean arguing against someone really isn't like the ideal Buddhist course of action to adopt anyway.

But someone says the Buddha was a beggar. Of course he was a beggar. Like he was a beu. And the word beu which is usually translated as monk literally means beggar which the Burmese don't like. They don't like that idea. Like the word for beggar in Burma is thudansza which is like someone who asks

for food you know. And there's there
there's in the commentaries there's a
much more exalted bogus etymology for
biku. It's like he who sees danger in
samsara something like that. But I mean
even in the even in the poly text itself
be bam baked beu you going with Burmese
pronunciation of of poly and there
strange pronunciation of vowels before
double consonants and all that. It's
like bam is alms badi is to ask for or
beg for. So it's the same etymology as
the word beu, which literally means
beggar.

So yeah, the Buddha technique was a
beggar. I mean, he wouldn't just flat

out ask for stuff, but he would stand in silence in front of a house for a few moments, and if anyone wanted to put food in his bowl, they'd put it in, and he'd move on to the next. He didn't work for a living. Well, anyone who thinks that a monk, especially like an aesthetic monk who is seriously striving for enlightenment, anyone who thinks that they're not working for a living is just vastly ignorant of what it is to be a monk. It is it is a hard job if you're conscientious. I mean, if you're just like living in some house temple in the suburbs in the West, you know, just kind of lounging around like a neutered house

cat, that kind of thing. Aren't there monks like that? And that's easy. It's easy to be a a lax monk, but it's damn difficult to be a good one.

So instead, he was like an entitled bgeoa. Yeah. An entitled bgeoa who's like living under trees in forests, doesn't handle money, who freeloaded off others. Yeah. I mean this is just sort of like bias western bias against like spiritual mendicity and and it was that way in China also. It was like Buddhism in China had to go a different route than monks going for alms because in China pretty much like in the west like like medieval early

medieval China like modern America it's like people who beg really have very low social status and so the monks in China had to become farmers

you know they had to grow their own crops

and it's kind of like Christian monks in the west too I mean they're even slaughtering their own livestock. I was a surprised reading um sort of an edited version of Thomas Merin's journals

where he's talking about he's he goes into the storage room where the the goat hides are being dried out. You got monks that are killing goats and skinning them and so forth, making sausage, that kind

of thing.

So with regard to freeloading off of others, there is a verse in the dharmapata that says a good monk is like a bee. He just goes from flower to flower without causing any hardship to any of the flowers. You know, it just any of it's like that's that's the way a good monk is supposed to be. is easy to support like the meta suta. One of the the blessings of the No, I'm I'm confusing sutas.

Subarosa.

Yeah, I think I think it's in the meta suta talking about how how a good monk should be and he should be suburo which

means easy to support. You shouldn't be causing hardship for others. And so I mean for somebody to take a spoonful of rice and put it in your bowl, it's helping them more than it's harming them. See, so somebody who thinks that like the Buddha was just a freeloader, they're just blind to the benefits caused by someone offering food to an enlightened sage.

Now, they probably don't have any concept of enlightened sage. They're just living in like an in a hypersamosasic interpretation of reality. So, but I mean trying to argue with someone like this, I mean, if if if

they're being like hostile, you know,
they're just like slandering the Buddha,
you're better off just like avoiding
them,
you know, wish them well and and go on
your way. But I mean, if if it's in good
faith, this a disagreement in good
faith, and you can have meta in your
heart towards this person while you're
trying to set them straight to some
degree, at least with regard to the
Buddhist view of things, then yeah, I
mean, that might be all right to kind
of, you know, out of compassion for this
person to kind of set them straight on
certain things so that they're not

viewing the Buddha as some sort of bum.

I mean I was he's been accused worse especially by Hindus who technically consider him to be God an avatar of Vishnu.

So how do you argue against someone who says that the Buddha was a beggar? Well he was he was a beggar essentially. I mean he didn't flat out ask for stuff but I mean he was living on alms. He didn't work for a living. Well, to be a good monk is hard work, even though he wasn't like working for for salary and instead was like an entitled bajgeoa. I mean, that's just obviously false who freeloaded off others. Well, they were happy to do it. See, that's

the thing. If someone is really happy and they're I mean, they're earning merit by helping you. I mean it's like the the sa is called the field of merit in the texts because it's like a golden opportunity for people to earn good karma by I mean just one spoon of rice into the bowl is all it takes. You don't have to be like building entire monastery buildings for these monks. You don't have to set them up with a a seven course meal or any such thing.

So

gosh, I mean, how you answer somebody like that, it would depend on how they frame it, what their attitude is, and if

their attitude really is just like
mocking and sneering, you're better off
not even bothering to dignify them with
a response other than just wish them
well and be on your way.

So maybe I answered that question sort
of kind of. So I'm just going to move on
to see action sepatna's next question
which is as follows.

Ashoka allegedly ended up destroying his
empire by giving all his wealth to monks
and the commoners. Meanwhile, a tyrant
who kills, rapes, and eats his enemies,
eats his enemies, can make their
societies prosper by taking it from
everyone else, with war being the
biggest reason of technological

innovations. Historically, it seems like Buddhism and many religions, if actually followed fully, would lead to societal destruction, but materialist consumers make economies prosper. What do you make of the fact that societies with many of these evils on an individual spiritual level usually end up doing much better than content societies that all followed the precepts? Well, if those societies are content, then still they're better off. I mean, what difference does it make if you're rich or poor or living in a like a constitutional democracy or a dictatorship if you're content compared You got you got some rich city dweller

in a in a supposedly free democratic society who's nevertheless a psychological mess full of desires and attachments, never satisfied. Then you've got some poor villager living in a hut under a military dictatorship, but they've got peace in their heart.

Well, from a Buddhist point of view, the poor villager living in a hut is better off than the rich city dweller who's who's never satisfied.

But it is true that Ashoka in a way he kind of set up his the the Morian Empire if I'm not mistaken. He set it up for destruction by you know largely disbanding the armies and so forth. And while he was still alive the neighboring

countries had a certain awe or respect. It's like whoa he must have the gods on his side. you know, he's not even bothering to to have, you know, many soldiers guarding the country. Maybe it's protected by gods or something. So, they kind of, you know, he his empire apparently prospered pretty well while he was alive and then it went into rapid decline after him, which then allowed the the Greeks to conquer northwestern India.

But, uh, let's see.

Yeah. I mean, you got to bear in mind that Buddhism was originally intended not for society, but for people

renouncing society and going off and living in solitude in a forest striving for enlightenment. So, when you're trying to like take saintly ethics and impose it upon an entire samsaric society and nation, then yeah, this this it can backfire largely because most of the people aren't saints. They're not sages. They don't have as good of karma as you know like an arahant or someone who's very close to being an arahant since an arant really isn't creating karma anymore they've kind of transcended that.

So let's see here. The question, what do you make of the fact that societies with many of these evils on an individual

spiritual level usually end up doing much better than content societies that all fall pre? Well, like consider like the Roman Republic, early empire or even the the late empire to some degree like Valentinian the Great. He was considered to be a great emperor even though the man was a psychopath. You know, he had two brown bears that he would entertain himself by feeding political prisoners to them and just watch them get torn apart and he thought that was great. He I mean he continually just having people just be beaten to death with clubs and so forth. They'd make the slightest mistake in his presence. I mean, the man

was just a a psychopath, but at at the very least, he had certain like priorities and he was trying to serve the empire. You know, he was kind of a patriotic Roman at the same time that he was a sociopath. And so Rome, I mean, you can't really say that it prospered, but it was kind of coming out of the the decline that it was in at least for a while while he was emperor. And then it just collapsed after that. The the the final like the fall of the Roman Empire happened shortly after he died because he had appointed his mediocre brother as co-emperor. the mediocre brother survived and Valentinian the Great didn't. And then

the Goths pretty much started running them up.

So I mean

for worldly success you need a worldly ethic. You need a worldly code of conduct. So I mean you cannot serve both God and Mammon. So you I mean

for worldly success you serve mammon and

you got sort of a spectrum of sort of attitudes that can be adopted. You know entirely saintly that's that's not very good and just complete savagery with no code of honor no ethics whatsoever really other than maybe some very crude moral codes or taboos or something.

That's not ideal. You want something kind of in the middle where you you're still ruthless badasses, but at the same time, at least you're defending your own citizens. You have an idea of justice. You know, you have an idea of fairness at least towards your own citizens.

I mean, the enemy you I mean, they can be dehumanized, I guess, at least in a society like the Roman Republic.

It's like too bad for them. We're

Romans. We're going to kick their ass.

That's what we do. So, I mean, that kind of attitude with an idea of justice and fairness and like a sincere patriotic desire to cause prosperity

for the society at large. I mean, that's that's good. And being good at ass kicking helps, too.

And just historically that kind of that kind of society has done the best like the British Empire before they wimped out started just kind of disintegrating. It was kind of it was that way too. It was you know they had relatively enlightened ideas with regard to the prosperity of the nation and justice and fairness and so forth. I mean it didn't always work out that way. You read Charles Dickens novels, you see that at the height of the Rome or the the British Empire like the 19th century

still. I mean, you had just the desperately poor people living in ghettos in London, that sort of thing. The judicial system definitely was not perfect, but it was better than most other places even then.

So I mean if you want worldly success you have to adopt a worldly ethic. If you want spiritual success you adopt a spiritual ethic. But you cannot serve both God and mammon as the good book says.

So I mean the spiritual spiritual ethic for a spiritual society. You might have people that have peace in their heart, but they're dirt poor subsistence farmers,

like lots of Burma like that. I mean,
they got a bad government as a general
rule,

but in a way, they're better off than a
lot of other places.

They have less dooka as a general rule.

Unless of course they get caught
criticizing the government, wind up
living on watery pumpkin soup in some
prison somewhere.

So yeah, it depends on what your
priorities are and your priorities will
dictate what your your your
ethics should be, I guess.

Anyway, I'm just going to move on to
Seioction Cadina's next question, which

is kind of an interesting one. He says,
"Do you think men or women are more
religious and why?" I think he means
men. So, do I think that men or women
are more religious? Well,
by religious, if you don't mean
spiritual, you just mean religious.
As a general rule, I think it's women.
And you can find the answer to this. I
think it's in the damapata. There's a
verse that says people are religious
through fear. I mean, not Buddhist, you
know, he's just talking about sort of
like mainstream cultural superficial
kind of religion. Women tend to be more
insecure and more desirous of safety and
security than men. And so they want to

cover their bases. They don't want to get punished. They don't be smitten by God or by the gods or whatever. You know, they want to go to heaven instead of hell. They're afraid of hell. They're afraid of that that kind of torment. And so, and also women tend to be more conformist than men. So, they're just going to go along with the culture and just be religious. And it's that way in Burma also. But like with regard to spiritual, not just religious in like the cultural sense, but like striving for enlightenment, striving to just kind of tear through the veil, to transcend samsara, to know reality, that kind of

thing.

It probably more men than women. And the greatest like spiritual geniuses tend to be men. Partly just due to the the notorious differences in the bell-shaped curve. The statistical bell-shaped curve is narrower from w for women, broader for men. So you're going to have more complete numbum skulls and also more just inspired geniuses among males than among among females just because there's a broader bell-shaped curve. So the super geniuses are going to tend to be male regardless of how feminists feel about the matter. But that's just with regard to like you know Buddhas and so forth.

Um but I do think that just with regard to like cultural kinds of religion, women tend to be more religious. you know, women are the ones that are mainly supporting the monks in Burma, for example. Um, that doesn't mean that it's, you know, 80% women or even 65% women, but, you know, there's a slight edge of with regard to women. It's it's a noticeable pre a noticeable prevalence of women coming to the monasteries on upsets today and taking eight precepts and that kind of thing.

Maybe even more women are attending meditation retreats at least at the sort of beginning level, you know, the sort

of the the novice level meditation retreats. But when it when you get into the more philosophical really trying to transcend some Sara kind of stuff, I think it's going to be somewhat more prevalent among men than women having that orientation.

And so I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from I should be dead soon.

I think I should be dead soon previously was known as five precept Pete, but I'm not 100% sure on that one. And he says, "Everything I see is dark, bleak, and vile. If not black with depression, then I am red with rage. This world is a cruel place. Nobody can be trusted that

hasn't made an effort to pursue virtue and wisdom. And even then, I must trust but verify. If I say anything to anyone, that can later be used against me. If I fall in love, her motives can never be truly known, and I must have the escape route planned for when she breaks my heart like it is nothing. In circumstances like these, there is no way to live a life. Those closest will abandon me. Friends will betray me. Words like love mean nothing anymore. The only commitment my generation seems comfortable with is staining their skin with tattoos. Nobody can define virtue, let alone pursue it. It in circumstances

such as these, death appears as a refuge. How do I practice with a mind that is dark as this? Well, I am sorry that I should be dead soon really feels this way. Although I mean it's it's always somewhat of a mixed blessing.

Like I've mentioned before that someone who doesn't like samsara can detach from it and renounce it more easily. Like in the wisudi ma it's talking about the different personality types. And it does mention the person with the dosa or aversive temperament has a certain advantage in dhama because like I said if you just disapprove of the world you don't like the world easier to detach from it easier to renounce it. So that's

one kind of dimly bright point I
suppose.

I mean it could be a very bright bright
point under certain circumstances. I

mean if it helps you to become

enlightened then certainly it's

definitely good even though it may seem
very unpleasant at first

but I mean with regard to a lot of this
nobody can be trusted

I mean it can be used if I say anything

to anyone can be used against him fall

in love the motives never can never be

known have to have the escape route

planned

um there's the closest will abandon me

friends will betray me this kind of
thing I mean you have to bear in mind
that you are creating your reality
that I mean when you're looking outwards
that what you see outwards is just an
outward reflection of what's going on
inside. And so a lot of this stuff is
self-fulfilling prophecies. So you have
to be careful about negative thoughts. I
mean if it's it's it seems to be
habitual

but still I mean you can make efforts
to kind of overcome this kind of utter
pessimism.

I mean just really I mean you're just
setting yourself up for it. If you're
expecting a woman to dump you it's going

to help her to dump you. If you're expecting friends to betray you, then it's going to increase the likelihood that friends will betray you. If if you think you're going to get cancer, it increases the likelihood, they've done studies on this, that that you're going to get cancer. So, it's it's like self-fulfilling prophecies also. So, that should be considered. And to to the extent that you have any kind of like volitional conscious control over your attitude, then really I mean you should you should kind of try to steer in a somewhat more wholesome direction.

Also, I'd point out that there's a famous quote by Winston Churchill. You can lot some people think Winston Churchill was was the bad guy, but even so, Winston Churchill was not a complete idiot. and he he had this this quote. I don't remember the exact quote, but it's like the secret to success

is to

move from one disastrous failure to the next with no loss of enthusiasm.

And that was kind of my my father's attitude towards women. You know, it was like he used to say, you know, he's he was married four times and he he lost four houses. you know, he'd build a house and then he he his wife would

divorce him and he'd lose that. He'd build another house. His next wife would take that one, you know, but he just sincerely loved women. He wasn't going to just become Mikttow. And finally, number five was a good one and he just wound up with her for the rest of his life.

But I mean

myself personally, I'm really can't identify or I can really can't identify with this attitude very well. I mean, I tend to always give people the benefit of the doubt and I tend to have good karma. You know, people have have messed me over relatively few times.

You know, I remember one time when I was a teenager, I got these pants that didn't have back pockets. They only had front pockets and the front pockets went in sideways. So that I put my wallet in the pocket. It would just fall out. And three times in one day, just over the course of like one hour while I'm walking home from school, my wallet falls out of my pocket. Three times, all three times, somebody rushes up and hands it to me with all the money still in it. I mean, that kind of thing has happened to me many times in life where just a kind of openness, willingness to give people the benefit of the doubt. I mean, it's not like you're thinking,

"No, nobody's going to mess with me."

It's just you you don't even go there, you know? It's like, "I'm not going to worry about it. Even if it happens, I'm not going to worry about it." Because, of course, worry is bad karma. It increases the likelihood of thing, bad things happening. Expecting people to do bad things to you increases the likelihood that bad things are going to happen to you.

So that's something that has to be contended. At least you should be mindful of it. Even if you can't really change your attitude, at least you should observe it. You can be mindful of

this attitude where you know it's it's
not me thinking bleak thoughts. It's
bleak thoughts are arising.

And that creates a detachment. It's no
longer you. You are no longer like this
denisin of a dark bleak vile world. It's
just you are observing dark, bleak, vile
mental states arising with philosophical
detachment.

So there's that too.

But I mean you should be careful. I mean
you should be aware that it's not so
much the world is dark, bleak, and vile.
It's you have like like habits
that probably going with Buddhism go
back into previous lives of just sort of
negative mental states reflected

outwardly as negative like phenomena which then cause sort of like a negative feedback loop reinforcing the expectation of negative things happening when really ultimately literally from the Buddhist point of view it's all your own doing. Karma is action. Karma is doing. And everything you experience is the fruition of karma. And so long as you're just continually expecting it and disapproving of it and so forth, it's just reinforcing it.

So the best thing to do in a case like that is just be mindful. Just watch mental states arise and pass away.

But getting back to what I said at the

beginning, if if you do not like
samsara, it does make it easier to
detach from it. Don't just get stuck in
like this hell realm, just wallowing in
a hell realm. And of course, self-deing
from the Buddhist point of view isn't
going to help because I mean, you take
your karma with you. That's the only
thing you do take with you after you die
is your karma. So, you're just taking
all the luggage with you. It's just
going to keep happening until you learn
how to deal with it. Either by detaching
and renouncing or at least detaching
through mindfulness or
making a conscious effort not to just
like whitewash everything force, you

know, just force white pills down your own throat. I mean, that doesn't work either. That's not realistic. You just have to kind of clear pill through mindfulness. just whatever happens is going to happen. But like bracing yourself for bad things that are going to happen increases the likelihood of bad things happening. Struggling against it, it's like you're you're caught in a snare. Struggling against the snare just tightens it.

But I mean, I I think it's probably

I hope an exaggeration

when I should be dead soon says

everything I see is dark, bleak, and

vile. I mean, not everything.

Hope is not everything. You see a flower, is that dark, bleak, and vile. I mean, you can think, well, it's going to just shrivel up and die. Some worm is probably eating the middle of it right now.

But

there there are genuinely nice people. I mean, they might not be perfect, but there are like sweetteered, simplehearted people who just smile at you and and bless you. They're out there.

So, yeah, be mindful would be a good one. And if you can detach and renounce, then that would be using this seeming

obvious problem to your advantage.

But still, I mean, you're carrying this stuff inside you. That's what's why it's become that's why it's manifesting outwardly because you're carrying it around inside. And so do the best you can with regard to just being mindful of it, not identifying with it and good luck.

My blessings are upon you.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ruie.

And Ruie says, "Easy one this time.

Would you offer a few words on the different types of wimbouti?" And wimi is like liberation.

Um it's it's not as easy as Rui would like to think because like different kinds of emote as far as I'm concerned the if we say there are two kinds of emotei then it would be like like enlightenment or just the various kinds of samsaric you know virtual temporary weimi but in terra Buddhism I looked up wimi in nyamatila's Buddhist dictionary

And he says this,

see we deliverance is of two kinds.

Deliverance of mind or chauimui and deliverance through wisdom or paimuti.

Deliverance of mind is the highest in the highest sense is that kind of concentration or samadei which is bound

up with the path of arahantship or
arahhata maga. Deliverance through
wisdom is the knowledge or nyana bound
up with the fruition of arahantship
arahhata pala. So this is orthodox
terra. And so the first kind of weimi is
bound up with arhata maga which
according to terra Buddhism lasts one
trillionth of an eyelink.

So I mean why even bother taking it
seriously if this kind of wimbouti lasts
for one trillionth of an eyelink found
in the texts and in all likelihood
neither you nor anyone you have ever met
or known is going to have any personal
experience of it. I mean we mui is

liberation in this liberation from duca
liberation from delusion liberation to
some extent from samsara
and if you want to divide it up then the
only dividing up you should do would be
of the virtual samsaric kinds of
weimotei you know you're you're you're
liberated from the a bad friendship or
something
but this in terraada in the sense of we
bajavvada or the the doctrine of
analysis where you had early Indian
Buddhist philosophers just trying to
categorize and analyze everything making
these different lists and categories. I
mean I never had any real use for that.
I really just had no interest in I do

not think that that is really how to become enlightened. If you read the Atakawagago or other really early texts, there's none of that or very very very little of it.

So yeah, I'm not really the person to ask on the different types of weotei.

Although I did tell you what Nyana tiloka thought about it

and one is associated with Ara mega which lasts a trillionth of an eyeblink and the other the other kind is associated with arhata pala which probably also lasts a trillionth of an eye blink but at least that is like the fruition of enlightenment.

So I mean you got this preliminary
fruition of you know you're
one trillionth of an eye blink away from
it. So I guess that's kind of a kind of
weimotei but I really have never really
been able to relate to that kind of
stuff very well. Never had a whole lot
of interest in it. Never placed much
value on that kind of terravada Buddhist
philosophizing.

And so I'm just going to move on to
Ruy's next question.

which is perhaps a naive one according
to him. Do you think meta or amity and
wimbouti could form some sort of
foundation for social political practice
at the lay person's level? Well, if we

mui is identified with full enlightenment,
then yeah, I don't think it would be much of a foundation for lay people that aren't enlightened
um for social political practice at the lay person's level. I mean, you'd probably be better off with just the the four Brahma viharas at the the social political practice at the lay person's level, which is meta or loving kindness or just sort of like friendliness, benevolence.

You've got compassion,
which is I mean it's it's not a bad thing. You've got muda, which is like

rejoicing in other people's happiness,
which is a virtue. And then you've got
like equanimity
which is detachment essentially
and that was that's sort of like a stoic
sort of virtue.

So yeah I mean

uh another foundation for social
political practice at the lay person's
level just honesty not stealing
not killing if it isn't absolutely
necessary that kind of thing. So this
basic basic morality would have to be in
there somewhere. If I mean especially if
you want this to be for like the mass of
normies participating in in a society
and then ideals would be four brahma are

fairly easily graspable ideals even for a relative normie.

And I mean, you could have weimi or like liberation as like the highest goal, but I mean, you're going to have to be renouncing society to some degree to get to that goal.

I mean, if you want this to be social, then you wouldn't put too much emphasis on renouncing society.

So, I think I'm just going to move on.

Next question. And I do not fully understand this question. This is from Fred. Fred asks questions that are not not I mean the the meaning is not necessarily obvious of the question.

Fred says question

do we have a template for rebirth to rebirth? An example could be the brain and the nervous system. I have a feeling the intellect doesn't go across but maybe wisdom does. Well, what goes across is karma. I mean like I said earlier on the only thing you take with you after you die is your karma which is your volition your your will is the momentum of your mental states the momentum of your stream of consciousness this momentum that is like pushing you from behind through samsara and it's largely generating your samsara.

So, do we have a template?

I guess the closest we would have to a template would be just our karma, the momentum of our mental states. He says an example could be the brain and the nervous system. I mean, that could be like a sort of stabilizer in this version of reality for your mental states.

But I mean the mental states come first and then they help to produce the the phenomenal events and phenomena that kind of stabilize this dream world that we're living in.

So I mean you can say intellect and also wisdom. I mean to some degree it's it's part of this momentum of your mental

states. So um

I assume it is possible for a really brilliant person to become really stupid in their next life just through like abuse of their intellect for example.

Um

it's probably a little less likely that a wise person is going to be reborn in their next life as just an utter fool.

So wisdom probably would be more reliable than intelligence.

But with regard to this template, I'm not exactly sure what Fred is referring to as a template other than just what goes across from this life to the next through rebirth linking consciousness is just your karma. That's all you take

with you. The momentum of your mental states,
your volitions,
your will.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question and this is from M and M says I was wondering about the factorization.

So um I do factor out the numbers of the Q&As's as I already mentioned 163 for this episode is prime. So you can't really factor it out other than just 1×163 . So, he's referring to 162 here. And he says, "I was wondering about the factorization. Does the thumbnail do the math?" And then he's got $1 \times 2 \times 3$ to the

4th power. And then he says, "One opens, two divides, three ascends four-fold, nine returns, complete." And this is like numerology. And I've I have to admit, I've never had any use at all for numerology. I've I've known some new age people, you know, it's like you take like the your birth date and then you you add up the numbers and then the the number you wind up with can give you like profound insights into your character. This kind of thing or just adding up numbers and like trying to derive some kind of profound insight from that.

I just don't see it at all. You know, I think that this is just some sort of

gimmick like tarot cards or something
where it may be if there any if there is
any kind of valid like wisdom that comes
up from it, it's coming from inside you
and you're just using the numbers as a
kind of gimmick.

But yeah, I I really don't have any use
for like numerology. And does the
thumbnail do the math? I I don't know. I
don't know if the thumb I guess
thumbnails don't do math.

So yeah, that the answer to this is no.

A thumbnail thumbnail doesn't do math.

And it's just a coincidence that you got
 $1 * 2 * 3$ to the 4th.

One opens, two divides, three ascends

four-fold. you're getting poetical in kind of a newagy numerological vein that I just I'm just got like uh I'm like colorblind or toned deaf to that kind of stuff.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Xenithoid. And Xenithid just really throws a throws a zinger in there. Does Deloise's concept of the body without organs have any relevance to Buddhism? and he put this out there on the Discord server. He asked me personally and also he just asked the the Dennisens of the Discord server in general what they thought about Deloise's concept of the body without organs and nobody knew what the

hell he was talking about. So he posted this wall of text describing this concept of the body without organs and it was kind of TLDDR. I didn't read all of it. Um

but

uh does it have any relevance to Buddhism? I don't think it has much relevance to terra orthodox terravada. I don't think so. I think orthodox tele terravada at the conventional level accepts that we have internal organs.

However, you get into like yoga mindonly school

where there is no physical matter at all. Then sure and to some degree I mean

I am kind of an idealist and so I can really accept the idea that I don't have any internal organs unless I am perceiving them.

And it may be that we didn't even have like white blood cells until somebody discovered them. I mean, before that, we'd still be fighting disease and so forth, but when it I mean, it had to get crystallized down into some rationalized explanation with people like cutting you open and like or not you personally, but cutting open like a cadaavver or something and like are taking blood samples, looking at it through a microscope and and it's like it's sort of like materializing,

if you will, these gimmicks
for explaining processes that people
have known for hundreds of thousands of
years but weren't able to explain or
they explained it differently. You know,
the gods do it or whatever.

So, I do have this idea that I mean
worrying about your health, worrying
about an internal organ, that kind of
thing makes more likely that you're
going to have problems.

And

yeah, I mean I've never actually seen my
own spleen

go going with conventional scientific
empiricism I can say okay you know

according from a samsaric point of view
there's a spleen in there and it's one
of its duties or functions is to produce
red blood cells and so forth
but I mean to to exist is to be
perceived and if nobody is perceiving
that spleen it doesn't exist.

So I think I mean I'm not even sure if
I'm interpreting this Deloise guy's
ideas correctly at all that you don't
necessarily have internal organs unless
you perceive them.

Um

but it would it would be more in harmony
with certain like idealist
philosophically idealist Mahayana
schools rather than the the pre-

Mahayanist orthodox schools like

Terravada that were accepting the

ultimate reality of physical matter.

It wouldn't include the ultimate reality

of spleens but it would be the ultimate

reality of the particles that compose a

spleen. what is conventionally known as

a spleen.

Which reminds me in the Wisudi Maga, one

of one of the few valid physiological

observations made in the Wizudi Maga,

when it's going through the the

different the 32 parts of the body and

so forth, is that when your spleen

protrudes from your body, you die.

But I mean, they they had no concept of

what the brain was for. They thought the brain was just kind of bone marrow filling a large hollow bone.

So

I I don't know about Deloise and his concept of the body without organs, but I I do tend to go along with the idea that SAS perk up to exist is to be perceived and if something isn't being perceived, it doesn't exist.

So going on to Xenithoid's next question. After saying so one more time. I say it an awful lot. Could be worse. So I could be saying basically instead of that.

Anyways, Zenith says, "How do you define self?"

And I think there's two ways of defining self. There's like the Terra way and the Mahayana way. The Terra way is subjective. You know it's like I me that is a self.

So it would be like a subjective entity self-existent individual being.

Um but like in the Mahayana concept they took the meaning of self and they they spread it into objectivity. You know like the sins ming says the subject is a subject for the object. The object is an object for the subject. And so from the Mahayana point of view, it's more likely to interpret a self as any intrinsically real distinct entity. So in which case

this paper umbrella would be a self
because it is supposedly if we're going
to go that route assume that it is it is
an intrinsically real self-existent
entity

that it would even be on the table if no
one was perceiving it there.

So that would be a more broad
interpretation of self as just any
intrinsically self-existent entity.

Whereas from the terravada point of
view, it just means more likely just
like like a soul or just subjectively
uh a self-existent
conscious being.

And I can I can go either way. I
generally go more with the Mahayana

point of view. If I if I say there's no self, I'm saying there there are no distinct entities that are ultimately real, which would include all these ultimately real Rupa Kalapa elements in Abidama philosophy that even those would be little selves. They might exist for only a trillionth of an eyeblink. It's still this little self that exists for a trillionth of an eye blink. And I do not think the Buddha would have endorsed their ultimate reality.

So those are the two main definitions of self that I'm aware of. And I go tend to go more with the Mahayana version than

the Terra version just because I don't think the Terra version goes far enough in denying the existence of a self.

So I'm moving on to Xenithoid's third question which is a continuation of the second one apparently. He says how is it different from subject? There is the obvious definition of self as in me versus you. But I think the me versus you distinction is better described by subjectivity as a result of karma and tna. The the forces which collapse consciousness into individuals. I think of something having self only when it is without distinction, without relationships to any other things. Without distinction and without

without causal potential, there are no selves, but there are subjects.

Well,

how can a self be without distinction? I mean, self is itself a distinction from not self.

So, that part I don't understand.

without relationships to any other things. I mean, what kind of a self would have no relationship? I mean, I guess there are spiritual systems that declare we have a soul that is just completely detached and doesn't do anything.

So maybe, but I really I really don't interpret it that way that a self would

either be having like a conscious ego. I mean, that would be one way of defining self. I think ego means something like self, doesn't it?

Um, or there's like just the the intrinsically real self-existent being, which would be kind of the subjective interpretation. Or like I'm saying, the objective self is any intrinsically real object entity.

If it was considered to be intrinsically self or real, you know, it's real, not based on external forces conditioning it into existence at all times like a fire, but it's it's it's real regardless of

external circumstances

that it's just self-existent, which isn't a very good way of describing it because you're using the word you're trying to define in the definition of self.

Um let's see what is the actual question there how is self different from subject well that is one way of defining self but like I've been saying I mean a self doesn't necessarily have any kind of awareness I mean from my interpretation that anyone who thinks that this is this little pip paper umbrella here is real would consider this to be a kind of self that it's just an an intrinsically real

entity.

But that's getting more into like the

the more subtle

maybe a little more sophisticated

Mahayanianist interpretation. Definitely

more radical in its denial of self.

But let's see. From a terra point of

view, how does self how is it different

from a subject

man? Well,

I don't know like a plant

would have I guess I guess I mean they

could be interpreted as being the same

which is something I've already

mentioned.

A self

how is it different from a subject? I

mean that's that's largely I mean
they're pretty much the same thing.

Although of course a subject can be the
object. Like if I'm looking at another
person I'm looking at what they view as
themselves subjectively. But for me I'm
seeing them objectively but still I'm
saying well conventionally that is a
self over there. A person with a self
maybe.

But yeah, I think from the terravada
point point of view, a self would have
to have consciousness. A self would have
to be aware and consider itself to be
different from everything around it. And
that's pretty much the same as a

subject, isn't it?

So, it's not necessarily different from a subject. Although I'm sure you get into this realm of ambiguity and so forth that there's going to be different people having different interpretations, but I just cut through the Gordian knot by saying any entity is a self. Period.

And I'm moving on to the next question, which is the last question. Always takes me by surprise or usually does anyway.

This is from PSA. And PSA says, "What's your opinion of all the woke leftists celebrating online over Charlie Kirk's death? It's actually scary how we live in a society like this." And up until I think it was yesterday, maybe the day

before,

um, I really didn't see it as that big of a deal because I didn't realize how big of a deal it was that I thought, you know, it's maybe a few%

of like woke leftists

are glad that Charlie Kirk was

assassinated. you know, a fraction of them would be making Tik Tok videos just gloating and celebrating that kind of thing. And then I watched Shoe Armed Head on YouTube. I think it was last night

or the night before. I don't remember.

I'm not good at at remembering exactly like within two days. I I'd be more

accurate whether it was last Monday or Tuesday. But anyway, Shuan head is a leftist. She's like a socialist and she has like a cheerful funny kind of personality, you know. I'll watch her videos. I mean, she she does a lot of like making fun of the left because she's a more sensible member of the left, you know, just she just has for for her own reasons an idea that socialism is more fair and so forth. Fine, I'll still watch her videos. and she put out this video recently where she is like at the verge of tears sometimes in this video. I mean she is just shocked when she found out that most of her friends almost all of

them according to her of the of her
fellow leftist friends were just
demonizing Charlie Kirk and saying it
was good that he got murdered. And so
then I'm thinking, wow, I mean, this
might not be just this small percentage.
I mean, this could be I don't know if
half. I don't know. But it's it's a lot
of them. It's way bigger than I than I
imagined.

And so, I mean, this is
it's it's a product of the culture. I
mean,

Trump supporters have just been
demonized, dehumanized by
like leftist mainstream media for years.

I mean, literally Adolf Hitler,
which is just stupid to say that Donald
Trump is literally Adolf Hitler because
he obviously isn't. are are saying that
even a conservative Christian is a
fascist or a Nazi. I mean, that's the
attitude. Anyone to the left of Hillary
Clinton is is a fascist and Nazi, which
I mean, it's just a kind of mass
hysteria that apparently has really
taken hold in America. And and there's
people on the right like the MAGA
people. There's a lot of them. like you
find them in Breitbart comment sections
for example who are just absolutely
convinced
all Democrats are just evil and

delusional and so it's going both ways
although it seems like the left is much
more likely to exhibit this in in the
form of violence which is kind of a
leftist tradition

you know Russian revolution for example
it's like you use violence to get what
you want. So, I do think it's really a
good sign that Trump has finally
declared Antifa a terrorist
organization, which is much more
significant than a lot of people will
realize because anyone donating money to
a terrorist organization is committing a
felony offense,
which is very much going to reduce the

amount of donations going to support Antifa now. And that means like the the protests and so forth are already very much reduced simply because like US aid got defunded. You know, you've got all these slush funds and and just sort of secret groups that are just channeling just channeling money into organized protests and so forth. And the money is drying up and it's going to dry up even more now that

Trump is starting to declare Antifa a terrorist organization, which it obviously is. I mean, it's like I was I was hoping before Trump um came to office for a second term that he was just going to be no more Mr. Nice Guy

and just go into ruthless mode. And that's to to a large degree what he's doing.

But the woke left is celebrating online over Charlie Kirk's death. Um, I've been told that literally tens of thousands of them have already lost their jobs, been expelled from universities and so forth.

And

I mean,

cancel culture was pretty much started by the left at least 10 years ago. And back then, I mean, you could lose your job, your career could be destroyed simply by publicly stating that girls don't have a PP like boys do. I mean,

it's not like I mean, Charlie Kirk, he was a conservative evangelical Christian who was with a certain amount of Christian love in his heart having open discussions and he gets assassinated and apparently at least hundreds of thousands, probably millions of people on the left who have just been programmed and just are caught up in this mass hysteria thinking that he is a Nazi and it's good for him to be killed and they'd be celebrating even more if if somebody like higher profiled than Charlie Kirk caught the bullet.

But I mean, you see some of the really vile videos of like people just jeering

and mocking people like who are mourning for Charlie Kirk and they're just like taunting them saying, you know, just I mean I'm not going to like repeat it, but I mean it makes common it's just common sense that they would be expelled from school for behaving that way. It's like they are actually cheering on a school shooting.

I mean, they're promoting murder and and the left really has become the pro-crime, pro-criminal party. Not that's not their only platform, but that obviously is like an unofficial part of their platform is to promote crime. So, my opinion of all the woke left is

celebrating online over Charlie Kirk's death.

I mean, you could say cancel culture is a bad thing, but I mean, if you've got an employee who is just gloating and sneering over somebody being murdered, I mean, in a capitalist society, it just makes common sense for an employer to not want someone whose behavior is seen as abhorrent

by most of the people in the country working for him. It just makes sense.

you've got somebody whose conduct is just absolutely despicable in accordance with the values of most Americans, then yeah, the employer would have every right to terminate that person's

employment.

And the the I mean the the tides are are shifting. I mean, it's the pendulum is apparently swinging rightwards at this point.

So like public opinion, the Democratic majority of of Americans are they're starting to see this mass hysteria, promotion of crime, defense of the criminal. Like even before Charlie Kirk, you had that that black person stabbing the that the Ukrainian girl in the neck and killing her. And then you had like Democrat politicians calling for like compassion for for the criminal.

And that's kind of the attitude of the

left. It's like crime is caused by inequality.

Crime is caused by capitalism.

So criminals are just victims of a capitalist society.

And it's [_]

So I guess I mean the woke left is celebrating online. I mean there it's going to happen less and less I guess.

as along as the like the the attitude the like the it just keeps shifting and it's partly shifting through

people that were sort of moderates

just looking at at just the blatant

insanity of some of the the attitudes of

the left and of course the left has this

this policy of opposing anything Trump

does. So if Trump in all I mean he has the at least enough wisdom to promote what he considers to be popular and he's going to be like trusting advisors to to point out to him, you know, most people think this is a good idea. And so he endorses that and then the Democrats just in knee-jerk fashion in f knee-jerk fashion just oppose what most Americans favor and it makes them look worse and worse and worse and they could be in a tail spin and I have no idea what's going to happen to them. At the very least there's going to have to be like a serious change in perspective. I mean they may have to hit rock bottom before

that happens.

But the way it's going now is like somebody that has the same policies as a Democrat in the 1990s is is seen as as like a fascist and a Nazi just because of just the sheer irrationality of of the new left of the progressive left as though progress were decline and fall. And that's I mentioned this I kind of touched upon it earlier where when the left is championing weakness and dysfunction and demonizing like strength and efficiency then the strong and efficient are just going to look I mean how are you how are you going to succeed when you demonize strength and success and you you champion just just being

completely messed up and weak. I mean, how is that going to be a a road to success unless like I mentioned like an early Roman Empire or something where you got 90 95% of the people being weak and oppressed then they might rise up and through sheer numbers overwhelm the strong and the successful. But it's not like that in America now.

And more and more people are just seeing just I mean cheering on murders, cheering on school shootings, calling for compassion for some guy that stabs a woman to death in a train. This kind of thing.

I mean, it's it's just they have just

completely gone off the deep end at this point. And there's a lot of people that are just still going along with it just because they are so indoctrinated and also they're so identified with this for so many years that to suddenly change their mind would be like death.

You know there's some famous saying I think it was by Albert Einstein about how anyone who is I mean they've dedicated their life to championing some idea

that I mean it's it's like death for them to finally admit that the idea was a stupid idea or that it was just wrong. So there's a lot of people that that might be just riding the the Titanic all

the way to the bottom just because they
just cannot face the idea that maybe
they are mistaken
and to the point that they're just
cheering on murders now.

So yeah, it is kind of kind of sobering
that we're living in a society like
this. Just very polarized. one half
hating the other half because
approximately sort of figuratively
speaking

and we are in a kind of civil cold war
although an actual hot cold war I think
would be more likely in the UK or Europe
if they still have enough balls to
actually do something like that. I mean

they might be just so emasculated and feminized that they're just going to be like sheep and just allow their societies to die. I mean that's a possibility too.

But I mean, definitely the left in in America should never hope that there's actually going to be a civil war because apparently the right has started fighting back in earnest. And the the right contains most of the guntoing rednecks that aren't really looking forward to a civil war necessarily, but they're they're going to be gritting their teeth in just in just grim determination if it does start.

So my opinion of all the woke left is

celebrating online. Well, obviously they are just sort of they have dehumanized the other side to such a degree that they they're kind of dehumanizing themselves.

You know, they just can't see objectively anymore with regard to many things. Anything slightly politicized, they just can't see it objectively anymore.

And there's some of that on the right, too. But, I mean, the right didn't just start rioting and burning down cities when Charlie Kirk got shot. George Floyd was a was a whole different kettle of fish.

And I guess I should just stop here. I mean, we've been going for almost two hours. That's good enough. And so, I guess I'm done.

So as I should always say at the beginning and never do except for once if you have any questions you think I can answer especially about dharma not necessarily I mean you know western philosophy sometimes politics if it's interesting that kind of stuff that's fine too but especially like terra Buddhism early Buddhism uh and just sort of ramifying out from that if you think I might be able to answer feel free to ask no more than three questions per person per episode, please. And like and

subscribe if you have not done so
already. And be happy.

Alrighty

then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 164.

I am your host Punya Bassu and if we're being completely honest here,

I have to admit that 164 is $2 * 2 * 41$.

Not prime at all. Although 2 and 41 of course are prime.

This is my beverage.

And we have kind of

the normal amount of questions

this time, which is kind of

you know, in the low 20s now, which

results in a 2-hour-long Q&A video

instead of a 3-hour-long one, which some

people prefer.

Uh,

so

with that as a kind of

lame introduction, I'm just going to

wade into answering questions here. And

the first question is from Athena's

Sigil.

And Athena's Sigil says, "Why do you

still identify as a Buddhist? And why is

it so important still in your life? I

ask this as you've mentioned that you're

rather heterodox in some of your

opinions, yet you still keep the faith.

By the way, I recommend that I recommend

that to everyone too."

Well,

um I guess I should start with this
um Athena's Sigil saying that I've
mentioned that I'm rather heterodox in
some of my opinions, but heterodox
doesn't necessarily mean non-Buddhist.
It means like non-Theravada.

You know, some of my interpretations
of

philosophy or of dhamma,

um I mean, they're more in agreement
with other schools of Buddhism like
Madhyamaka

or some other Mahayana schools than with
Theravada.

So, just being heterodox, especially for
a Western Buddhist, is really

being a member of the majority of
Western Buddhists if that
for example have no use for Abhidharma.
Most Western Buddhists don't have much
if any use for the third pitaka.

So,

I mean, anyone capable of critical
thought,

just objectively looking at their own
religion, not just with a heart full of
faith where they would want to just
believe everything, but just with a
capacity to look even at your own
spiritual system with a certain amount
of objective critical thought, a little
bit of skepticism,

I mean, it's it's pretty much inevitable

that you're going to deviate from the
hardline orthodox
hardline.

So,

yeah, I do think that certain other
schools of Buddhism uh were more correct
in their interpretation of certain
doctrines of
early Buddhism.

Like pratītyasamutpāda or dependent
co-arising for example.

So,

um

I really can't think of anything right
offhand where I think that Buddhism is
wrong and some other religion is right.

I can't think of it. I mean, there might be some doctrine that I could really get on board with say say that the Christians are right on that and the Buddhists are wrong, but I just can't think of any.

So,

yeah, I'm not orthodox Theravada, but still I am Buddhist.

And so, why do I still identify as a Buddhist?

I think that

the doctrines of Buddhism are for the most part correct and even if they're not strictly speaking ultimate truth, still they are beneficial and useful if you follow them. You know, they help you

to purify the mind, cultivate cultivate wisdom, get closer to enlightenment.

So, let's see. Why is it so important still in my life? Well, it's it's pretty much my working worldview.

Um not necessarily strict orthodox Theravada, but generally speaking a Buddhist point of view.

It seems to be the wisest um

I guess I could say more most accurate interpretation of reality. Not just of samsara. I think science may may win the prize on the most accurate

interpretation of just phenomenal

samsara. Not with regard to its source, its origins, anything like that, but

just with regard to what happens in
samsara.

Science seems to be really good at that.
With within within limits.

But if you're taking the entire scope of
reality or of just human human
experience,

including things that science doesn't
deal with very well, like how to be
happy, I think Buddhism is still the
best and to have some kind of worldview
is necessary. I mean, there was a
discussion on the Discord server last
night, I think, or at least I didn't get
around to reading it till last night,
talking about metaphysics. And I point
out that everybody has has got a

metaphysic. Even a dog or a chicken,
they they have the metaphysic of naive
realism or what sometimes is called
common sense realism.

That just you just take everything at
face value. That's still a metaphysic.

So, everyone has to choose some kind of
metaphysic. You get

common sense realism or naive realism
just by default for being a vertebrate.

But, you can't improve on that and I do
think that Buddhism is

the best improvement that I've been
exposed to.

So, let's see here.

I guess I answered the question. So, I'm

just going to move on to the next question. This is from Boxcar Bob and his dog Comet.

They must have collaborated on this question.

And Boxcar Bob and his dog Comet say,

"My first Om memory was at the farm."

And then parentheses he's got TN, which

I assume stands for Tennessee.

"Along with Stephen Gaskin and friends during a week-long stay in 1976.

I use low E on a guitar as my guiding tone. My question, is there a particular universal frequency that monks use or prefer to Om, and is any tone okay if you are alone?"

So,

um I'm unaware of any universal frequency or tone that monks prefer. It'd be mostly Hindu monks, I suppose, because the Hindus emphasize Om more than Buddhists do, especially more than Theravada Buddhists. In Mahayana Buddhism, there's more Om than in Theravada, possibly due to more Hindu or proto-Hindu like influence.

So,

my personal opinion is partly just because I'm unaware of there being any preferred tone, is just whatever comes natural.

Just whatever comes natural to you is going to be more natural.

So, it'll just have more of a flow.

It'll be less artificial, less
constrained, I guess.

And before I go on move on to the next
question, I would just like to point out
that I took a shower last night
with the beard beads or the beard braid
still in. And because it got wet, I
slept with that way, it mutated into a
kind of scorpion tail. I don't know if
you can see it. Like

So, my sweetheart wanted me to take a
shower, but I thought the scorpion tail
really was kind of a nice effect, so I
just refrained from taking a shower.

But, I'll take one later. No worries.

And I guess I'm just going to move on to

the next question here after showing off
the scorpion tail

beard braid one more time.

And this is from HV20

Cannon,

which sounds like the name of a copy
machine. I I assume this is an actual
human asking the question, though.

And HV20 Cannon says,

"Knowing the cruelties that man had
inflicted on each other throughout
history and recently, often times for no
good reason, do you sometimes lose sleep
over that?"

And

uh I'm going to turn up the fan because

it's very muggy here in South Carolina lately because there's like extreme weather warnings out and there could be like a big storm hitting anytime.

But, getting back to HV20 Cannon's question,

first of all,

I've read a lot of history,

and I know that the human race has always been this way. I've even read that like in the Stone Age, it appears that one of the main causes of death was intertribal violence.

Just based on like skulls, broken skulls, and just gashed up bones that they have dug up.

And to some degree, I'm just used to it.

I had a macho father. He had actually killed people, although he did it legally as a soldier in wartime. But still, I mean, my father was just this macho alpha dad, and he just taught me, you know, you got to have a certain amount of stoicism or like a Spartan mentality, even if you're non-violent. I mean, there it helps to have a certain amount of toughness and just objective acknowledgement of the way things are. And as a Buddhist, I'm living in this world because of my own karma.

I have landed myself here because this

is what fits my current state of development or whatever.

But I can say

the closest I've ever come that I can recall to losing sleep over man's inhumanity to man,

so to speak, would be when I was living in a cave in Burma, and I'd be thinking, you know, Burma is a military dictatorship, and I had been reported to the military secret police before on political charges, just because someone didn't like me, you know, they wanted to get get me out of that monastery.

And so, sometimes I'd be lying there on my pallet in the cave thinking, at any

time, military secret police could show up at the door of my cave, and what would I do?

So, I mean, that would be the closest I've come to losing sleep over,

you know, human cruelty towards other humans.

And the Burmese military secret police can be pretty damn cruel at times. In fact, there's a policy. I don't know if it works this way in America, too, where you've got like the agents have to get moved around a lot cuz if they stay in one place long enough, they might start making friends and then not wanting to

just like arrest somebody in the middle of the night and hold them into a torture chamber or interrogation or whatever.

So, let's see here.

I guess I answered that question. Let's move on to the next one. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "I read one of your books, Essays in Theravada Buddhism, and like your writing style. I was wondering if you could shed light on your creative process.

Do you jot ideas down as they come to you and randomly throughout the day, then revisit and coalesce them once you have some available leisure time, or do

you take a more disciplined approach and set a specific block of time to sit in front of your computer or notebook and force yourself to write regardless of whether or not you feel particularly inspired?"

Well,

uh

maybe Romeo hasn't noticed that I haven't done any significant writing in a few years.

When I was a monk, I was a member of the leisure class or, as some more sophisticated folks might say, the leisure class.

And so, you know, I I could just like be

writing whenever I felt like it. Then,
after I stopped being a monk and started
working for a living,
um it was like a weekend thing where I
would just kind of force myself to just
regularly, reliably put out a blog post
every week. So, that would be
just me sitting in my room on a weekend,
pretty much just kind of
doing it just cuz it has to be done.

But then,

these Q&A videos have taken the place of
my blog writing on weekends so that I
just don't I haven't I haven't written a
blog post in probably a couple years at
this point at least.

So,

um this is my answer is going to be pretty much in the past tense because I haven't been doing any significant writing lately.

But the way it used to be is I'd get an idea, often while bathing for some reason, about something that would make you know, a good topic. And then I would just kind of let it digest in my mind and I would just write down things I would be sure to mention.

And so I just you know, in a way just make a list of points that I wanted to be sure to mention. I didn't want to forget that. And then after, you know, it had kind of digested

or ripened in my mind and I had like a sufficient number of points to cover, then I would arrange them into kind of like an outline. I used to hate making an outline when I was in school. Like like a kid in school they always tell you make an outline before you write the essay and I used to hate that. But it does make sense and like the unit of any kind of essay or writing that I would do, uh like like

the unit is the paragraph. Each paragraph is like a a discrete idea.

And so,

um you know, you want one idea to lead to the next idea to lead to the next idea. You know, you you want a coherent

like chain of association or chain of thought.

And just write in the style that you would speak except without the unnecessary ums and so's and and bad grammar. You know, it'd be more perfect. It'd be like the AI version. You know, it's like one of the reasons you know that some YouTube video is done by AI is just the perfection with which they say everything except for some unusual word those those just pronounce it completely wrong because it's just not in their vocabulary.

So,

write the way you would speak except you

know more polished more more

grammatically correct manner.

And

well, there's one other thing. Oh, yeah,

always imagine like your most

most critical

critic. You know, it's like your most

sort of

adversarial critic. Not necessarily like

an emotional enemy, but someone who's

likely to just pick to death what you

say looking over your shoulder while

you're writing. Just kind of always keep

in mind

that people aren't just going to accept

what you say just because you say it

that you need to really form like a

coherent argument.

I mean, that's not going to necessarily work so well if you're writing fiction.

Although even in fiction, you still have to have people remaining in character and verisimilitude.

You know, people you know, just things happening the way they would naturally happen unless you're deliberately writing about something unnatural.

So, let's see.

I think I pretty much just uh answered that question here.

So, I would jot down ideas and then jot down sub ideas under the ideas and then once I get a large enough

number of them, form them into like
like groups which would represent
paragraphs in like a coherent sequence.

And then write

the way you would speak in just normal
English. Try to avoid using words that
you don't use normally like explicate.

Who the hell says explicate unless
they're writing? Just say explain.

And just always imagine you've got
critics that are reading what you are
writing.

Oop.

Just hit the computer with my beverage.

So, I guess I'll just move on to Romeo's
next question.

He says, "Do you have any general

writing tips for a budding writer?" And
that's kind of funny because
I mean, I've written and published three
books

thus far, and I don't make nearly as
much

um

I don't make nearly enough money from
them. I mean, it's it's just barely
putting any kind of dent in my income.

You know, I still have to work for a
living driving a forklift.

So, I guess general writing tips for a
budding writer, aside from just how to
write relatively well,

I mean, I was getting compliments on my

writing back when I was in school.

It would just be well, business-wise,

just do the opposite of what I've

Like, try to get an agent, try to get

published by some big-name publisher. I

mean, if you can't manage that, go to

Amazon, or if you just don't want to

bother with that, you can just

self-publish on Amazon or some such.

But, uh

yeah, as regards to

being a professional writer, a writer

that really like

is is like

out there for lots and lots of people,

then I assume you go back to the

old-fashioned kind of

maybe having an agent and just trying to
send your manuscripts
to
big-name publishers.

But, I'm just not the right person to
give advice on how to be um a successful
professional writer.

In my own case, I'm just putting stuff
out there as a kind of public service,
you you and

if it's hard to find, most people that
might like it don't ever see it.

It's I just kind of chalk that up to,
you know, cosmic

the cosmic order and and karma and so
forth. I really I really can't put

myself out there. I'm not good at hyping myself. When I was a monk, I came back to America like 2011, just trying to live as a free-range Buddhist monk, not like

pinned down to a monastery or something, just kind of floating out there and

numerous supporters in all good faith are just saying, "You got to put yourself out there, you know, you got to sell yourself." And I just do not operate that way.

I'm just kind of indifferent to that.

So, yeah, if my general writing tip for a budding writer would be get advice with regard to making a living from

someone besides me because otherwise you're going to be writing in your spare time and making your real money driving a forklift.

And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Master Po.

And Master Po says, "Have you ever watched the Yuri Bezmenov interview from 1984?

Former KGB agent that defected." He's got deflected here, but I think pretty sure he means defected. "It's worth a visit if you want to understand what's going on in the USA. Interesting." I have seen clips of the Yuri Bezmenov interview. I think my brother sent them

to me because he was really black-pilled about politics from early age.

And

yeah, I mean, it's I can

a lot of like the the woke stuff that is occurring now is like the the towering oak tree from acorns that were planted by

Soviet agents back in the 1970s and 80s.

So, it is kind of ironic that the efforts of the KGB finally came to fruition after the Soviet Union had already collapsed.

But, I guess Russia and the United States are still fairly adversarial.

It's too bad, too, really. I think the United States and Russia could be

allies, maybe even against a common enemy

like like China, for example.

Not necessarily enemy in the military sense, but at least in the economic sense, certainly in the cultural sense.

The United States and Russia have much more in common culturally than the United States and China do, or Russia and China, for that matter.

But, yeah, he was

Yuri Bezmenov was

um essentially just talking about how bad ideas were being like

distributed throughout the the culture

in America by the Soviet Union just as a

way of undermining it.

And now it's like the platform of

Democratic Party, or

like second the second most important

aspect of the Democratic Party after

just hating the president's guts.

So, let's see. Yeah, I have watched

That's The only question here is have I

ever watched the Yuri Bezmenov

interview? And I have watched like large

clips of it.

Several minute-long clips.

So, I think I'm just going to move on to

this question.

This is from Cleefy.

And Cleefy says, I got to check see if

we're recording. Yeah, I guess we are.

Cleefy says, could you expand on what you mean by trust Dharma?

Uh

that's that's kind of a a weird question. It's

I mean it seems like it's straight to the point, but it's kind of ambiguous at the same time.

Expand on what I mean by trust Dharma.

And I'm not exactly sure

where he

where he heard me say trust Dharma.

Unless it's like if you protect Dharma, Dharma protects you. That kind of thing.

Um I mean in that case

I mean there's there's numerous angles

that you could try to explain that. That
if you have faith or

I mean

it's you know, the Christians put more
emphasis on this than the the Buddhists
do, I think. It's like God will provide.
Consider the lilies of the field, you
know.

Um consider the sparrow or sparrow.

Something about sparrows.

Or

um

you know,

let's see. What was the other one?

Give no thought for tomorrow what you
will eat or where you will sleep. That
kind of thing. I mean it's it's there in

Buddhism, too, but it received a bit more emphasis in early Christianity.

And I mean it really does

I mean if you can do it if you can just like cast yourself upon the the mercy of the universe they'll actually help you.

It's like all of a sudden I'm reminded of this story that's at the beginning of Illusions by Is it Richard Bach?

You know, The Adventures of a Reluctant Messiah.

And there's this story at the beginning that apparently was written by this reluctant Messiah, David Shimoda.

Where there's these little animals that live in a stream.

And they cling to the water plants.

And

it's like

the it's very important to them that

they cling to these plants because

they're sure that if they let go they're

just going to get washed away and die.

So one of these little animals finally

gets the idea I'm just going to let go

of this plant and see what happens. And

so at first the current just kind of

knocks him against the rocks. This is

what the the animals believed is you let

go you're going to get knocked against

the rocks and then if you don't die

you're just going to get washed away and

never seen again. So he lets go and of

course he gets knocked against the rocks
at the bottom of the stream for a little
bit and then the current lifts him up
and he's just flowing down the stream
and then the the little animals
downstream see one of their own kind
apparently like flying past them and
they think he's some kind of Messiah or
you know supernatural being and he's
saying all I did was just let go of the
plants and and they're like no that's
impossible. You let go of the plants
you're just going to get hit against the
rocks and die or just get washed away
and he's saying no I did it.
So in a way trusting Dharma is like

that. You just let go and it's like the universe protects you.

Um Krishnamurti had the similar idea about

you've got some gardener who has this garden full of flowers

and one of the flowers is unusual. You know there's some kind of mutation. It's it's like this new strain or something.

It's not like all the other flowers. So the gardener is going to give special care to that flower because it's unusual and he says people are the same way. If you are like unusual in that sort of way then it's like the forces of the universe the gods or whatever you want to call it is sort of give you special

attention and take care of you more than everyone else.

So I assume Clefy isn't asking me in particular like trusting Buddhism.

I mean, that's I kind of addressed that in like the very first question or the second one.

Let's see. Let's look up here and see.

Yeah, very first question.

So, trusting Dharma just is in like

looking at the world through a spiritual lens or just interpreting your experience along spiritual lines. In a way, is trusting Dharma and it's

I mean, just from your own personal experience, you can see that it is to your advantage to live that way. That if you're just like completely trapped I'm reminded of this guy at work. He's a hell of a nice guy. I'm not trying to badmouth this guy at all, but he is just locked into samsara.

I mean, he's just everything is just real, you know, and he takes it completely seriously. I mean, he can joke, but he takes the joke seriously, too. You know, it's just this is reality. And I don't know. I just I just kind of feel sorry for him sometimes because he's just locked in. Like it's

like hyper samsaric mode. Even though he's a really nice guy and all.

So, yeah. I mean, if you can separate yourself, just just detach.

I mean, that in itself is just a blessing to your life. Then something like something icky arises. Let's say hatred arises in your mind. Then I mean, the person who's just locked in is like, I hate. Whereas, if you have some detachment, then you can observe hate is arising and then you can choose to just acknowledge it as, you know, hate that is arising, a mental state is arising, and then that's it.

Or just knowing the second noble truth.

The most important thing about Buddhism
you could possibly know from a practical
point of view

that whenever you are unhappy, it's
because you desire something. You are
clinging to something.

So, I mean, that's not even really so
much trust as just kind of empiricism.
You could trust empiricism on that one,
I guess.

But, just
sort of having faith in God from like a
Christian point of view where you just
sell all that you have, give the money
to the poor, and just
wander. Like Peace Pilgrim, that little
old lady that just took off walking and

God provided, or whatever Christians call God provided.

And that's important. That's It takes real bravery to do that. I mean, a lot of people, they want to have like a safety net, you know, a safety line, just to make sure.

But, really, from the spiritual point of view,

early Buddhism and early Christianity is just just have faith and God will provide, or Dharma will provide. And if you can really do that, it works. You get exactly what you need.

Exactly what you need might not be particularly pleasant, but still, you

get exactly what you need.

And I expanded a little bit, I guess.

So, I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Skoladin or Skooladeen, who used to ask questions a lot, but he's kind of tapered off. He's not as question-asky as he used to be.

And Skoladin or Skooladeen says,

"Would you kindly explain fear of the unknown?"

"I find that people are easily startled when confronted with something they don't they didn't know existing abruptly."

Well, I mean, fear of the unknown technically would be xenophobia. And it's not xenophobia as bandied around in

political circles where it's just hatred of foreigners, that sort of thing. I mean, that would be like one kind of xenophobia. But xenophobia is common throughout higher higher vertebrates. You know, it's just a survival trait. So, it's just built into us, possibly even hardwired into us, that we have a certain distrust of the unusual. And because the unusual can be dangerous. I mean, what you're used to, I mean, you either know that it's not dangerous or if if or if you're used to it and it is dangerous, at least you know that it's dangerous and what ways it can be dangerous. But something

that's completely un un unknown,

then

it just triggers this instinctive animal

alarm in us, the way it triggers

instinctive animal alarm in a chicken

or a deer. It's just built into us.

Just

Darwinian.

People that had xenophobia were more

likely to survive or just our ancestors,

our pre-human ancestors that had a kind

of xenophobia were more likely to

survive. Just Just caution and wariness

around the unusual just makes sense.

But then there are certain kinds of

xenophobia or fear of the unknown that

really, I mean, I can relate to that.

It's like

if I'm sitting here and all of a sudden
this cup just starts levitating and it
it's not like doing anything dangerous.

It's just It's just like floating in
midair, just just like that.

Then, I mean, I would be alarmed and
just that would be like one of the the
first reactions. I mean, possibly the
first one is how the hell is that
happening? Is is Is there something
lifting it up? And then when you see
that nothing's lifting it up, then
there's like this alarm. I remember
reading I think it was a
uh Ambrose Bierce story

about this guy

who he's looking out the window

and he sees this clump of trees and one of the trees is different from the other one in a way he can't explain and he just feels alarmed just from that until he realizes that it was a small tree closer up

against bigger trees farther away and they all looked about the same size. So they at first he thought it was just this little clump of trees, but one of the trees was like the focus was different or something.

And I mean, just that can cause a certain amount of alarm in people.

Just anything that you can't explain,
anything you don't have an answer for,
that that can be dangerous. And so you
have these animal instincts that just
all of a sudden kick in and you are in
this state of at least yellow alert.

And it makes sense. I mean, it does have
survival value.

So

let's see. Skoladin or Skoladine says,
"I find that people are easily started
when confronted with something they
didn't know existing abruptly." Yeah,
it's it's animal instinct and it works
the same in chickens and deers as it
does in humans. Probably

fish

have this also. Just any kind of

vertebrate or chordate

that is conscious enough that it has

like perceptions and awareness like a in

internal visual image of what's what

it's experiencing, that kind of thing.

Then they're going to have xenophobia.

It's just built in.

So I'm just going to move on to

Skoladin's next question.

"Would you kindly explain how people can

have such a lack of presence?" Uh I

think I already kindly did. You know,

it's just built into us as an animal

instinct in the human animal.

And there's of course all kinds of

different shades. I mean, the levitating coffee mug would be like fairly extreme at one end. And then just like not trusting foreigners or being suspicious about foreigners. I mean, that's sort of more subtle, but it's the same phenomenon of the xenophobia.

Chimpanzees are xenophobic just as humans are xenophobic.

Not to mention chickens and fish.

Or fishes.

So,

I think I just move on to the Skoladin or Skoladin's next question.

Which is, would you kindly give your expert opinion on Nowhere Man? And I I

assume what he means by Nowhere Man is
the song by The Beatles. Which is in
their movie Yellow Submarine.

Good movie by the way.

And so, let's see. Nowhere Man. I mean,
it's

it's just kind of like this

optimistic feel-good hippy kind of song
about how sort of alienated NPC type
normies

um you know, they're not living up to
their full potential. They're just kind
of closed off and like self-limiting.

And so, you know, Nowhere Man, please
listen. You don't know what you're
missing. Nowhere Man, the world is at
your command. You know, it's it's it's

kind of a little bit of spirituality
added to it.

You know, it's just
the your potential is just beyond your
comprehension.

You just got to open up to the
possibilities. Be more open. Have less
of Pink Floyd's wall, you don't mind me
bringing up a different rock group.

So, I mean, it's it's fairly
straightforward, I think.

Um I don't think that there's any like
real

any kind of subtle profundity. Although
there is some profundity in just, you
know, not being alienated and closed off

and being open to all the infinite possibilities, that kind of thing.

But I think it was pretty standard for like hippie music in those days to have that kind of a theme anyway.

Let's see. I used to I think Nowhere Man was like the only Beatles song I knew all the words to.

I'm not going to sing it though.

So anyways, oh also I should say maybe this is why I school at no school at the NASA question.

One time I was before I became a monk, I was a monastery attendant. Started already shaving my head wearing like white robes.

I guess it's called Paco in Thailand,

you know, anagarika.

And I was in the kitchen washing dishes
and I'm just just kind of passing the
time, not being particularly mindful.

I was just trying to think of what
Beatles song would represent
each person in the monastery. And for
myself, I gave Nowhere Man.

So I was trying to follow the Beatles
advice and become more open and so
forth.

There was one kind of abrasive Jewish
guy who lived there.

His theme song was Happiness is a Warm
Gun.

And I don't even remember, I think it

was the Abbot had that one

Nothing's going to change my world.

What? Anyways, I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Austin.

And Austin says, "Sikhs or Sikhs hold that killing may be justified in the defense of life and the upholding of justice. They teach that if such an act is carried out with a mind free from lust, anger, attachment, and pride, it does not give rise to negative karma. If karma is mental intention, then under this view, could killing be justified? Question mark.

Because the act isn't coming from anger or ego, but from alignment with hukum or

divine order. In that case, it wouldn't carry the usual karmic weight of violent ego-driven action. Well, this kind of reminds me of like the samurai interpretation of Zen Buddhism.

You know, it's like you you if you kill, it's going to be through honor and duty.

You know, there's going to be no anger, no hatred at all. You know, like the story I've I've told more than once, you got the samurai master has a disciple.

And the samurai master, you know, it's sort of like gunslingers in the Wild West. Everyone Everyone wants to duel a samurai master because if you win the duel,

I mean, you are famous. You're the guy who defeated the master.

So,

some young samurai challenges the samurai master to a duel, and he kills the samurai master. So, then this disciple, this student of the samurai master, you know, it's his duty to avenge the death of his master. So, he he finds this this young samurai who killed his master and challenges him to a duel. And so, they're they're sword fighting, and the the disciple of the the deceased master has his opponent down on the ground on his back. He's getting ready to finish him off, and the the defeated

samurai just spits in his face, just in defiance. And so, this pisses off the guy. He's really going to get him now. And then he realizes, "Whoa, I'm not motivated by honor and duty anymore. Now I'm pissed off, and I want to kill him because of that." So, he does the honorable thing. He just gets up, stands up, sheathes his sword and walks away. Because if he couldn't kill him due to purely as a result of honor and duty, then it was no go.

But still, it doesn't really work that way. Like you could I've had people say, "Well,

sociopaths, you know, they don't have
any like

you know, they don't have any
conscience, you know, it's like they can
kill somebody in the same way that they
peel an apple. You know, it's like they
don't have these these negative mental
states. But still, a sociopath, I mean,
just setting aside the ones that just
get this uncontrollable urge to do
horrible things to a prostitute.

That still, I mean, subconsciously,
you are still aware I mean, everyone has
a certain amount of empathy.

That I mean, we're all mental mental
states are contagious. And to some
degree, we're all connected. Like

consciousness is just consciousness.

You know, it's not like I'm generating completely different consciousness from the next guy.

It's all the like this sea of consciousness and we are sort of manipulating our area of consciousness, so to speak. You know, it's just a a cluster of waves on the surface of the water. There's a different cluster of waves on the surface of the same water that is identif- self-identifying as somebody else. And I'm reifying the absolute, which is a no-no for Buddhists, but I'm trying to get the point across. That really, even if you

are detached

or I mean, especially if you're not enlightened yet, but you're you're like a sociopath or you're like this well-trained warrior who just acts according to duty and honor, doesn't take any enjoyment in killing, it's just your job. You know, it's your dharma from like the the point of view of the Bhagavad Gita.

Still,

to the extent that especially if you're not enlightened, then the at a subconscious level

that I mean you're harming yourself at the same timing as as you're harming the other person.

That I mean you know at a subconscious
level like at a subliminal level
uh that you are inflicting fatal agony
on somebody else and it's going to have
its effects. You're doing it
and and it's going to
every action's going to have this this
result.

So,

I mean a person who is killing like a
samurai sword master
or this uh
alleged sick
that Austin's bringing up
that
they'll probably be creating less bad

karma than someone who just goes berserk.

But,

still I mean it's not completely neutral.

It's still it's it's still you're causing harm and that harm is

I mean it's sort of permeating or

infiltrating into your own subconscious

mind at the very least even if at the

conscious level like well like well the

sociopath, they're oblivious. And that's

one of my theories about sociopaths is

they're just cut off from their

subconscious mind. There's still all

kinds of [__] going on down there.

They're just clueless.

That's one reason why they don't feel compassion. This is a compassion or like empathy is coming from a deeper level of consciousness that they have just shut off for whatever reasons.

So, let's see. What is the actual question?

If karma is mental intention, then under this view could killing be justified?

Not from a Buddhist point of view.

Certainly killing cannot be justified

from any point of view. Although, I

mean, there are there's like the

elephant look that's it's like this

controversial thing that's found in the

poly sutras where you got some evil

person

and the Buddha will give him the

elephant look and according to

it's it's called the elephant look

because he doesn't just turn his head to

look at somebody. He turns his entire

body to look at the person and then the

person just dies. You know, it's like

the ground opens up and they plunge into

hell.

And you know, there's some people say,

"Well, I mean, he's he's doing that. You

know, in a way he's killing that person,

but there's like this subtle thing where

I mean, the person is

it's not like the Buddha's deliberately

killing anybody

kind of a thing.

So, I'm not exactly sure why I brought up the elephant look, but in in a way it is kind of sort of like enlightened killing, but

the orthodox interpretation is no, the Buddha doesn't kill anybody, but it's just sort of like this

cosmic coincidence kind of a thing.

Maybe the Buddha's just turning around to look at them right as they die just because they've done something so egregious

that they're just going to plunge into hell in the next second anyway.

It's it's kind of this weird thing and

and it may be just sort of like a a
legendary thing that did not occur
historically for all I know.

Or also, there's like the story of
Padmasambhava

who's dancing on a flat roof and kicks a
rock off the roof and it it falls off
the roof and and hits somebody in the
head down below and kills them. And
Padmasambhava is is just karma, you
know, he didn't do it on purpose. It was
just and he didn't feel any guilt, no
remorse, no apologies. It's just it's
just the way it goes.

So,

uh you're you're going one step beyond
that when you're actually deliberately

killing someone, even if you think you can do it um with complete detachment. I think only an arahant could possibly be completely detached. And even then, there's a good chance I mean, it's it's highly unlikely that they'd be going around killing people on purpose.

So, I guess the answer to this is if mental karma is mental intention, then under this view, could killing be justified? Well, you can justify anything. You know, the the the sociopathic serial killer truck drivers that are

killing lot lizards across the country,
they they justify it.

You know, Jack the Ripper was probably
justifying what he was doing.

People that were like

Nazi Germany, soldiers that were like

lining up people and machine gunning

them after forcing them to dig their own

trench mass grave,

they justified it. I mean, everyone

justifies what they do. That doesn't

mean that it's right. Just because you

can justify something.

I'm not trying to pick on psychopathic

truck drivers or or Nazi soldiers,

either.

Just trying to give some examples that

people can kind of relate to or understand.

So,

the next question is kind of a follow-up on this one, even though it's by somebody else. So, I think I'll just move on to that one. This is from Chrzaszcz is. And Chrzaszcz is says, "What would happen in terms of karma if we appointed an arahant to be the executor or executioner of death penalty for convicted murderers?" Well, let's say the government has some way of deciding who is is and who isn't. And then they're just

going to contact

these enlightened people and say, "Would any of you be willing to be the official executioner

for people who are been sentenced to death? You know, you got to give the lethal injection or flip the switch on the electric chair or whatever."

I seriously doubt that any arahants would be willing to kill somebody.

I'm I'm not on purpose. I mean, they could be Padmasambhava dancing on a roof and kicking a rock loose.

Or the the Buddha giving the elephant look.

But still,

I've never heard of any case

of a fully enlightened being just deliberately killing people, even if they're like vicious murderers. Like vicious murderer serial killer Angulimala.

Did the Buddha kill him? No. He converted him to Buddhism and then Angulimala became a devout practicing Buddhist and eventually became enlightened.

So, of course, the best way to destroy an enemy is to turn him into a friend, if possible.

Or just avoid the enemy if he's just couldn't make a friend.

And I just noticed I got
one mandible sticking out further than
the other ones.

Oh, well.

You guys that that just listen to the
podcast and don't watch the video
aspects do have certain advantages. You
don't see me all disheveled in my
bathroom.

Custom made in Lithuania out of 100%
natural linen.

It's really a nice robe. So, I guess
those of you who do see the video at
least have certain advantages over the
people that listen to the podcast cuz
you can see the robe.

You also see the kind of asymmetrical

facial hair and so forth, but
uh there's there's give and take on
this.

So, Traleg asks us this question, "What
would happen in in of karma if we
appointed an arahant to be the executor
of death penalty for committing murder,
they probably would decline. They'd say,
"Nah, I don't want to do that."

I'm pretty sure that would be what would
happen.

Although arahants, there it's it's
problematical. I mean, you can't really
prove that anybody is an arahant.

There's that Dignaga school. It was like
a medieval school of Buddhist logicians

in in northern India

who had as their classic case of a

problematic premise

that

any being is is fully enlightened cuz

there's no way you can prove it one way

or the other.

I mean, maybe you could give some fairly

good evidence that someone isn't an

arahant or isn't fully enlightened

because you just saw them screaming in

rage at somebody or like tripping an old

lady and then giggling about it. That

kind of thing.

But to prove that somebody is an

arahant,

I don't know. It's it's sort of like

proving that Bigfoot doesn't exist.

You know, it's like you cannot prove an absence very easily. You know, you can't prove that Bigfoot doesn't exist and you can't prove that an that this person has zero defilements.

So,

yeah, but I think if they could if the government could find an arahant and did try to recruit them to be an executioner,

that the arahant would just say, "No, thank you. I'm not interested.

And you shouldn't be killing people anyway."

That would be my guess.

So, I'm just going to move on to Chrizaskazis' second question, which is as follows. Do you think it is more difficult to drop from monkhood after 20 or 30 years now than it was in the 20th century and in any century before? I mean, now people are born with smartphone in one hand and laptop in second and world didn't seem to change all that fast.

Um

I don't know. I mean, it might be someone's interest to do a statistical survey, to do a statistical analysis of this phenomenon, but I really don't think that there's all that much difference. Maybe if

Yeah, I really don't think it's all that much difference cuz I mean, a monk's main reason for dropping out of the is not necessarily like the internet.

Um but now that I right when I was in the middle of that sentence, I do realize that in Burma when internet first came out, there was like this mass disrobing. You know, there was like this pandemic of young monks especially disrobing because they were getting access to pornography and also like communicating privately with women for the first time in their lives. So, it just caused a lot of monks that

really did not have a true vocation to
to just drop out.

So, there is that.

Um but that would make it easier for
monks to drop out of the monkhood, not
not more difficult.

Um

but still like human nature remains
human nature.

And like a monk who's just living alone
in a a hut or a cave or something, you
know, it's going to be the same now as
it was 1,500 years ago
with regard to the likelihood of staying
in robes and so forth.

So, I think if anything, it would be
easier to disrobe now just because of

this

seventh sense organ we have we have
acquired relatively recently as humans,
which is internet.

You know, it's like your computer or
smartphone is like the sense organ
itself.

And the internet information coming
through is just sort of the the
the the sensory input coming through
um that sense organ.

You know, in a in a way it's like a step
towards omniscience that most people
just don't have the wisdom to really
navigate very wisely. And so some people
can just be destroyed by it.

But I don't think it's more difficult to drop from the monkhood now than it was in the 20th century. If anything, it's easier just because there's more distractions, especially if you're like surfing the web all the time.

So, I'm just going to move on to Chursaskis as his third question.

Please tell us about hot chocolate in the evening at Wat Pah Nanachat. If it is without milk, is it in accordance with with vinaya rules?

Well, this is from There's a member of of the Discord server who is intending to be ordained at Wat Pah Nanachat in Thailand, which is the main international or or it's like a

a monastery particularly for foreign monks. Nanachat is the Thai sort of corruption of Nanajata, which means like different birth or different ethnicity. You know, so it's it's the forest monastery for foreigners essentially. It's like the name of the place.

Um so it's like the main monastery in the Ajahn Chah tradition in Thailand that has lots of Western monks ordained there.

And um I told him be careful about the hot chocolate in the afternoon or in the evening

um because I've been told I've never

been to Wat Pah Nanachat. I've met several monks, lots of monks that have spent time there. And there was one Indonesian monk who was telling me about, man, they they really like the hot chocolate there and the dark chocolate, too. I mean, they they eat dark chocolate in the afternoon going with this idea that chocolate is just a congealed liquid. So, it's like drinking hardened juice.

And I really

I mean, it just seems kind of like casuistry. Is that Is that a Is that a word, casuistry? Just sort of justifying whatever you're doing. Like eating

cheese in the afternoon, they probably got cheese there, too. On this cart, it's probably cheese and chocolate, hot cocoa. And

I mean,

in Burma,

like cheese, especially, it's just not controversial. I mean, the word for cheese in Burma literally translates as hard curd or hardened curd. And which is what it is. Cheese is like purified curd. You take curd and you squeeze the excess whey out of it.

And maybe add a little bit of like bacterial or fungus fungal culture.

And it's got more curd in it than what

is called curd. It's a kind of purified curd. It's more curd than curd is, but Thai Forest tradition has declared that it's okay to eat cheese in the afternoon. And Ajahn Thanissaro, actually, in his first Vinaya book, went to the extreme, it seems to me, of implying that maybe, just maybe, cheese is actually a kind of butter. And butter is allowable in the afternoon.

And And I think that the chocolate is similar. I mean, I wouldn't eat it if I was a monk. I I never ate dark chocolate afternoon when I was a monk. I never ate cheese afternoon as a monk, either. I mean, in Burma, it's just not controversial. You just don't do it. Any

monk that would eat cheese in the afternoon would also eat rice and curry in the afternoon. And there's plenty of those.

And in the hot cocoa, they justify that um because they instead of putting milk in the hot cocoa, they use like a non-dairy creamer. But the non-dairy creamer is made from milk.

You know, it's like one of the main ingredients in this non-dairy creamer stuff is casein, which is milk protein.

So,

yeah, if if I was there, I probably would just avoid the goodies cart in the afternoon. And this this Indonesian monk

was actually saying they pass it around three times. So, if you don't get your fill the first two times, you can you can still get more on the third time around.

So, it's it's fairly luxurious there, I think. It didn't used to be. You know, like in the 1970s,

back when like Ajahn Sumedho was there, then it was still rough. You know, it was still fairly ascetic. Not so much now because it's famous and lots of lay people want to support the the Western monks. And so, if you're not careful, you can get spoiled rotten fairly easily.

So, let's see here. Yeah, milk chocolate

is out cuz it's got milk in it, but having milk protein in the cocoa is fine.

And of course, milk protein is like one of the main ingredients in the cheese, too. So,

I guess milk protein is considered not to be um on the list of foods.

Uh

So, let's see here.

I guess I answered that question. Let's move on to the next question. This is from Zenathoid.

And Zenathoid is uh curious about David Hume, I guess, cuz he's got two

questions about David Hume. First one is, "What do you think of Schopenhauer's critique of Hume on causation? I like his idea that when I kick a rock, the missing link between my foot and the rock is will, and that this extends to events between physical objects as well. Okay, well, David Hume actually addresses this that Schopenhauer didn't accept Hume's like covering of this issue, but it's like David Hume was saying that you we can't really know cause and effect. All we know is that A follows B or B follows A consistently, so we just get the idea that A causes B. And so, I mean, he says that even with regard to our own mental states. I mean,

you experience the volition or the will to pick up the coffee mug, and then you pick up the coffee mug. But still, you don't actually experience any causative force necessarily.

You just have the will to do it, which is followed by you doing it.

And David Hume wasn't saying that there is no cause and effect. He's just saying that we have no direct knowledge of cause and effect, that it is a kind of inference.

So, yeah, Schopenhauer's idea that when you kick a rock, the missing link between the foot and the rock is will,

Hume already addressed that and just said, "I mean, really, you do not experience causative force."

You you you feel the will to do something and then you do it, but still it's it's another AB it's another B following A scenario.

That's what Hume says. But I do remember from Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*, his main counterexample to Hume's argument that we just see B following A until we we just assume that A causes B.

Schopenhauer's

uh like counterexample is night and day.

That he says we see night following day,

you know, every day, but we don't say that day causes night.

So, that's a fairly good

def- uh

at least it's a sufficient counter

example that we don't attribute just

regular succession

like repeated succession of A and B as

being necessarily A causing B.

Because

night follows day and we don't think

that day causes night. At least most

people don't.

So, let's see.

So, I do think that Schopenhauer did

bring up a valid counter example to

Hume, but it could still be that Hume is correct.

That, you know,

we we don't necessarily in every case

say that A causes B if A comes before B

on a regular you know, just regularly in our experience.

But, still that is, according to Hume,

why we believe in cause and effect.

Because we don't just subjectively

experience causative force.

So, let's see here.

Uh I think I answered that question. So,

I'm going to move on to Zenethoid's next

David Hume question, which is please I

guess it's not a question. There's no

question mark. Please give your opinion

on Alex O'Connor's critique of Hume's understanding of imagination. And then he he left a a video link with time stamp 1 hour 10 minutes and 10 seconds. So, Alex O'Connor in this video is talking about David Hume talking about imagination. How, according to David Hume, we can't imagine anything that we've never experienced. That, I mean, we can reconstruct things. Like, for example, you have dreams all the time, or at least I do, of people you've never met in real life. You know, it's like your your subconscious imagination, your dreaming imagination, is just sort of

taking various components of At least
according to Hume, taking various
components of, you know, different
people, noses, eyes, skin colors, and so
forth, and just creating a new person.

But, according to David Hume, that
really you like a blind person
who has been blind from birth, who has
no way of like objectively experiencing
colors, I guess subjectively
experiencing colors, they wouldn't be
able to imagine colors.

That

person who's deaf from birth can't
imagine sounds, according to David Hume,
because you have to experience that in
order to imagine something even like

even similar to that, which is composed of like components of things you've already experienced. I think he calls that fancy, where you're just like reassembling different things that you've already experienced to create something seemingly new, um but the components of it aren't new. You've all had You've had to experience all of it before somehow.

So, then Alex O'Connor in the video is talking about how David Hume himself came came up with a counterexample. And the counterexample is you've got the missing shade of blue. He just blue

is a convenient color here. But, let's say there's a person who's seen every shade of blue except maybe this one little wavelength they've never experienced, but still they could imagine kind of an unbroken spectrum of different shades of blue, so that they could kind of fill in the gap by sort of compromising between the slightly lighter shade of blue and the slightly darker shade of blue, so that they could imagine this shade of blue that they had never actually seen before.

Which would be kind of rare nowadays because we see all these spectrums of, you know, blue kind of I mean you see the spectrum, so you see the

full spectrum of blue.

But somehow, like hypothetically, if someone has not seen a certain color, they but they have seen like slightly lighter shade and slightly darker shade of that same general color, they could sort of imagine that color that they've never seen before. That was David Hume's counter-example. And Alex O'Connor just kind of

in a way was

using that as a way of just being skeptical of Hume's entire idea that you can't really imagine something that you've never experienced before except like Hume's counter-example, which is

very just a slight deviation because you have experienced almost exactly the same kind of blue.

But someone who is blind from birth would not be able to do that same thing. Because they haven't experienced any blue.

So, I think Hume may be correct from my own experience.

I mean, I have indulged in what Hume calls fancy, which is just taking things you have experienced and just making something like new at like a higher level even though it its basic building blocks are all things you've experienced before like different colors, different sounds, you know, different facial

features, that kind of thing.

So, yeah, I mean,

Alex O'Connor was saying, "Well, Hume just contradicted himself blatantly."

But, in a way, he kind of didn't cuz

he's the one that brought up the

counter-example to his own theory. But,

it was just really kind of a very

nitpicky kind of counter-example that I

think Hume may be correct. I really It

doesn't That particular aspect of Hume's

philosophy doesn't really cause me to

have a lower opinion of Hume, although

certain other things like

his

let's see.

His

his imagination

um his interpretation of like let's see,

how do we do this?

Of like an impression.

Like

like sensory data.

You know,

you know, he's he's talking about how is

sensory data, like you actually seeing

something different from just imagining

something and he says that it's more

vivid. But then he uses that exact same

argument with regard to belief and

non-belief.

That if you believe something, then it's

more vivid than if you it's just like

some random thought that doesn't really isn't really attached to anything.

And that I think would be is kind of a defect cuz he's using the exact same definition for two entirely different processes. At least according to him they're they're different processes. You know, you've got like the the sensory impression and then you've got belief that have the same definition. They're both livelier, I think is was his word or more vivid than if it's just some casual thing. But I remember coming up with the my own idea that any perception is belief. That it's just more seems more vivid if you actually believe that

something is real because it's like
you're integrating it with all the other
things that you think are real. So that
that kind of reinforces it, whereas just
this stray this you know, this image of
a unicorn

is going to be very different from you
looking directly at a horse
or believing that horses exist.

And then there's another thing about
David Hume I don't like so much is he
was a product of the seven or the the
18th century Scottish Enlightenment. And
he was pretty

like he was definitely anti-Christian.

But he couldn't just come out and
declare himself a non-Christian because

that would just be social suicide. He was a member of the gentry. He was I think his elder brother was a lord and you know, he was hobnobbing with you know, the the rich and famous.

And and he was effectively ambassador to France at one time. He was sort of like assistant ambassador to France, but when the ambassador was gone uh he had

I mean, he had like

moved on to something else and the new ambassador hadn't been installed yet.

Hume was de facto the ambassador to France. And so he was

I mean, he he was like of the upper classes and for him to come out as a

non-Christian at the time he was he had already lost some really good career opportunities just for being declared an atheist.

Because that's the way that's the way it rolled back then.

But he was anti-Christian. He just thought Christianity was just foolish superstition that philosophy like empirical philosophy like science should take the place of Christianity and we'd be living in a better world. Although that's kind of questionable. You know, there's definitely pluses and minuses to atheistic scientism taking the place of Christianity.

So anyways, because Scotland and England

were no longer Catholic, he could bash away at Catholics, which is generally what he did.

And so his bashing of Christianity would take the form of bashing Catholicism mainly.

Whereas really, I mean, it was pretty obvious that like his arguments in in in his books were mainly arguments against Christianity.

Like for example, he tries to argue against any argument used by Christians to support the existence of God, like miracles. I mean, just miracles is something Jehovah Witnesses will still do it today. It's just

they're looking at just look at the miracles. You know, it's that that's one of their ways of justifying that Jesus was the Messiah and so forth. Look at the miracles. And so, David Hume has this entire chapter and I think it's an inquiry into human understanding where he's saying essentially, and it makes sense, that you should believe in a miracle only if the falseness of the story would be more miraculous than the miracle itself.

But, I mean, the reason why he throws that in was just making another like underhanded jab at Christianity.

And he he makes lots and lots of them in his inquiry into human understanding. In

a way, it was like an anti-Christian text disguised as some relatively deep philosophy.

I mean, it was both, essentially.

But, his uh

imagination, his understanding of imagination, yeah, according to Alex O'Connor, I I think that was kind of like a a nitpicky kind of uh argument against Hume.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Rakasa. And Rakasa says, "Your usual advice when asked about dealing with unskillful emotions or thoughts is note it and let it go.

Classic mindfulness. What is your general opinion of Orthodox Theravadas liking for counter meditations, meta to counter hate, asubha to counter lust, etc.?"

Well, my experience is that they generally don't work very well. Like, I knew this young American mom who was trying to combat lust by imagining rotting female corpses, like swarming with maggots and this kind of thing. And my experience with this sort of thing both in myself and in others is that it it doesn't work very well. You know, in a way it's you're just struggling against it which which reinforces what you're struggling

against.

So, yeah, definitely just mindfulness.

Like anger arises, you note the anger and let it go which sort of denatures the anger and it stops it from having a like as much reinforcing power

to to the karma. You know, it's it's not adding to the anger karma. If you just note it and let it go, then it just dissipates. And to that extent the the like the momentum of this angry mind is dissipated to that degree.

But like meta meditation,

I mean,

I've never really liked meta meditation.

I'm not a particularly meta-oriented

human. I'm more head-oriented than heart-oriented.

And I just I mean, I experience meta, but it has to be spontaneous.

I can't just turn it off and on like a faucet.

You know, it's like when you're beaming meta in this direction and beaming meta in that direction and beaming meta in that direction, beaming meta at the higher beings, beaming meta at the lower beings, beaming meta at fellow humans, just on and on and on. You know, it's it's like this cookbook method of just generating loving kindness or friendliness or benevolence or love,

whatever you want to call it. And it for
me it just doesn't work. Or like
like um the main argument or the main
meditation

uh for combating lust is the 32 parts of
the body. But I'm a biologist or at
least I was trained as a biologist, have
a degree in biology, and to me the human
body is just like a miracle in
engineering.

I've I've seen autopsies, and I mean I
wasn't really grossed out by it. It was
fascinating.

So,

yeah, just my experience is that the
counter meditations, where you're like

meditating on the opposite of the problem, in a way it's sort of s-
I mean, for some people it may work. I mean, it's it's been in the tradition for over 2,000 years.

So, it must work for some people. It just never worked that well for me, and seeing other people do these things, it I mean, I was not impressed by the results.

Someone who's just got a lot of love in their heart might be drawn to to metta meditation just because it's so easy for them, that kind of thing.

But,

like an angry, hateful person who does metta meditation, they're essentially

dissociating.

I knew this one woman in Burma who, I mean, she had to be feuding with someone all the time. It was like it was she'd just be bored climbing the walls if you didn't have somebody to be fighting with.

And one time she was bragging to me about how she does metta meditation every morning, and I pointed out, "Well, I mean, if you're sending metta to all beings, you're also sending metta to this guy you've been feuding with for the past few weeks." And she just flares up and says, "No, not him."

And it's it's just they're it's like

make-believe. They're pretending to send metta to all beings. It's And then you have like this warm, glowy feeling that makes you think that it's working, but it's just a warm, glowy feeling, and you're not really sending metta to all beings.

So, definitely classic mindfulness is more effective, in my opinion, than trying to counteract some defilement by meditating on the opposite.

Or using any of counterforce sort of meditation.

I mean, it may work for some people.

It's just that it seems fairly obvious to me that classic mindfulness works better.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Damma River.

And Damma River says, "Of all the teachings of the Buddha, including all suttas, what percentage would you say was legitimately taught by the Buddha?

And what percentage was added later by other sources, such as deceptive political rulers seeking to manipulate people into submission or just monks seeking personal gain or even innocently not being able to remember the teachings correctly, et cetera?" Well, I mean, I've I've discussed this in some to some depth previously. I

wrote an entire essay on it way back before I even started No, wait. No, this is after I started doing a blog, but it was

um it was too long to put on the blog, I guess. You know, "What did the Buddha really teach?"

That was the the name of the essay that I wrote.

And I point out that I mean, first of all, let let just let me address this this part before I get into the the main answer.

See, what percentage was added later by other sources, such as deceptive political rulers seeking to manipulate people into submission? That's like

atheists, one of their main arguments against religion in general, is that it's devised by deceptive political rulers seeking to manipulate people into submission. I've had people say that about Buddhism, too, just by pointing out, "Look at the Buddha, he was of the political class. There you go. He was trying to control people, trying to keep people in submission."

But

I just don't see much of that in in Buddhism. Maybe in like later forms of Buddhism, you know, like [__] medieval Japanese Buddhism, there may have been some like political

pressure to change doctrines and so forth. I don't think that Ashoka for example, the Emperor Ashoka was seeking to manipulate people into submission by forcing monks to change their doctrines, that kind of thing.

I mean, is there's a lot more of that in early Christianity, I'm pretty sure. Or maybe I'm just being naive and just have not been exposed to any evidence for it. Then none that convinced me anyway. Like the Buddha being a Kshatriya.

Anyways,

um getting back to the main argument though, like

what percentage of the like the Tipitaka

Let's just set aside all the Mahayana

the entire huge library of the Mahayana
Tripitaka. Just Let's focus on the
approximately 40 volumes
of the Pali Tipitaka.

In in the Burmese edition, it's 40
volumes cuz they include some extra
extra texts like the Milinda Panha that
that some
some Theravada Buddhist countries don't
accept as canonical.

The Patisambhidamagga Well, I think the
Patisambhidamagga is considered, but the
there's like the
the Nettipakarana is also considered to
be canonical in Burma, but it's not
considered canonical like in Sri Lanka.

Uh anyways, what percentage of that would be genuine teachings of the Buddha? Well, like I've said before, there's there's like a spectrum of authenticity. First would be like exact quotes, verbatim quotes of what the Buddha taught.

Then you've got like paraphrase. You know, it's not exactly what he said, but it's essentially means the same as what he said.

Then you take another step and it's stuff that the Buddha himself didn't teach, but he would have endorsed it. You know, it would have been in a in accordance with what he had been teaching. You know, it would be in

agreement with what he had been teaching. And then you take another step and it would be stuff that really the Buddha didn't teach and wouldn't endorse, but I mean he'd just be kind of indifferent, you know, it's like he wouldn't denounce it as being the opposite of what he taught. And then you like the other end of the spectrum is just completely made up [__] that the Buddha would denounce. Just I never said that, I would not promote that. That is wrong view.

So, I mean where do you draw the line? I mean, obviously the last two groups that I mentioned would not be considered

reliable teachings of the Buddha.

But I mean, if you insist on verbatim quotes, probably be like less than 2%.

Um I mean just you look at the texts and I mean the third Pitaka, that the Abhidhamma Pitaka, is pretty not non-controversial among Western Buddhists anyway, that the Buddha probably didn't really teach it.

Then you've got like ancient commentaries

that are included in the texts that are unlikely to be taught by the Buddha.

Like

for example, the uh

the Niddesa

is is commentary. It's an old commentary

added to the text. Or also what is called the Vibhanga, the Sutta Vibhanga which is a ancient commentary on the Patimokkha rules that I mean probably that got added later. Even though it's so old that it's included in the Tipitaka is canonical. And I I kind of lost where I was getting to with that. Oh yeah. So, and then like all these fairy tale stories that that objective Westerners can't really, you know, talking animals and fire-breathing cobra dragons and all that. A lot of Westerners like me are are skeptical skeptical of that. So,

um if you get down to like the core texts that were common to all the different schools of Buddhism, not just Theravada, but the other early schools of Buddhism. And then you kind of weed out some of the that talking animal stories and all that, the monsters and dragons and so forth. So, you're down to less than half already.

But

I mean, you can also weed out the ones that

that really weren't even attributed to the Buddha. You know, you got some nun giving a discourse or you got Ananda giving a discourse, that kind of thing, then that's

you know, it doesn't immediately
um you know, cause like a red flag like
shouldn't believe that, but still it is
at least a yellow flag.

So,

let's just uh draw the line at
paraphrase.

Okay? So, it's either

like verbatim quotes of Gautama Buddha

or at least it's paraphrase of what he

taught, then I mean, even if it's in

agreement with with what the Buddha

taught, but he never taught it,

you know, it's it's sort of like

elaborations on what he taught, then I

mean, where do you where do you draw the

line exactly?

But, I have read

that the official position of the

Vatican since like the 1970s

is that

the the words attributed to Jesus in the

New Testament are probably at least 80%

bogus. That the that Jesus probably did

not say

80% of the words attributed to him in

the New Testament. And I assume most of

the bogus stuff is in the Gospel

According to John.

Because biblical scholars, a lot of them

anyway, are of the opinion that John or

whoever wrote the Gospel According to

John was

just putting his own words into the mouth of Jesus to sort of debunk or refute certain Gnostic sects or heretical Christian sects that were arising in the early 2nd century.

And

the the authors of the New Testament they they had much more of a sense of objective history and accurate record keeping than the Indians of the Ganges Valley 2,500 years ago.

So, personally I think in the in the essay I came up with a figure of about 10%. That would be we'd be doing well if 10% of the Tipitaka the entire Tipitaka Poly Tipitaka were

if not verbatim quotes of the Buddha at least paraphrasing what he said.

And then 90% would I mean at the at one extreme would be stuff that the Buddha would would have just positively denounced. There's way more of that in Mahayana than in Theravada like Poly texts. And then a lot of it is just sort of elaborations or making lists this kind of stuff that I don't think the Buddha would have bothered with.

And then there's just legends all these miracles all the like devotionism like so one of the first things that caused me to have doubts about the authenticity of the the Poly texts. I was very naive

when I first became a Theravada Buddhist. I thought that Theravada Buddhists were so conservative they were afraid to change anything and so it's relatively pristine.

And then I start reading the texts and there's certain texts that I just it's hard for me to swallow like the Buddha just sitting there bragging in grandiose terms about how wonderful he is and how people should worship him.

I mean it's much easier for me to believe that that stuff got added later by devotionalistic Buddhists than that the Buddha himself would be sitting there bragging about

how great he is and how people ought to worship him.

And then the talking animal stories and all that or like

some of the debates that the Buddha has where you've got this master debater on the he he's like a follower of the

Jains. I don't remember the name of the sutra. But there's this follower of the Jains who had a reputation for being a master debater and he's bragging about how he's just going to mop the floor with the Buddha in debate and then he goes to the Buddha and just caves immediately.

I mean, he doesn't even put up any kind of fight at all. The first thing the

Buddha says and this master debater just agrees with him and converts to Buddhism. That kind of stuff you there's lots of it in the texts and I mean, it was that kind of stuff originally that really started me getting like the seeds of doubt or skepticism with regard to the authenticity and reliability of the entire Tipitaka.

That was even before I got into Abhidhamma.

So, let's say 10% and I mean, there's different schools with regard to this. I mean, you've got the 100% school which is mostly Asians. They

think it's all 100% teachings of Buddha or 100% in agreement with the teachings of Buddha. That's mostly Asians. Then you have like the 98%

and I've met a few of those even Western monks who think that the Buddha taught 98% of what's in the text or at least 98% of what's in the core texts.

And that 2% is very flexible. It's like bouncing around all over the place.

Talking animal story, okay, that's part of the 2% and the Buddha bragging and grandiose stories, well, maybe he really did that. Okay. And then it's just flat earth, you know, Mount Meru, all this kind of stuff. That 2% gets used a lot. And then you've got sort of the 50%

group, which is the people that reject the core texts.

So, yeah, that would be a different group than the 98%

You just you you get rid of the court uh you get rid of the extra stuff that is only found in Theravada.

And you just get to the core texts that were presumably, according to them, was what was recited at the first council.

And it was common to all of the early schools of Buddhism. So, that's 50% already. And

most of like the really fundamentalist Western Buddhist monks belong to the 50% group.

But even with regard to the core text, there's talking animal stories in the Buddha bragging about how wonderful he is, etc., etc. So, yeah, I'm I'm down to 10% approximately.

So,

take that for for what what it's worth.

Let's see here.

But there is um

he does mention down here, let's see,

monks seeking personal gain. There's a

little bit of that, like you read the

the Petavatthu, for example. It's

considered to be one of the the latest

texts added. You know, it's definitely

not a core text. It's the ghost stories.

And you see that

it's mainly people being punished for not making offerings to monks. That they they get reborn as a ghost instead of a deva, this kind of stuff. You know, there's lots and lots of pounding away at you make offerings to monks and you're going to have a good rebirth. And you don't make offerings to monks, you can get a bad rebirth. That Yeah, that's probably like why is it your monks that that are, you know, just trying to get more offerings like coming up with this kind of stuff. And then like he's got another case here of people innocently not being able to remember

the teachings correctly, etc. And that reminds me of

uh the rules of monastic discipline that all monks are supposed to stay in one place during three months of the monsoon season.

And there's in in the rules of monastic discipline, there are cases where you can break that rule, where you're allowed to travel during the rains retreat. Like, you know, your mother or father is sick, for example. You know, they're on their deathbed or something, then you can break you can break the the rains retreat in order to go visit your your aging, you know, ailing parents. Uh and another one is there's a person

who has heard teach who knows teachings
of the Buddha that haven't been
incorporated into the
like into the sutras yet.

So, it's an old it's an old rule.

So, but still, I mean,

is a lot of stuff gets added that way,
where like, let's say you've got some
teacher who gives a Dhamma talk, and
it's a really it really strikes a chord
with people. It might not be really wise
or anything, but for whatever reason,
people like it, and it starts getting
spread around, you know, maybe
memorized
or whatever.

And then finally, there's some monks
come across that, and it seems so good
to them that they they just assume or
maybe it's it's already been assumed
that the Buddha taught it.

You know, it's just people assume that
that's so wise, the Buddha had to have
taught it, and then it gets it finds its
way into the sutras that way. I mean, I
am sure that some of the stuff in the
sutras was not really taught by the
Buddha, but was added to the sutras in
goodwill, just assuming the Buddha must
have taught it.

But, my short answer, which is too late
for that now,
is

of all the teachings of the Buddha,
including all sutras, what percentage
would I say is legitimately taught by
the Buddha? I'd say about 10%.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question.

And this is from Rui.

And Rui says,

"Did your oneric life change much after
disrobing?" And oneric is with refers to
dreams. So, did my dreams change much
after disrobing?

But I'm not an oneronaut.

So.

I don't I just wanted to say oneronaut
cuz I've seen that word before.

I think it refers mainly to piece of people that are lucid dreamers that cultivate lucid dreaming, which I've never done.

So, did my dream life change much after disrobing? Um

I think because I sleep more, uh mostly I could remember my dreams and I'd have vivid dreams when I was relatively sleep deprived. Like I wrote a a journal, kept a journal, um when I was living under the big rock ledge at the northern boundary of Alondra Caba National Park, and I was having really long detailed dreams. And I still have long detailed dreams, um

but not to that extent

as when I was doing intensive meditation
and only sleeping maybe 4 and 1/2 hours
per night.

So, I mean, it's just your mind is just
kind of more dreamy anyway because we
have like this physiological need to
dream, apparently.

And so, it was closer to consciousness
than than than now when I sleep more.

And I mean, I mean, I'm I'm a monk in my
dreams way less. I mean, it was I was a
monk for at least 10 years before I was
a monk in my dreams at least half the
time. And then sometimes it'd be sort of
a borderline case where I'd be like a

lay person hanging out with my buddies from high school or something. They'd say, "Oh, let's let's go and go to McDonald's or something." I'd say, "Wait, I got to I got to wrap up first, you know, you got to cover both shoulders before you go out in public." That kind of thing.

So, there is that. I mean, my dreams are seem to be less vivid now. Oh, they're obviously less monk oriented now. I dream about like tropical fish, dream about our dogs.

I mean, that kind of stuff I wouldn't be dreaming about when I was a monk.

I had weird symbolic dreams. A lot of airport dreams, a lot of huge building

dreams.

Sometimes, you know, you got the bad guy chasing you through like an airport or something, and no no matter, you know, what you do, he just keeps following you, that kind of thing.

Still occasionally have like school anxiety dreams

where, I mean, you show up and it's you got to do the final exam and you didn't know that there was a final exam coming, you didn't study at all, or uh it's like the term paper is due, and you know, you've got you suddenly realize it's due in like 2 hours and you haven't started on it yet, or it's like

the first day of school and you have no idea where your where your class is, that kind of thing. I still have dreams like that for some reason.

But, I did have this kind of a strange, almost dream-like experience at work just a few days ago.

And at work, I often catch myself in a dream-like state. I'm just like an automaton mode doing my job, and all of a sudden, it's like this higher level of consciousness kicks in, it's just like, "Whoa."

It's just so strange that I'm just doing I'm sort of like a large ant in this large swarming colony of ants doing my job, and then all of a sudden, it's like

I take a step back, and it just seems so weird that it's even possible that this is like my version of samsaric reality at present.

But anyways, I was at work

few days ago

and I was finished loading up a trailer and

I noticed that somebody

had balanced something way up high, way up in the the nose of the trailer, like the opposite end of the trailer from

where you load stuff. It's way up in the front. And it was pretty obvious that it was just going to fall over. It's like 400 lb and if it didn't get strapped

to the wall, it was going to fall over almost certainly.

And it wasn't me who did it, you know, I wouldn't be the one who would get in trouble, but still it's like I don't want it falling over. So, I'm climbing over this freight in in an oven like a sauna

in Southern California or California, South Carolina

and it's just like a a sauna in the in the the top of the trailer especially cuz heat rises.

It's still technically summertime or maybe around the end No, I guess it's not summertime anymore. The the equinox is is already done, isn't it?

Anyways, it's still hot and so I'm climbing, just clambering over this freight, getting up into the nose of the trailer and for some reason I'm remembering

how I went camping with my friend Auto several years ago at this point and he lost his phone.

And I don't remember what it was that reminded me of this, but then I finished strapping it to the wall to secure it, come out, get back in my forklift. It's I'm all sweaty from being up in the in the sauna of this trailer. I'm going to go get something to drink.

And so, this eventually out of force of

habit, I just kind of slapped my pocket and realized my phone is missing.

And so, after just like 5 to 10 seconds, it occurred to me I I just thinking of Auto losing his phone.

So, there's a good chance that's where I lost my phone. And so, I went and I climbed back up into the front of this trailer over over all the freight that was behind it. And I looked down and there it is, my phone is lying on the floor, you know, 6 ft below between these big pallets of of freight. And fortunately, there was a supervisor there who was skinny enough that he could climb down in there and get it for me. But, it was I I I mention this with

regard to dreams because

people have dreams

that are like trying to give messages to

the conscious thinking mind. And so, my

best guess as to what happened was

is that my peripheral

like subliminal awareness

somehow noticed that I dropped the

phone, but my thinking mind didn't

notice.

And so, it was like my subconscious mind

is like trying to get this message to me

that I had dropped my phone.

Which is what some dreams do. I mean,

that's one of the purposes of dreams.

And most most dreams are just kind of

spam or just, you know, rearranging, processing information you got earlier in the day to help you like categorize it and store it and so forth. I do think that's like the one of the main purposes of dreaming.

But still, sometimes the subconscious mind will percolate up this message to you through dreams. And it happened in that case just I don't even remember why. I just happened to remember right when I was losing my phone, this friend of mine who lost his phone.

So, that's that's kind of strange, but my conscious thinking mind didn't know.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Sea of

Axion Cpad Zetatum.

And he says, "How do you feel about inspiring a young man to become a monk?"

And I'm somewhat ambivalent. I mean, I certainly don't regret having been a monk for 30 years. I think it was really a a blessing to my life. It was one of the main purposes of this life was for me to be a monk. So, no regrets at all. I think it was very good that I was a monk for 30 years, even though I'm not one now.

But I do remember when I told a certain Zen Roshi that I was planning on becoming a monk, and he's said, "Well, in very Zen-like fashion,

I'm proud of you and I feel sorry for you."

Because, you know, it's nothing is just pure good in samsara. You know, it's everything is dukkha, first noble truth. Sabe sankhara dukkha, everything is conducive to suffering, including being a monk.

But it's it's sort of a more subtle kind of suffering, I suppose.

And I mean,

in a way, I've kind of run my course as a monk. So, I don't feel as like enthusiastic about being a monk as I used to.

But still, like I can see that for for a young man, it's it's definitely a good

thing.

So, I would certainly encourage it. You know, I would endorse it.

So, if if my videos or my writings have inspired anyone to become a monk, then that's that's good for me. I mean, that's in a way, it's good karma for me, merit, you know, gathering up treasures in heaven, I suppose.

But still, it's just helping helping Dhamma along, which is the main purpose for these videos, especially.

Even though I'm saying, you know, 10% of the teachings of the

the Buddha are likely to be authentic even in the poly text. You get to Mahayana and we're getting down to like 1%.

Maybe two.

But just cuz the Buddha didn't teach something doesn't mean that it's bad or wrong. I mean, the Buddha didn't teach anything about calculus for example.

That doesn't mean calculus is bad or wrong.

So, how do I feel about inspiring a young man to become a monk? There there's a certain amount of this kind of a lack of like gung-ho enthusiasm while the same time acknowledging that it's a good.

And I'm just going to move on to Seal of
Action C Pod Z 2 knows next question.

See here.

Please explain the meaning of this and
then he's going to be quoting from
Majjhima Nikaya number 44, which I
didn't look up. I'm just going with the
excerpt here.

Now, what is the concentration lady? Oh,
now what is concentration lady? What
qualities are its themes? What qualities
are its requisites and what is its
development?

And then the lady, probably a nun, an
enlightened nun,
says, "Singleness of mind is

concentration, friend Visakha.

The four establishings of mindfulness are its themes. The four right exertions are its requisites and any cultivation, development, and pursuit of these qualities is its development."

So, I'm guessing that the Majjhima
Nikaya 44

um

I can't remember what they're called. I think it starts with V, but it's a kind of question and answer, very analytical sort of sutta that usually is not being taught by the Buddha himself. It's a disciple of the Buddha in this case, an enlightened nun, who is teaching a woman.

And so, I assume Visakha here is I mean,
it doesn't have a a macron over the
second A, but I assume it's referring to
one of the Buddha's main
uh supporters, Visakha.

Um

let's see here.

So, I mean, because it's not attributed
to the Buddha, and because it's one of
these really technical, listy kind of
suttas, I would include that in the 90%
that the Buddha didn't teach.

I mean, obviously, it's not even
attributed to the Buddha.

So,

with that as kind of a a buzzkill sort

of intro,

let's see, "Singleness of mind is concentration." Yeah, I mean, I I can agree with that. It's singleness of mind. It's not it's not so much like one-pointedness as just unification of mind.

Cuz you can have concentration while still being very expanded. It's just that your mind is unified. It's not divided up into parts.

Or at least the dividing up into parts is kept to a minimum. It is reduced significantly.

So, I would agree with that as samadhi.

So, the four establishings of mindfulness are the themes of

concentration.

Uh yeah, that I think is sort of debatable.

I mean, the four establishings of mindfulness is it's

you know, it's like bod- body, mind, mental states, and and dhammas, which are kind of philosophical points, if I'm not mistaken. That that fourth foundation of mindfulness or fourth like setting up of mindfulness does appear to be somewhat ambiguous and controversial.

So, I mean,

how is like concentrating on a kasina disc

um one of the four settings up of

mindfulness?

I don't know if that's even included in like the Satipatthana Sutta or the Maha Satipatthana Sutta. So, this is sort of I don't know. It's sort of playing with ideas to some degree that

the the the themes of samadhi are the four Satipatthanas.

Yeah, I mean, maybe if I saw the whole Sutta, but

it I might see it in better context or something. But, yeah, I think that yeah, I think that that is questionable.

And then the next part is the four right exertions are its requisites. Yeah, I mean, you could say that. The four right

exertions are, if I remember correctly,
to

cultivate

um

good habits that you already have, you
know, to to strengthen good habits you
already have,

to acquire new good habits that you
don't have yet, to reduce bad habits
that you already have, and to avoid
acquiring any new bad habits.

So, yeah, this is just kind of plugged
in conveniently here.

You could say that it's requisites. You
could say he was equal validity that
other things are its requisites.

So, yeah, again, I I think that this is sort of a later addition to the Tipitaka.

I would guess.

And it's just sort of like taking ideas of the Buddha and just sort of like rearranging them and using them in ways that the Buddha might not have used them.

And anyways, then the next part is any cultivation, development, and pursuit of these qualities is its development.

I guess so.

But, yeah, I should Maybe I should just look just a second. What the hell?

Let's see here.

Sutta number 44 here. Let's see what it

is.

46, 41.

44. Yeah, the We Dall Suttas. So, it's the Chula We Dall Sutta.

Yeah.

And it's uh the lay follower Visakha went to the Bhikkhuni Dhammadinna.

Okay.

Yeah, Dhammadinna is the enlightened nun. So,

like I said earlier, I mean, if it's not even attributed to the Buddha, then it may be that the author of the sutta had just this enough

like compunction, is that a word? Enough scruples not to just put his own ideas

into the Buddha's mouth, but he just sort of took a step down from that and put his ideas into the mouth of some enlightened disciple.

But these are We Dall Suttas.

Um there's more than one. The We Dall is just sort of a question-answer format kind of sutta, and they're usually not even attributed to the Buddha, and they're this They show signs of lateness.

So,

that's the meaning of it.

my opinion.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is the last question.

So, this is going to be a probably less than a 2-hour-long video, which some of you can appreciate.

And so, this question is from BuddhaWrecks969.

And BuddhaWrecks969

says, "Do you think the assassination of Charlie Kirk has led to a resurgence of Christianity

what I consider to be a Marxist

doctrine. Personally, as a liberal right

Buddhist, I deeply detest this

hypocritical, intolerant Middle Eastern religion

which also wants to spread its poison in Asia.

Mhm.

Well, there's a few things I before I get to the main question, the main answer to the main question.

Let's see. I mean, to say that Christianity is a Marxist doctrine, I mean, that's like saying that Jesus was a Muslim, which some Muslims say, or that the Buddha was a Hindu, which a lot of Hindus say, but it's it's obviously an anachronism cuz I mean, Christianity existed long before Marxism did.

However, I would go so far as to say that both Christianity and Marxism are schismatic sects of Judaism.

And also, Christianity um

I mean, it was sort of like the the the Roman Empire's version of progressivism.

You know, it's like

you've got the the neo-Marxists, the cultural Marxists, the the progressives, you know, the SJWs as they were called 10 years ago.

Um nowadays, you know, they kind of fill the same social niche niche as early Christianity in the the Buddhist time the Buddhist time in like the Roman Empire.

So, you know, they've got the same sort of

insistence upon like acceptance of others, but only others that agree with

you.

That if they disagree, then it's just like this hysterical hatred and intolerance.

And just championing the weak and the poor, that kind of thing. You know, as the Christians did that and the later Marxists do it. It's just the main difference is, I mean aside from specific doctrines, but with regard to the main effect, the Christians, the early Christians of the the Roman Empire, actually did have a kind of moral high ground.

Whereas the progressives nowadays are champions of just moral degeneracy and they hate Christianity, mainly because

it's like a rival to them. It's like a competitor with regard to worldviews.

But also Christianity teaches you should have self-restraint with regard to indulgence and sensuality and so forth.

Whereas the Marxists who have somewhat of a different objective,

they're all in favor of moral degeneracy

because that helps to undermine like

Western civilization. Cuz they want to

undermine Western civilization as it

exists today in order to replace it with

some kind of Marxist utopia and 100

years of stagnant and failing economies

and totalitarianism and even genocide

have not persuaded Marxists that

socialism just doesn't work very well.

Christianity, I mean they were trying to overthrow the old pagan regime, which they did.

And I mean they just did it with this intolerant zeal in many cases.

But still they did have like morals.

Whereas the new left have replaced morals with just unrefined feminine sentiment.

Just do whatever you feel like so long as you don't offend our side.

To offend the other side is fine.

They're they're evil and bad and should be, you know, eliminated or in whatever way,

peaceful or otherwise.

So, I guess that helps to get out of the
helps to get out of the way. Also, I
would not call

Christianity itself hypocritical.

Some Christians are hypocrites. A lot of
Christians are hypocrites, but
Christianity itself I do not consider to
be hypocritical. That not all Christians
are hypocrites. I've I've known some
very sincere devout Christians.

You know, they mean they they admit that
they cannot live up to the standards of
Christianity because they're just too,
you know, unenlightened or whatever. I
mean, Buddhists do the same in that

regard.

They try to love their enemies even though they may not succeed.

That sort of thing. And of course, gather not up your treasures upon the earth is just completely unrealistic as uh like a religious view for people that have families and have to provide for their family and all that.

So, let's just get to the main question here, though.

Do you think the assassination of Charlie Kirk has led to a resurgence of Christianity? And to some degree it has.

Like, there's some people I think

Jeremy from a a YouTube channel called

The Quartering who used to do videos

with Styxhexenhammer666

until Styx was like getting drunk or something on the videos and like passing out.

So, anyways, um this Jeremy guy says because of the Charlie Kirk thing, he has it has inspired him to start going to church. And there are a number of people that you see on social media just talking about the same thing, how it has kind of caused Christianity to appear in a more favorable light among Americans in general.

So, yeah, I do think the assassination of Charlie Kirk has led to some kind of resurgence. I don't think it's going to

be just major,

but you know, a few percent more people,

like maybe let's say 2% more people go

to church now just because of Charlie

Kirk? Maybe.

I'm sure it has increased at least a

little bit.

And I mean Charlie Kirk is just sort of

like a modern-day martyr, a Christian

martyr.

He's not going to be canonized though

because he wasn't a Catholic.

Or Orthodox for that matter. I think he

was evangelical.

But it has caused Christianity to appear

in a more favorable light.

And I mean

I have considered the possibility of I
mean be willing for America to become a
kind of like

theocratic monoculture. You know, the
way the West used to be where like I was
talking about David Hume earlier. If you
weren't a Christian, that was it. That
was just cultural suicide. They had
cancel culture even back in the 1700s.

So,

what still I mean it might be worth it
for Western civilization in general
to just go back to traditional
Christianity even though it wouldn't be
good for me because I'm not a Christian.
And I wouldn't even pretend to be a

Christian.

I just kind of keep my head down and keep my mouth shut about it.

But

um I mean it could be I mean I would prefer that Western civilization go back to Christianity than like be forcibly converted converted to Islam.

Or just voluntarily convert to Islam.

I guess Indonesia mainly just voluntarily converted to Islam for whatever reasons.

So,

I say so a lot. This

You just have to put up with that, I guess.

Probably not going to change anytime

soon.

Um I guess I have answered the question.

Do I think the assassination of Charlie Kirk has led to a resurgence of Christianity in America? Probably not in Europe.

But other factors I think are pushing people towards Christianity and just it's a stabilizing factor. It's your tradition in the West that worked fairly well

when it was in power before it got replaced by atheistic materialistic scientism.

So

there I went saying so again.

But I don't think it's Marxist. I do think that Christianity and Marxism are both schismatic sects of Judaism. But you know, they they have certain like resemblances.

But and they they sort of glorify the weak and the poor although um the new Marxism is not just glorifying the weak and the poor and demonizing, you know, the strong and the rich, but it's glorifying the dysfunctional. You know, this like utter degeneracy is being glorified. Whereas just normal like healthy-minded people are being demonized to some degree.

So I'm still sort of

ambivalent

with regard to

um

whether the West should return to

Christianity. They're I mean, the West

is not just going to convert en masse to

Buddhism or some kind of neo-paganism,

probably.

So Christianity does seem to be the

obvious go-to for the sake of like a

stable traditionalist society in the

West.

But I mean, it has its upsides and its

downsides, obviously. I mean, just to go

back to the division of the Founding

Fathers without the slavery would be

good. I mean, that's that was what held America together for a long time is just everyone agreeing on just the ideals of the founding fathers and the constitution and all that. Although the left now really doesn't have much use for that either.

So I guess we're done.

I guess so.

So like I always say

No, like I never say.

Except once.

If you have any questions you think I can answer specially Dhamma oriented, Buddhism oriented, specially Theravada or early Buddhism oriented, then feel free to ask me in the questions or the

comments below.

I don't know, it must be getting late.

I'm getting kind of loopy in my my
speaking skills.

And like and subscribe if you have not
done so already.

And no more than three questions per
person per episode, please.

And be happy.

Alrighty then. I do believe we are recording.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 165.

I am your host Ponyo Bosa. Some of you may have noticed I didn't put up a Q&A last weekend because I needed a vacation for various reasons we need not get into. Although one reason is I just worked too much. So, I needed a vacation and I got it. And now I'm back to answering questions.

This is my beverage, by the way.

And 165 obviously is not prime at all.

It's $3 * 5 * 11$ if I did the math in my head correctly. And I suppose after

lamenting my aquarium situation, I'll just get right to work answering questions. And those of you who have watched those the few of you who have watched my aquarium videos may notice or may recall that I was talking about how if you have a balanced aquarium then if you're like putting stuff into it like uh like food and for example then if the plants aren't absorbing all of the like the minerals and so forth that the mineral minerals can like build up in the water. And so what happened is that especially in my 10gon tank that was originally just an invertebrate tank, the shrimps stopped reproducing.

And then just a few months ago, couple months ago, they apparently just started disappearing. And so finally, a few days ago, I did water tests on on both of my aquariums and like the nitrogen was completely fine. You know, the fish pee was just being recycled by the plants. It was all like a nice balanced system, but there was the water, the pH was like up around eight, especially in the 10gon tank. And the the hardness of the water, like the dissolved minerals in the water was just practically off the charts. It was just like very hard water just due to all the minerals in there. So, I

started doing water changes trying to get the the water um soft enough and the pH low enough that the few remaining shrimps will start feeling frisky again and start reproducing because for a while there I had like a just a population explosion of little red neocaradina shrimps.

So, I'm just going to start answering questions now.

And the first question is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "Oh, and by the way, before I get to what Romeo says, this is kind of a long one because this is two weeks worth of questions. So, this could be like three hours, especially when I keep digressing like this."

Romeo says, "I was recently on an airflight coming back from vacation and we encountered some prolonged turbulence along the way. Although things eventually turned out okay, there was a moment when I wondered, is this the end? I then recalled how important one's mental states are in passing one's karmic momentum from this life to the next. And I began wondering what the most optimum mental state was that I should try to generate.

I thought should I follow my breath and mindfully note my bodily sensations, thoughts and feelings as I would during a reposina meditation? Should I beam a

kind of humanitarian may all sentient beings be free from suffering mantra out to the world as I would during a meta meditation? Should I just calmly acknowledge and accept my fear and panic knowing that I'm about to die?

In short, what do you think is the most optimum mental state one should have in their last moments? And how does one cultivate such a state last minute?

Well, I mean, when it gets down to the last minute, um, I mean, the cultivation should already be, you know, behind you pretty much. Um you know it's like at the the moment of like crisis as a general rule you don't have time to think well what should I think about you

know how should I you know it should
just be automatic at that point like
spontaneous

intuitive if you will which is something
that's happened to me many times in my
life when like you're driving in the
winter time up north and you hit a patch
of black ice and the car starts like
sliding out of control. It's just I mean
you don't think well what kind of mental
state should I cultivate at this moment.
It's just automatic you know it's just
the mind becomes crystal clear and your
body just it's like something else takes
takes over your body and does whatever
is necessary to keep you alive and then

it's after the crisis is gone then you
you go back into your your normal state
of consciousness.

Um, but I mean, let's say you're on a
you're on an airplane and you think it
might crash. Well, it seems to me that I
mean, the best mental state you can have
when you die is the most enlightened
mental state you can possibly come up
with, the the higher level of
consciousness, the highest level of
consciousness that you can manage.

So I would assume that that would be
sort of like what Krishna Murdy talks
about with choiceless awareness. You're
just wide awake just aware of everything
and not reacting.

Just you become like a transparent sheet of glass and just everything is just like going through you unimpeded.

But this does, this question does remind me of a movie came out in the '9s,

uh, starring Jeff Bridges and Isabella

Roselini called Fearless about this guy

played by Jeff Bridges who is in a plane crash and he's one of the few survivors.

In fact, he's he's hardly I mean, it's like he doesn't have a scratch on him.

And as the plane is crashing, it's like

he's having like the existential crisis,

you know, and it's like before the plane

crashes, he has just made his peace with

the whole situation. He's just in a

state of wide openen acceptance and then he survives the plane crash and it it it abides this this new mental state. You know, it's like he has become somewhat enlightened. you know, he's he's been jolted into a higher level of consciousness and most of the movie is just how he doesn't fit in anymore. You know, it's like the the lawyers, especially the lawyer for his best friend that was and I think it was like his his work partner that was on the plane. His friend died, but he survived. And the the reason why Jeff Bridges survives is the plane is like starting to like, you know, show signs of distress. I don't remember the exact

details of why the plane crashed, but Jeff Bridges sees this boy sitting alone kind of several rows ahead of him who's obviously scared shitless. And so just out of the goodness of his heart, Jeff Bridges changes seats, sits next to the boy to try to, you know, comfort him.

And so if he had remained in his original seat, he would have died because he was sitting right next to his his buddy who died.

But like the lawyers who are like trying to, you know, settle like the lawyers for his best friend's wife is trying to get Jeff Bridges to talk about how terrified he was, you know, because the

distress and everything. You get more money that way. And Jeff Bridges, I mean, he just can't bring himself to lie. And there's people just pressuring him to do all this shady stuff, you know? It's just he's he's trying to trying to be enlightened in this world where enlightened just is not the way to be,

but I digress, and I probably shouldn't be digressing so much, but it it's definitely a good movie. There was a person who had a near-death experience who had an like an enlightenment experience at the same time. Sort of an echartlah type. Uh John John Ren Lewis he highly re recommended this movie

Fearless starring Jeff Bridges and
Isabella Roselini.

But getting back to the question just
the highest level of consciousness you
can manage is choiceless awareness. just
make your peace with what's happening.

Be just wide awake, aware, and don't
react if you can manage that. But again,
you're not going to be, you know, at the
at the moment of crisis. As a general
rule, the work you've already done is
what's going to see you through it. You
can't just start cultivating right then
and there.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question.

This is from I should be dead soon. And he says, "Is the intentional consumption of psychedelic substances by a monk considered an offense?"

And it can be. I mean, it depends on your depends on the reasons for taking it. If a monk takes psychedelic substances recreationally, then at the very least, it would be a dooka offense, which is the lowest level of offense, a dooka offense for taking a medicine without a legitimate medicinal need for it.

Um, but if he is taking it for what he considers to be like health reasons, especially like mental health, then I mean it's I'm sure it

would be controversial. There'd be some who would say, "Yeah, for those reasons it's all right." Then there'd be more conservative monks, you know, conservative Asian monks who just consider all take all drugs to just be, you know, like heroin, fentanyl, whatever.

So yeah, I mean at least if you're taking it for spiritual reasons, you kind of have a foot in the door, but even if you I mean even if you're considering uh if it's considered break breaking a rule, it would probably be the rule. It wouldn't be the rule against drinking alcohol because you're

not drinking alcohol.

So it would be I mean in in Pali it would be majana. That's that's a pacidia rule. If a monk consumes a majapana which is intoxicating drinks then which generally means alcohol

then yeah he's committed a pachida offense which is like an intermediate level offense but to take a take a medicinal substance without a real medical need for it is a duka offense which is as I say is the lowest the lowest level of offense and uh if you're a monk you may consider it worth the cost worth worth the sacrifice.

Like there is a rule that a monk is not supposed to be ordained unless his

parents give their permission. But even if the parents do not give permission, the monk can still be or the person can still be ordained as a monk and the ordination is valid. It's just that the monks who participate in the ordination ceremony are guilty of this same dooka offense which is the lowest level of offense. So I knew this this American man who wanted to be ordained but his both of his parents were like fundamentalist evangelical Christians. So they would not give their consent. But this American man went to Tonulu Seattle, the founder of the tradition in which I was ordained and told him about

the situation. And Tonulu Seattle is said to have said the song is willing to make the sacrifice. Which means the monks were willing to break a minor rule by ordaining him without his parents' consent just because they considered that to be for the greater good.

So, I mean, there are times when it's it may be considered worthwhile to break a rule. You see a beautiful girl drowning in a lake. I mean, some really strict monks would just sit there and watch her drown because it's against the rules to be touching a beautiful woman.

I mean, let alone like giving her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or whatever. Like in my case, um, it's

against the rules. It's again a duka offense, a minor offense for a monk to be like practicing medicine or giving medicines to lay people to to other monks is fine, but to like lay supporters, you shouldn't do it. But I'm living out in this area that's endemic for malaria, false malaria, which is the worst kind. And one of my supporters, some village guy, nice guy, said that his daughter had had malaria for it was some god-awful amount of time. It was like 3 months or something. And fortunately, they have resistance. There's no way I would have survived for 3 weeks, much less 3 months. So, I had

some state-of-the-art antimalaria drugs. So, I thought, well, it sounds like sounds like she really does have malaria. you know, I kind of asked, you know, because villagers will attribute all kinds of, you know, they don't really have much medical knowledge. So, yeah, I mean, she was having like fevers that would, you know, every 48 hours, fevers and chills every two days. So, sounds like full cypro malaria. So, I gave him the pills and she got better. And I mean, to save somebody's life, it seems the better choice than just refusing to break any rules at all. So getting back to a monk taking psychedelic substances like LSD or

something, then if he really thinks that it may help him spiritually to knock him out of ruts to blow the carbon out of his brain pipes or whatever that it could like help to ground him or whatever it is, then that's his choice to make, I assume.

And I'm just going to move on to I should be dead soon's next question. which is along the same kind of lines here. Says, "If a lay person uses psychedelics for medicinal reasons, wouldn't that be closer to skillful means than a violation of a precept? It seems backwards that a doctor can hand out Oxycontin, Valium, or Xanax,

whatever that is, to kids, but an adult can't use LS LSD medically."

Um, yeah. Well, I mean for lay people, you've just got the fifth precept, which is I ab, you know, I abstain from taking wine, ale, and other intoxicants which cause heatlessness or cloudedness of mind.

And so, I mean, the first question is, would something like LSD result in heedlessness or cloudedness of mind? I mean, to some degree, it can cause like a pathological clarity of mind. But then again, I mean, some people if especially if they're taking LSD recreationally or they're already mentally unstable to begin with, you

know, they might have like latent schizophrenia or something. Those are the ones that like jump off of roofs and that kind of thing. They think they can fly, they jump out a window, and then they just drop like a rock.

So the person has to know himself or herself to make like a wise decision with regard to this kind of thing.

Um

but let's see here. Let's get back to the question. If a lay person uses psychedelics for medicinal reasons, wouldn't that be closer to skillful means than a violation of a precept?

Yeah, I I would I would assume so. I

mean, it would only be a violation of a precept if it makes you less conscious instead of more conscious.

And my experience with psychedelics is it tends to make me more conscious. I was never really tempted to jump out of windows or any such thing.

So yeah, I mean as a monk I did take psychedelics a few times and I also took uh I attended a few ceremonies as a monk. Whether I would be considered a psychedelic or not, I don't know.

um some of the effects are similar like the like the visuals and so forth.

So yeah, I think it's uh a person has to be honest with themself you know it's you shouldn't take drugs just to escape

from just the the burden of ordinary
conscious samsara that kind of thing.

But if you think that it really can help
you in I mean my generation of monks at
least half of them started with
psychedelics and then saw that there
were other ways of looking at reality
that are just as valid as the normal one
maybe even more valid. And then they
wanted to try to cultivate these
expanded states of consciousness without
the chemicals. They got into meditation
eventually became monks.

So it's not entirely a bad thing. Like
Ram Doss started off with psychedelics.
That's one reason why he was one of my

heroes when I was in high school. You know, he was kind of taking the the psychedelic road to spirituality at first. Although he eventually stopped taking the psychedelics, mainly because it wasn't necessary anymore. He could attain a lot of the same states just through meditation.

And you shouldn't be doing meditation as a substitute for for hard drugs.

But

for the sake of expanded consciousness, greater mental clarity.

Okay. So I guess I answered that one.

I'm going to move on to the next

question. This is from Newman. And

Newman says, "Outside of meditative

insight, are there other ways to deduce former lives? For example, if you're attracted to exin interest in this life, it could suggest some karmic attachment of a former life and so on. Yeah. Well, I mean, aside from meditative insight, I think one of the usual ways of doing past life regressions would be through hypnosis. So, there's that, too. There's no guarantee that what you experience in hypnosis or experience in meditation for that matter is a real genuine past life. It could just be like subconscious imagination.

For example, people that do past life regressions and they're they recall a

life in like ancient Egypt or something.
Still they're speaking modern English,
you know, they still don't understand
ancient Egyptian, that kind of thing.
And then they might even pinpoint the
exact year like using the Christian
calendar which Yeah. So some of it I'm
sure is just subconscious imagination.
But aside from meditation, meditative
insight and also hypnotic regression.
Yeah, I mean I've I've done that other
ways to deduce former lives. It's like
any kind of character trait that is not
easily explainable through genetics and
past experience
then I mean that's hypothetically could
be kind of momentum from a past life.

And so uh are just like intuitive, you know, you can just get intuitive hunches that I mean I mean it's certainly not proving anything. It's not really evidence or just kind of flimsy evidence, but still I mean you can consider it like uh I've had just a certain fascination for certain periods or just a lot of karma. I've had a lot of Japanese karma in my life, for example. Just I just I've been to Japan three times. Never really planned on going there, you know. I just wound up there, you know. I'm just traveling with some monks or whatever and we stop off in Japan on the way to Burma, that kind

of thing. And

I mean, it's possible that I was

Japanese in a previous life. I just kind

of intuitively that feels right that

like maybe around the 1700s

I was Japanese

or uh like I have a fascination for like

medieval England

and so there's a good chance I mean I've

I've kind of used various like intuitive

hunches and personality traits and so

forth to come up with a kind of

hypothetical existence for me in

medieval like 14th century England where

I was probably a rascally monk. Didn't

take my vows very seriously. May have

met my current sweetheart at that time

in medieval England. She was probably married to some kind of knight or lord or something and I was just a rascally monk who like talk dirty in Latin to her. That kind of thing.

Probably transcribe manuscripts for a living because the printing press hadn't been invented yet.

Um, and uh, I mean among other things, there's a good chance I died of bubonic plague

and I still have like a like a purple birthmark right in the area where I think I may have had the boobo.

So, I mean, you can hypothetically come up with with certain ideas like maybe,

but you shouldn't be too sure about it,
you know? It's just maybe, just maybe. I
was like some kind of shaman who
worshiped cobras in like prehistoric
northwestern India like on the outskirts
of the Indus Valley civilization.

Maybe

it would have helped to account my the
fact that I just love snakes. You know
it's like most people they have this
phobia of snakes. It's like um I read in
like a book by Carl Sagan long ago that
there's supposedly even like a special
center in the brain somewhere that
recognizes snakes, which is one reason
why if you're walking down the trail and
you see like a stick or something by

the side of the trail, especially in snake country like Burma, then immediately your mind just goes to that. It's like, nope, not a snake. Okay. And then you continue on your way. But for some reason, I would just be like filled with joy at seeing especially a big snake, you know, a six-footer. I'd just be in raptures.

So,

how do you how do you account for that?

Well, I mean, you could hypothesize. You could just guess that maybe I was I was into snakes like in India or something long ago where they did worship cobras might still worship cobras in a few

places for all I know.

So yeah, I mean if genetics and past experience won't account for some fascination like for some period in history, you know, like ancient Greece or like early Republican Rome, that kind of thing. Then I mean like I've had a fascination for for certain cultures and then certain other cultures like Meso America, no interest at all. Like China, not so much. ancient Egypt almost none. But then certain other cultures are really interesting to me. Why is that? I mean, you could just account for it in just totally mundane ways. Or you could say, well, maybe I lived in that culture long ago, and that's why I'm so

interested, you know, why there's such an affinity.

But you really can't be sure. It's it's just all the sort of this speculation.

And I'm just going to move on to

Newman's next question. He says, "If you encountered powers or sides, I guess eds in poly during your time and experience as a monk, did they solidify a belief that Buddhism was the truth?"

Well, I mean, Buddhism is the truth is is really just a a totally scattershot kind of statement because I don't think everything in Buddhism is necessarily true like like the the mythology and stuff that gets added or like the some

of the Indian cultural elements that just kind of got absorbed into Buddhism because Buddhism arose and developed in India, northern India. So yeah, maybe I'd I would kind of tweak this the question not so much that Buddhism is the truth, but like dharma or dharma is the truth. That might get a little closer to like a really accurate sort of statement or question um or more applicable anyway. And I got to make sure that we are Yeah, we've been recording for several minutes already.

So yeah, I mean encountering powers, you know, just having strange events, strange synchronicities, especially when

doing intensive meditation, just weird coincidences that are hard to account for or just strange experiences in general. Um, I mean that doesn't necessarily prove that Buddhism is true, but it can prove that like spirituality really has something to it. That, you know, if you're doing like intensive practice and your mind is more open than usual, then synchronicities and just strange coincidences and so forth are more likely to happen.

In fact, it may be that once a person becomes enlightened or just like a really advanced sage that these synchronicities are so commonplace that

they're they're just assumed to be the
psychic powers of the sage when really
it's just he is such a liinal being that
the rules of some sor kind of weaken
around him allowing kind of strange
things that are against the rules to
happen.

So let's see, get back to the question
because I just keep wander just toddling
away from the question.

If you encountered powers during your
time and experience as a monk, did they
solidify a belief that Buddhism was the
truth? I mean, it it strengthened my
faith in just dharma in general, I
suppose. You know, it just seemed like a
kind of vindication.

Let's see. Oh boy. I forgot to mention something.

Maybe I can get to it later because there's there was a question the question of that I I should be dead soon talking about lay people using psychedelics for medicinal reasons.

Yeah, there's I I mentioned before I used to have a a friend um an American. He was sort of he started off as a monk and then he became like an ex- monk who still was like a meditating hermit in Burma. He lived in the big hollow tree and he had a supporter in America that was sending him um like articles from uh it was like a an organization of

doctors trying to legalize psychedelics for medicinal purposes. And he I read this article written by a doctor of back in I think it was like the early 60s when LSD wasn't illegal yet or it was just kind of starting to become illegal that there was like this TV producer who had this teenage son who was just

I mean he was considered mentally ill. I mean he he he just would not participate. He was just defiant of any kind of therapist and he was going to therapist after therapist, you know, psychiatrist after psychiatrist. His daddy was rich. He could afford it. And the kid was just had like a chip on his

shoulder and just I'm not exactly sure what the diagnosis would be, but he was just given up as a hopeless case by numerous psychologists and psychiatrists and therapists. And so finally he goes to this place where they specialize in like LSD therapy. So he he goes to this room and it's like a welllit brightly colored room with flowers and art books and this kind of stuff to help prevent people from having a bad trip. You know, everything is kind of upbeat.

And so he takes this dose of LSD with the doctor and a like a nurse attendant there with him. and he's just kind of kind of mocking them just it's not going

to work. You know, I've already told you it's nothing works on me. So, after like half an hour, they start noticing that he's sort of getting more rigid and he's starting to like pant and sweat because he's trying to fight the effects of this LSD. And finally, after like an hour or something, I mean, he keeps saying it's not working. There's no effect. But you can see, I mean, he's just like sweating and just like really tense. So he he's suggesting he wants to lie down on this couch and they assure him that's probably a good idea. You should do that. And so for like eight hours, he is just rigid as a board on this couch just like panting, just fighting against the

effects of this this acid for all he's worth. And every once in a while being able to gasp out, it's not working.

There's no effect.

And then finally after just this very draining, exhausting many hours of this trip, you know, he he kind of weakly goes home, you know, in a weak weakened state and then he sort of re regains his his bravado or whatever. So he's talking with the doctor a few weeks later and he's just kind of scoffing. He say, "Told you no effect. It's not going to do anything." So then the doctor says, "Well, I suggest we try again with a much higher dose." And he says the this

young guy just immediately he stopped breathing and this the color drained out of his face. And then the doctor says, "But I suggest we do this at a clinic in Scandinavia that specializes in this sort of thing, and we'll have to have your father's permission." which which caused the the young kid to just immediately start breathing in and just start saying, "Well, I'm sure my father would not agree to that." But the father agreed. And so a schedule was, you know, a date was set up for this flight to Scandinavia to take a much larger dose. And the the kid is sort of stalling for time and saying, "Well, just give me give me some time." And what he does is

he just drops back into society. you know, he gets a job, gets a girlfriend, starts like associating with other people, you know, it essentially cured him, but it wasn't like any kind of like like insight or or inspiration or anything that he had on the trip. It was just he was so terrified of having to go through that again that he would just just sort of cured himself of this personality disorder, which is probably something that he had, you know, some kind of personality disorder, and just rather than have to take the acid again, he just dropped back into society and started being a a relatively normal

person.

So, I should have I should have mentioned that when I was discussing lay people taking psychedelics, but I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from pooping user. I do not understand this name. It's uh somebody on Bitshoot, which can help to explain because Bitshoot you get a whole different class of commenters than you do on on YouTube. It's like Bitshoot used to be sort of the the the refugee camp for the people kicked off of YouTube. Sort of like Mines was like the for the people that were kicked off of Axe back before Elon bought it and turned it into Axe. So anyways, pooping

user says, "How can we better understand the mechanism of animal sacrifice?"

Which is kind of a strange question. Um, I mean, most religions did do animal sacrifice or at least lots and lots of them. You know, the well-known religions, Judaism did animal sacrifices just it's all through the blood soaked pages of the Old Testament, especially like Mosaic law. You know, you're supposed to sprinkle the blood here and smear it on the horns of the altar there.

ancient like classical paganism, animal sacrifices. Although even the ancient Greeks,

they had already started growing out of animal sacrifice, you know, it was more of sort of like a a community gathering where it was only like thigh bones wrapped in fat that were actually burned on the fire and then the good meat parts were like cooked, you know, it was like a big cookout and distributed to all the attendees, that kind of thing.

But animal sacrifice I think there's like two main

reasons for it. Um one reason is I mean sacrifice

to pastoral people you know back before there was a money economy you know wealth was measured in terms of like cattle you know that was the way it was

for like the ancient Hebrews the ancient north Indians probably a lot of like European types where you know you don't have money you don't have so your wealth is determined by how many cows you've got how horses, that kind of thing. And so sacrifice, one of the main purposes of sacrifice is you are like paying, you're making an investment. You know, you are like sacrificing what is of value to you in order to get something that is of value like from a different direction. It's sort of like you're causing a kind of imbalance in the cosmic balance by destroying this thing of value to you. it in in a way it

creates like a vacuum that will cause more value to flow in and fill the gap which is maybe a kind of value that you don't have as much control over. You know, it's the the gods are going to reward you for offering this cow to them that they didn't really want or need. But still, it's like this gesture sort of like the cat kills a mouse and just brings it to your feet, you know? It's like you don't have any need for a dead mouse, but I mean, you kind of have greater affection for the cat just out of the fact that this cat is wanting to give you something. You know, this cat has made this gesture of love towards you. So you could think, well,

the gods kind of have a similar kind of feeling towards humans that offer dead cows or whatever it is, maybe even a hundred cows at the same time, a heck of a tomb. So, so that that might be a third answer. So that would be like the obvious superficial explanation for a sacrifice is you know you are showing your respect and veneration to the gods in order for them to smile upon you.

That would probably be like the superficial normie kind of explanation.

Then um this another explanation would be like what I was getting at where by destroying what is of value to you, you're creating sort of like a karmic

imbalance that will then cause good to come back to you, especially if you believe in that sort of thing.

but also especially with regard to animal sacrifice and like uh I remember reading like uh the emperor Julian who was the last pagan emperor of Rome. He actually went through this kind of a sacrifice where you get it down into a pit and there's like a grading over the top of you and then they lead a bull over this grading, probably like a a white one or just a really like a perfect specimen and cut its throat and then the the blood just like rains down on you and has like some kind of cleansing cleansing effect, that kind of

thing. that to some degree it's
limonality where by
like killing a living conscious being is
already it's
to some degree liinal especially if you
are relatively conscious. you know that
animal hasn't done you any wrong and
you're not doing it for just the sake of
food or or leather or whatever that you
know that you've got like these kind of
metaphysical ideas and it kind of
weakens the fabric of samsara to some
degree like I was talking about being
around an enlightened sage how they are
liinal beings which kind of weakens the
rules you know the laws of physics even

that allows strange coincidences and even more than strange coincidences to occur around them. And animal sacrifice or even worse or more intense like human sacrifice

is a very liinal act which can cause juu to enter into this version of reality which can then potentially be harnessed. In fact, I don't know if I mentioned this on a Q&A, but I do have a a theory about, for example, the the assassination of Charlie Kirk where there's all these abnormalities. You know, he gets shot through the neck with a 306 rifle, which is like a big game rifle. You know, use it for like hunting grizzly bears. And I mean, it's

just it doesn't even come close to blowing his head off, that kind of thing. or or just there's other like anomalies associated with this kind of thing. And it could be, I'm not insisting that this is the case, but it could be that it's such a liinal thing, like this public execution practically, that it's sort of causing like glitches in the matrix, which causes these abnormalities to be more likely, which is one maybe one reason why there are so many anomalies with regard to just about any like highprofile atrocity. like 911 is another one or the assassination of John F. Kennedy

is another one. You know, there's all these conspiracy theories and everything trying to account for these apparent anomalies.

It's not just a straightforward thing that is just completely follows the known laws of physics that there's all these weird glitches somehow.

So, animal sacrifice can have some of that factor added to it also.

But if you want to better understand the mechanism of animal sacrifice,

uh

I suppose you could you could read texts um from people in cultures that really took it seriously. Um but there's all these different ways of understanding it

like um in the in Vedic literature,
you've got the vedas, you've got the
brahmanas and you've got the upupanadas.
the Brahmanas were in between and they
were mainly like technical manuals on
conducting animal sacrifices or maybe at
that point they were getting away from
animal sacrifice but I don't think so it
was this was pre Buddhist time so
probably it was still animal sacrifices
at the time and there's a school of
Hinduism called mimamsa
where they still kind of take this
seriously where the sacrifice isn't just
you know you're showing your reverence
for the gods and everything it's like if

you do the sacrifice perfectly, you are compelling the gods essentially to do your bidding or you are it's even more than that. It's like by doing this sacrifice perfectly, you are maintaining the cosmos.

I think the Aztecs had some of that kind of philosophy also and they were doing lots and lots of grizzly kind of sacrifices.

So, I hope I answered that question because I'm moving on to the next one also by pooping user. He says, "What is an acceptable bed for eight precepts?"

Well, an acceptable bed for monks is first of all, a monk that or a bed that's narrow enough that only one

person can sleep on it. And you're supposed to stay away from high and large beds.

See, it' be high. Yeah. Maha. So, it' be high beds and large beds would be the the precept for lay people. For monks, it's just you're not allowed to have a bed where the bottom of the frame is more than eight finger widths above the floor. So, if you can take your fingers like this and stick it underneath the bed, the bed frame, then it's too high. Well, I mean, just sleeping on a mat or just a little pallet on the floor is fine. So, I would assume that you could use that as a way of determining the

acceptable bed for uh a lay person keeping a precepts. So, I mean, if you just sleep on a mat on the floor, you're you're in no danger of breaking the precept, but the bed should not be large enough for more than one person to sleep on it. And if you're following the monk rules, then you shouldn't be able to put your eight fingers like this and fit them between the bottom of the bed frame and the floor, which is kind of an easy rule to cheat because you could have like a box springs a foot thick and then just be still sleeping way up high. Pretty sure they didn't have box springs in the Buddhist time. And I'm just going to move on to pump

pooping users. Third question. He says,
I assume it's a he. Has meditation or
internal work ever produced for you an
outof body or alternate reality
experience? And I would like to
apologize right off the bat for using
double air quotes even when the
questioner only uses single air quotes.
Maybe they're from England and and don't
speak the language
uh as well as we do or some such.
So let's see here. Has meditation or
internal work ever produced for you an
out-of- body or alternate reality
experience? Well, the only out of body
experience or the only thing that I

could even interpret as a possible out-of-body experience was caused by taking some derivative of Bella as a teenager.

So that was that was a drug thing. I was just hallucinating wildly too.

Um alternate reality experience.

Uh I mean it depends on what you mean by alternate reality. I mean when you get into deep meditative states I mean obviously you're not dealing with the same kind of reality as you would be walking down the street somewhere.

So yeah, alternate reality. I mean, it's just be like a refined version of reality maybe or a refined version of samsara, I should say, getting a little

closer to actual reality.

[Music]

So, yeah, the out-of- body experiences
I've never had as a result of
meditation.

I guess some people would argue that you
have them in your dreams at night every
night, but I'm not so sure about that.

And the alternate reality, it would it
would depend on your definition of
alternate reality. But I mean, I have
had weird like altered states of
consciousness which kind of produce de
facto an alternate reality, an alternate
semi-reality. Anyway,

uh but I mean I never really I mean

aside from mystical states then I mean alternate realities and so forth really are not the point. They're not important. They're not something that should be cultivated other than just becoming more and more conscious.

Raising your level of consciousness, that that's important. But astral traveling and so forth is more of a distraction

than uh than an actual, you know, something that's helping you to attain the goal.

And I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Siovak and Seipad Zidana. And SEO of action sepad zed says is the Mahayana belief that the Buddha

never really attained Paribana and the highest goal is of staying in samsara to help others with fabricated teachings of the Buddha actually just Maraana and Mara of course is sort of like the Buddhist equivalent of of the devil you know he's the tempter he's the he's the deity who is trying to keep people unenlightened

in fact I mean he's not like the devil so much in that uh Mara I mean if he can't get you to be bad he'll get you to be good you know if he can't get you to just wallow in sensuality you know he'll get you to do acts of merit because even if you do acts of merit you're still

kind of within the realm of samsara you
know even the heaven realms are in
samsara

but this question I mean it's it's a
matter of a matter of personal opinion
I'm sure there's lots of people who
think that Mahayana Buddhism is just the
product of Mara.

And you know, they got their they got
their evidence.

I think uh my buddy Brian might be of
the opinion that Mara made Mahayana. He
might call it Marana sometimes.

But let's see. Let's just get down to
the nitty-gritty here. Just get down to
the brass tax, if you will. Whatever the
hell that means. Brass tax. Is the

Mahayana belief that the Buddha never really attained party nibbana. Okay.

Uh yeah, I mean he wouldn't be the Buddha if he if he Well, and see part of Nibbana would be when he dies. So they they're just assuming that he did become enlightened, but then after he died, he still continued to exist as some sort of cosmic entity or something.

Uh

yeah, I don't know. It's like you could I mean I'm sure there have been wise probably even fully enlightened assuming that their full enlightenment can exist in samsara that there have been really wise Mahayana Buddhists um even if some

of their beliefs
or tenets seem absurd on the surface
just like I think there may have been
enlightened Catholic saints despite the
fact that some of the beliefs of
Christianity are somewhat what
far-fetched from a non-Christian point
of view.

So

yeah, I mean so long as they're not
saying that he didn't become
enlightened, but I mean the idea that
the Buddha continued to exist after he
died. I mean even Ajan man believed this
and he is terra in fact he's considered
to be like the classic example of an
arant in Thailand and he believed this

that I mean after that u in his
biography I think it's I can't remember
if it's his autobiography or his
biography I think it was his biography
composed by Ajan Mahabua who also was
considered to be an Aron that Ajan man
was having long deceased deceased
Buddhas with retinu hundreds of long
deceased arahant disciples coming to
visit him at night and discuss dharma
which that's kind of far-fetched to me
even though a lot of devout Buddhists
especially ordained in a Thai tradition
would not dare to assume that maybe Ajan
man was a little bit nutty in addition
to being very wise I mean there's

there's not necessarily any conflict between being like really eccentric and having weird ideas and at the same time being very spiritually advanced. In fact, sometimes they go hand in hand. Uh the highest goal is staying in samsara to help others. Yeah, that I would consider to be more like Maraesque, more samsaric because I mean there are no ultimately there are no others that it's like the the sutra of Hui Nang, the the platform sutra of Hui Nang really stuck with me where Hui Nang supposedly says even though this uh I've I've come across later evidence that it was a cooked up kind of a fake sutra but in the sutra itself Hui Ning says is

that you know when you become
enlightened you look around and you you
see everyone else is enlightened too.
When you look through enlightened eyes
you see nirvana you see enlightenment
everything is enlightened you know sort
of like in the New Testament when Paul
of Tarsus says to the pure man all
things are pure.

So yeah, I I think the whole bodhicattva
vows of like essentially just defying
the teachings of God Buddha, the
historical founder of the of the
tradition, you know, who says if you can
do it, get enlightened in this very
lifetime. And I really think that the

whole like stratification of enlightened beings with the Buddha up here, a sama sam Buddha up here and then below that you got pacheka Buddhas and below that you've got like like great disciples or chief disciples, then great disciples.

Then you know you just at the very bottom you'd have like the dry visioned Araham who is fully enlightened but nevertheless doesn't have any psychic powers or any such thing. Can't even remember his past lives. can't even read minds.

Um, I think that is like an artifact of Indian culture where the Indians, Indian philosophers were trying to just analyze everything to death, just classify,

making lists, analyzing the hell out of everything. And I think they'd really jump the shark sometimes. But ultimately, I do think the Buddha was enlightened and he was teaching other people, you know, I became enlightened. You can become enlightened, too.

I mean, there's just enlightened.

There's you're either enlightened or you're not. Full enlightenment is zero delusion.

Nobody's going to have a higher zero delusion than somebody else with zero delusion. The wisdom is going to be the same.

So yeah, I think the idea that the

Buddha never really attained parinana
and still kind of exists in in within
the context of samsara kind of I mean
that is

it's not orthodox terravada obviously
and even if the Buddha did somehow still
exist I mean there'd be nobody there you
know it's like an enlightened being they
don't have any self view or anything
their karma is is like was denatured if
they have any karma at all. So I mean in
a way they become almost like an NPC or
just you know part of the matrix but
it's it's sort of like a a pure part of
the matrix that there's really nobody
there. So I mean that is a little more
acceptable than the idea that the

highest goal of dharma of Buddhism is to stay in samsara to essentially stay unenlightened to in order to help other beings which who ultimately don't even exist in ultimate reality. There are no beings.

So yeah, I think that aspect of Mahayana is just anti-Buddha or at least uh it can certainly be interpreted that way.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This also is from sea action zun and he says do you agree with her? She seems 100% correct to me but people don't want to face reality. And he

he shows this like a YouTube short. I think it's from YouTube or X or something, just this little short video of somebody interviewing this woman on a train or a bus or something. And she's saying that most religious people aren't really religious. And the main reason she gives is that if you really believed that anyone who didn't follow your religion was going to burn in hell, then I mean you'd be like waking them up in the middle of the night, you'd just be relentlessly trying to get them to convert because you don't want them to burn in hell. But because you don't really think they're going to burn in hell just deep down

you you get sleep at night. But I mean, if that argument that this woman gives is valid, that would apply to people like the Buddha and Jesus, too.

It's just like the Buddha and Jesus realize that I mean, everyone has to make their own decisions. And it can be very sad. I'm sure a lot of Christians are very sad to think that their neighbor Joe is a heathen and he's going to burn in hell. But just pounding away at it, just like relentlessly harassing the guy probably is just going to make him even more anti-religious. Anyway, so this woman on the bus or train or whatever it was saying that I mean if if

you can just let people go to hell, if that means that you're not really religious, that you don't really believe it. Jesus and the Buddha weren't really religious either, which is kind of a stretch.

It's just kind of a sad reality. I mean, it's sort of like knowing that everyone's going to die.

But, I mean, just because you're religious doesn't mean that you have to take at face value everything you find in the text. I mean, that's obviously the case in my case where I mean, just because I read something in a Buddhist text, I don't just naturally assume that it's necessarily true. for example that

only Terravada Buddhists can become enlightened. I'm I'm very skeptical of that.

Terravada Buddhism. I mean, I don't want to badmouth Terraata Buddhism, but still, I mean, it's its track record, its success rate, you know, how many people practice it compared with how many people are fully enlightened. I mean, it's you've got like a tiny tiny fraction of 1% probably.

But

let's see. Yeah. So, I don't really agree with this woman. She's just a smug kind of secular kind of person who doesn't take religion very seriously and

thinks that just because somebody can sleep at night with the thought that other people are going to burn in hell. I mean, you just don't think about it for one thing. Like a devout Christian who really does think that most people who don't follow Christianity or their particular like sect of Christianity are all going to burn in hell. I mean, it's not a pleasant thing to dwell on. And so, you just kind of don't think about that much. Just like you don't think about the fact that we're all going to die very much.

I mean that's that's true too. That's hanging over our heads all the time. We got the sword of damocles hanging over

us all the time.

So I think people are just even very religious people they have to have like a philosophical view on this that I mean relentlessly hounding people to try to make them become religious. I mean Jehovah's Witnesses do that. you know, they're pounding on knocking on doors. I mean, I don't know if they still do that anymore. I think their their prophecies have proven false so many times. You know, it was the end times for well, it's like this the final generation before Jesus comes has been since World War I, I guess. So, yeah, I I don't know if Jehovah's Witnesses still knock on

doors. I assume they do in some places anyway. We haven't had any knock on our doors since uh since I've been living in South Carolina. Anyway, so yeah, I don't I don't really agree with it.

So, next uh Sea Action Cadiraa says, "Thoughts on this? Interesting since you grew up before social media." And again, he just sends gives this link to this uh video of a Harvard professor. I think he was just like a psychology professor or something. and uh he's talking about default mode network and talking about how it's a good thing to be bored. How people avoid being bored. It's like you got to stand in line for

30 seconds. You just immediately pick up your phone and start scrolling on it, you know, checking texts or that kind of thing just to avoid being bored. And this Harvard professor is saying that being bored is actually good for you. It does have like beneficial results.

Although I watched the video like more than a week ago and I don't remember exactly what the benefit is other than just learning how to accept being somewhat uncomfortable.

I mean that's that's valuable right there. just to be okay with being uncomfortable is I mean that's one of the the first things that a monk should

learn, you know, especially if you're like the oldfashioned kind of aesthetic monk and not living in a a cushy monastery in town somewhere.

So

yeah, Harvard professor default mode network talking about how it's good to be bored. Yeah, I I assume it's good to be bored. It's even good to be worse than bored, like have irritation and so forth arise. You shouldn't just try to completely avoid anything that will cause un unpleasant mental states to arise because you have to learn how to deal with them. Simply repressing them by avoiding the situation, it's it's not a very good way of learning how to deal

with unpleasant situations. Just like resisting temptation just by avoiding temptation, it doesn't make you any more resistant to temptation if you fail to avoid them. So just having to face up with unpleasant situations or trying situations

um it can actually be a good thing. You shouldn't seek them out because that's deliberate self- torture if you take it to extremes. But I mean just let it happen naturally. You just let your karma bring it upon you at at your own natural rate. And that's that's like the middle path. It's it's one of many middle paths, you know. It's not you're

avoiding unpleasantness at all costs,
which is what a lot of people do and
they all fail or you're just seeking out
unpleasantness

um just for whatever reasons. I mean,
that's not good either. So, you just
live your life as well as you can. And
when unpleasantness arises, you don't
try to run away from it or block it off.
You just learn to deal with it
skillfully if possible.

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question which is from
and says, "I thought you might find this
interesting being both a biologist and
evolutionist. Curious as to your take on
this point they make. It's fascinating."

And then another link to a video where I mean at least if you're going to send me articles or videos or something to comment on, I mean they should be short. And this one wasn't bad. It was it was kind of interesting where you've got this person. I mean, again, I watched the video more than a week ago, so it's not extremely fresh in my memory cuz I didn't know that I was going to be taking a vacation until this the day before and I'm thinking, man, I I should just not do a Q&A this weekend. So essentially the argument is that Darwin himself would renounce his theory of evolution uh if he knew just how

complicated cells are. And I really don't think so. And I mean it was a little misleading in the video because when they showed a cell like the internal structure of a sh cell they did not show the internal structure of a simple cell like the most primitive any bacteria the most simplest you know un ununucleated you know proarotic cells they didn't show that they showed like this ukareotic complicated cell with a nucleus and mitochondrias and all this kind of stuff And then they're saying that the complexity is such that you cannot reduce that without the cell just dying. And yeah, that may be true. I mean, it's

the same way with a human body. I mean, this you just take the cell, you know, multiply it by a few trillion, you got a you've got a body. And it's the same like a microscopic scale. Like we got a spleen. you just take the spleen out and you're gonna die unless you're getting like blood transfusions or something on a regular basis.

So, but that doesn't mean that we didn't have ancestors long ago that didn't have spleens.

So, getting to like the the simplest cell, I mean, it would be archy bacteria. It would be I mean there's an entire kingdom now the ary bacteria or

they may have changed the name of it but they're all anorobic.

It's it's like anorobic very simple bacteria and they're anorobic because apparently they evolved back when the earth's atmosphere was anorobic. There was no free oxygen yet which is the way it was on this earth for billions of years.

So yeah, I just I just don't think it's a good argument. And probably these people are creationists. I would guess these people are creationists. I mean, for the most part, people who argue against evolution, like on platforms like YouTube, tend to be Christian creationists.

I think there's like a new kind of people now that are also arguing against evolution for other reasons, but they don't have any option to replace it with. You know, it's like evolution is just mathematically impossible. But then they offer no alternative. It's just we can't figure out how it happens exactly, therefore it's [—] which is kind of hubris in my opinion. Or you got the Christians who just say, "Nope, the Bible's true and God did it." And that vindicates their religion and and so on and so forth. Helps to take down a peg or two, the main rival to Christianity and Western civilization

with regard to understanding how reality works, how how the phenomenal universe works.

So I think probably the earliest life would have been like a pond that was full of sort of like an organic soup.

And I've said before that the earliest protoo life would just be like a very simple enzyme which is a protein a very simple protein which replicates itself.

But then taking a shower the the other night, it dawned on me that in this pond, you could have lots of these different proteins that are like, what's the term? What does an enzyme do? It facilitates a chemical reaction. So you could have one protein that replicates

uh you know just one stage in the reproduction of itself and then you'd have another protein uh as an enzyme just help helping along another stage of just linking another amino acid onto the chain. And so you just have this pond of various simple proteins that are sort of I mean not deliberately because they don't have minds but just because it works are just sort of contributing to this organic soup in this pond and something like DNA like nucleic acids they that would come later and also cell walls like like lipid membranes that kind of stuff would come later and I did a a speech I had to do like an oral

report in in college once about how
lipid membranes evolved the first cell
membranes and there's
uh a thing called a myel where um like a
fatty acid or like a a lipid molecule
it's polar at one end and non-polar at
the other so it's soluble in water at
one end and not it's more like oil
soluble on the other end and it forms a
this kind of cluster called a myel with
I think the the water soluble ends all
pointing outwards into the water and
that that could be like sort of a
nucleus for the evolution of of cell
walls or just cell membranes where
you've got like a double layer of these
with the water soluble aspect pointing

one way or the other. It's and

It's been a long time.

But yeah, I mean, they should start, if they're going to be having this kind of conversation, start with discussing any bacteria, like the earliest, simplest, most primitive living things, not show pictures of this really advanced, practically modern cell with all these organelles and everything. And the organelles according to evolutionary theory at least widely accepted evolutionary theory that like the nucleus of a cell and mitochondria and chloroplasts and all that. I guess mitochondria itself would be plural.

Mitochondrion I think would be singular but anyways that those were like uh symbiotic bacteria that were invading a larger bacterium.

So that's uh I mean that in itself is kind of a blow to the irreducible complexity argument.

But I really don't think that Darwin if he were alive today would renounce his own theory because evolution the fact that evolution takes place should be so freaking obvious. Just looking at the fossil record, the fossil record alone is sufficient to demonstrate that life has evolved over time.

So, I mean, the argument shouldn't be whether it happens, it's how it happens.

And if these people that are arguing against it, I mean, they say it's impossible. It couldn't happen that way if they could come up with a better theory which they which they can't.

I mean or at least adopt a little bit of humility where they say okay just because I can't figure it out exactly the the mechanism by which it works doesn't mean that it's impossible.

Unless of course you're a creationist Christian and then you jump at that because you want the Bible to be true.

So yeah, irreducible complexity is kind of true. I mean, it's true with even with a human body. You take out one of

our vital organs, of course, we're going to die. But that doesn't mean that all of our ancestors had that same kind of vital organ. It gradually evolved into such a configuration of parts that that's like a vital part. But our ancestors didn't necessarily have those vital parts.

like a a nematode worm. I not that we're descended from nematode worms, but a nematode worm. It doesn't have spleens and and kidneys and stuff.

Maybe I should have said a an like an aroworm. We are descended from something similar to what is called an aworm, which is sort of like a an invertebrate simple protoish. It's sort of like a

tadpole kind of thing.

Anyways,

I think I'm just going to move on this question. There's lots of questions.

There's less than 40. So, I mean, we've have had more questions than this, even going once a week, but um still I don't want to be going for four hours. And this next question is from Trzaskiz.

And Task is says, "How an enlightened being can feel complete indifference to people's death and full compassion towards them, i.e. G not feeling any grief or sorrow maybe he was going to say sorrow and then just stopped.

So yeah, the question is like how can

you be fully enlightened? You don't suffer but at the same time you feel compassion which literally means suffering with

is a good question and I have uh I wrote an essay on this long ago. It might be in one of my books might be that old where I think the title of the the essay was compassion means suffering with. So, how could an enlightened being have compassion if he doesn't suffer? And I remember

uh the illustration I used for the for the essay is uh an actor playing King Lear with the fool. I mean, he's like raging at the storm, you know, he's going mad with grief.

And

I mean, if you look at King Lear like raging at the storm, going mad with grief as an actor, then at one level he's playing he's living the role, you know, especially if he's a method actor, but at another level, then he's like rejoicing that he's playing Lear on stage, you know, it's like this this other level of reality.

So I I assume an enlightened being. I mean when people experience suffering I mean he can he can feel that you know especially if he's he's able to like read minds he's like empathic or whatever then he can feel it. It's just

that he is interpreting it at a very different level than the person who's wallowing in some sorrow. That he is enlightened. He knows that this is all just kind of a superficial show. You know it's it's the matrix. So I mean if you can feel a certain compassion for King Lear standing alone in in in the rain going mad with grief raging at the sky in a way you can feel sorry but at the same time you know it's a play and then an enlightened being knows that this is a kind of play and that most of the actors are so into method acting they don't even realize that they're just acting.

So that's how I would explain it in five

minutes or less.

An enlightened being can feel I don't know if he feels complete indifference to people's death. It's just that he accepts it and and at one level I mean at the ultimate level it's not even ultimately real. It's conditionally real. It's virtually real. It's potentially real but it's not ultimately real.

Death is not even an ultimate reality in Abidama philosophy.

So it's it's just kind of a mental construct, an unenlightened mental construct, but still he can sympathize with that at

this

superficial level.

I mean, he can feel what others are feeling. It's just that he interprets it from a higher perspective than they do.

And I'm just going to move on to Trz because it is the second question which is what is the longest period of time you went without sleep.

So I mean I have to do some math I guess. Um the longest I ever went it's like let's say you get up at 9 in the morning. It's just assume for the sake of argument that I got up at 9 in the morning one day and then stay up all night that night. I used to do this when I was a kid just for just for the heck

of it just see how long I could stay awake. I'd stay awake until like 9:00 in the morning the next day. That's 24 hours. Then 9 at night, that's 36 hours. And then maybe you go to sleep at like 11, which would be 38 hours. And then it's like you've been without sleep for so long. It's like your system has kind of forgotten how to fall asleep. So it might be a few more hours after that. So I'm guessing it'd be approximately 40 hours would be the longest I ever stayed awake. I never stayed awake two nights in a row. I'd always eventually crash late the second night, if not early the second night.

So, I'm just going to move on to Chas's third question, which is, can you choose your preceptor or is it always abbot of the monastery you ordaining in? Well, according to Vineia, any senior monk, any terra, any monk who's been a monk for at least 10 reigns retreats does have the authority uh as long as he's in good standing to ordain monks. Although Buddhist cultures have like changed like for example when I was going to become a monk my main vineia teacher who venerable utania

I mean I liked him and I I wanted him to be my preceptor so I asked him can you be my preceptor and he was like shocked he's like oh no only Seattle can be the

preceptor so in Burmese tradition then as a general rule it's just the abbot who can be a preceptor. Um it may be some monasteries like if it's a big monastery like I stayed at Mahagandon and the the reigns retreat I spent there there were 600 monks and 900 novices there. So it may be in a big monastery like that there'd be like a you know like a lieutenant Seattle who who was like

he is allowed to ordain monks that kind of thing.

And in Thailand, it's even worse because in Thailand, you I mean, you're not it's like illegal in Thailand for a monk to

ordain junior monks um without the permission of the government. It's like you have to get some kind of certificate or something from the federal government in Thailand before you can ordain anyone. Even if you're like the ajon of your own monastery, that kind of thing. you could have been a monk for 30 or 40 years still the government has to give you permission to do it which is I don't know it's may maybe if Thailand is considered somewhat theocratic you could kind of justify that but I think that's just way too much um interference from you know the the secular government in SA affairs but according to Vineia I mean if if you're a senior if you're

been a monk for at least 10 years then
you have the right to do it.

Um,

but it's not necessarily the way it
works. I don't know how it works in in
other Buddhist countries like Sri Lanka.

But technically I mean it would just so
long as the government's not involved

like in Burma I am sure there are
monasteries especially bigger

monasteries where the the abbot just

kind of relegates authority to ordain

junior monks to other like qualified

seats at that monastery

but it is it it varies by from monastery

to monastery I'm sure and from Buddhist

country to Buddhist country.

So, I'm just going to move on to this question from Buddha Warrex 969.

And Buddha Warrex 969 says, "What's more important for your rebirth? What you've done or not done your entire life or your mental state or thoughts in the face of death?" Well, um, your last conscious moment before death is probably the one most important determinant of what your next conscious moment after like at rebirth, you know, your rebirth linking consciousness is going to be. So it's like your very last mental state in this life is arguably the most important with regard to determining what your first mental state

in the next life is going to be which is going to have a big influence on what your next life is going to be. That kind of thing. But what is more important for your next life in general is going to be all this karmic momentum that you've brought into it. So it's like your last thought in this life may be most important with regard to your very next thought because that's like a continuum of momentum but all your problems and character traits and all that kind of stuff is going to be this this baggage karmic baggage from lifetime after lifetime of just wallowing in some sorrow stumbling through some sorrow.

So it may be that your your last mental
your last conscious moment before death
is helping to determine like what realm
you're going to be born in. But the all
the rest of it is going to be the karmic
momentum that you're bringing with you.
And so let's say you're kind of a icky
person, very unskillful in your actions,
and then you just have this epiphany at
when you're dying, which allows you into
into a relatively blissful realm, but
then it's you're just not going to fit
in there very well and you may not last
there very long because your most of
your karma is kind of more in a
downwards direction. Similarly, if
you've been a saintly relatively wise

person and then you die in some kind of agony like cursing somebody which causes you to be like re be reborn as like a a pa or ghost or something then you're probably not going to fit in there either. You know, it's you might not last very long in that existence because most of your karma just is like tending in a different direction.

But chances are if you're an icky person, you're going to die with more icky mental states. And if you're a wise, saintly person, you're more likely to die with wise, saintly mental states. So, as a general rule, there's not much conflict going on.

And so, I'm just going to move on to
Buddha Warex 969's next question.

He says, "I discovered the following on a
page called pure dharma." Pure dharma
and would like to hear your opinion.

It's just a small excerpt from a longer
article. And then uh we got quotes here
from this article saying when Reese
Davids and others began the English
translations, they were heavily
influenced by Sanskrit Mahayana sutras
as well as by Vedic literature. When the
Europeans began trolling through all
these different poly and Sanskrit
documents, they must have been
overwhelmed by their complexity. It took
some time to separate Buddhism from

Hinduism. And in the process, some concepts became confused. For example, they assumed that anata was the same as anatma or anat, which is a Sanskrit word but with a different meaning, no self. Similarly, they took ana and interpret it as the similar Sanskrit word ana meaning impermanent. Most people write it as anata. It doesn't matter how you spell it as long as you understand the meaning, without refuge, without substance, helpless, but not as no self. And then uh Buddha Warex, that was an unquote. And then Buddha War says, "This is all very interesting. Please read the entire article yourself and let me know

what you think. Well, I haven't read the entire article yet, but I have read this excerpt

and

uh I'm Yeah, I mean it's it's probably true that when the the first pioneers in studying poly texts like TWW Ree Davids um when they when they started studying poly, they were probably heavily influenced by Sanskrit Mahayana Sutras, which were better known back then, probably still are to western scholars as well as by vadic literature. Yeah, I'm not exactly sure how much vadic literature these early pioneers I mean they start generally started off with Sanskrit so there's a good chance they'd

read the gita and the upanachads and that kind of thing.

Um so let's see when the Europeans began trolling through all these different poly and Sanskrit documents they must have been overwhelmed by their complexity. Yeah especially the Mahayana ones. I mean poly I mean the poly text I mean it's so long as you stay away from abidama and the commentaries there's not an extreme amount of complexity it's it's relatively straightforward see it took some time to separate Buddhism from Hinduism and in the process some concepts became confused well maybe and then he gives the

examples they assume that anata was the same as anatman which is a Sanskrit word but with a different meaning well how do they know that that there's this person whoever wrote this article is saying that anata which literally means no self doesn't mean no self that says it means without refuge without substance helpless

yeah I mean even the orthodox poly texts do not imply

that anata means without refuge without substance helpless I mean without substance maybe that's what Mahayana teaches with regard to anata you know there is no self because there isn't anything really ultimately I mean some

Mahayana schools teach that so I mean
then you can compare no self with no
substance yeah I mean that's fine
but still with no substance you have no
self and is without refuge where the
hell do they come up with that I mean
that's not that's not supported by the
poly texts themselves it's if this
article is correct then apparently All
terraata Buddhists are making the same
mistake as the early Europeans, the
early European translators of poly
texts, the first pioneers.

And I don't think so. I mean, I was a
monk for 30 years. I still think anata
means no self and ana means inconstancy

or impermanence.

Impermanent.

And it when I was in Burma, the monks thought the same thing.

So it's not just western like Christians turned poly scholars that are understanding things like anata as no self and ancha as impermanence. I mean pretty much all Buddhists including conservative Asians that have never been to the west believe the same stuff.

So yeah, I think these whoever is writing this has an axe to grind and it may be that they are one of the western kind of Buddhists or quasi Buddhists that still just intensely vehemently want to believe in a self. So they'll

just say, "Well, they don't understand.
I do."

Kind of like uh Ken Wheeler kind of
approach to Buddhism.

He's the authority. He's he knows more
about Buddhism than just about any
Buddhist supposedly.

Anyhow,

I'm moving on. The next question. This
is from Drip Walker. And Drip Walker
says, "Is it possible to spiritually
heal mild chronic neuropathic phantom
pain? Anything is possible. Anything.

Unless it maybe it's just a complete
logical self-contradiction like you know
a square circle or something. But yeah,

I mean to spiritually heal mild chronic neuropathic phantom pain. Sure. I don't see why not. I would assume that Jesus could have cured somebody of that.

Maybe he did. Just was too complicated of a of an idea of what the malady was to get included in the New Testament.

Maybe they just said the person was possessed by a demon or something.

So, sure. Is it possible to spiritually heal mild chronic neuropathic phantom pain? Yeah, sure. So, let's go on to the next question. This is also from Dripwalker. Says, coming back from the first question, if so, how should one go about doing it? Like what rituals, techniques, people, places should one

should go and any books, etc. Yeah, I think that's just barking up the wrong tree. I mean, rituals, forget the rituals, techniques, even. Yeah, I don't I don't think so. People I mean, faith healers,

that might be the kind of people you'd be searching out or people who really have no doubt whatsoever that this kind of stuff is possible and that happens like a Christian science practitioner maybe.

Um, so places you should go to, yeah, you can go to the Christian science practitioner. You can go to the faith healer.

Um, but let's say you don't have access to a Christian science practitioner or a faith healer. So, you just live a spiritual life. You cultivate your consciousness until maybe you reach this breakthrough where you just don't need the neuropathy anymore. that you just kind of outgrown the karma or transcended it or just exhausted it somehow.

But I mean there's uh Upandida's famous book was in this very life very non-Mayana title there in this very life because he's saying enlightenment in this very life.

Um yeah, he he had stories like one person had like relatively he came to

Upandit's meditation center with a relatively severe case of tuberculosis. I mean, he's like coughing up blood, that kind of stuff. And he just started doing intensive practice, you know, partly inspired by Sam Vega, the idea that maybe he's going to be dying soon. And he just healed himself, you know, he started developing more healthy mental states and mind is the forerunner. Mind it's it's all things are, you know, mind is chief. They are mind-made. So if you want a healthy body, if you improve the health of your mind, your body gets healthier or at least that's the ideal state unless you have some karmic need

for some kind of physical malady.

So yeah, just first of all just believing that it's possible or or just not believing that it's impossible. Just keeping your mind open that anything is possible. I mean that's that's like a giant first step.

And uh I mean if you can't be around people who really like are able to heal others using like

faith wisdom whatever then yeah just or another case is Ubaqin who was SNA's teacher he had some kind of cancer I think it was like skin cancer on his face or something and through intensive meditation

it just cleared up it went into

remission on its own. It's like or if you read Mary Baker Eddy's uh science and health with key to the scriptures which I mean that might be a first step is just read that read Mary Baker Eddy's science and health with key to the scriptures where there's like the last 100 pages or so is called fruition and it's just testimonies person after person after person who were cured of all sorts of maladies just from reading science and health key to the scriptures the first one which is the dramatic was like a 40 lb tumor and the I think it was a woman who had this 40 lb fibroid tumor. I don't that was using

oldfashioned language, you know, it's like apoplexi is a stroke and consumption is tuberculosis and all that. She had whatever whatever a 40 lb fibroid tumor is. She's reading the book and all of a sudden it just clicked.

It's like yeah that's true that it's all mindmade. You know, it's like when your mind just stops forming it, then it it stops being there. And so, she just she just read this book and it was like there was just this click that happened. And she just didn't have any doubt. I'm healed. I I never really had it in the first place because that's what that's what uh Christian scientists believe is there is no such thing as sickness. God

is good. God would not create anything bad. So, anything bad in this world is an illusion.

So let's see how should you go about curing yourself. Yeah. Well, first step is just not believing that it's impossible.

You know, have faith, I guess. Or I mean, even if faith is too much, just at least don't have anti-faith. Just this firm belief that scientific realism is true and that it's just impossible.

Although I guess even scientific realism is starting to get to the point where mind mental states are influencing physical physical systems

even determining physical systems.

Did I answer the question yet? My coffee is cold now by the way.

Uh yeah, just don't worry about rituals unless you have somebody who is like a a trained spiritual healer who actually has a track record of healing people using like mental state spiritual means or if that person gives you a mantra or whatever. Yeah, you might at least want to try out the mantra.

But as a general rule, rituals and techniques really are not the point.

I'm just going to move on to Drip

Walker's third question,

which is, are there dangers to healing

ailments? He says elements here, but I'm

pretty sure he means ailments. Are there dangers to healing ailments spiritually other than the condition itself not improving and causing harm? Um the the only thing I could think of I mean healing something I mean it's probably more dangerous to heal it through like traditional medical means just because you can have relapses and so forth or side effects of of the medication that kind of thing that can cause things to be worse or just cause things to start happening again like they were before. um a spiritual healing is probably more likely to be like a real healing, you know, even a miraculous one where the

where

medical doctors would just say that's impossible.

But I am reminded of a saying of Jesus in the New Testament where he says he can cast an unclean spirit out of a person which is sort of like healing them at least of like schizophrenia or something and that unclean spirit will leave the person and they'll start looking around for some other person to to inhabit you know some other person to possess and they won't find any suitable host. Then they'll come back to the first person. They'll find their mind's just like a a clean apartment. You know, it's all nice and bright and clean and

everything. And they invite seven of their buddies to to possess this person with them. So the person winds up even worse than before.

And from a or from a Buddhist point of view, you could say that's karma. I mean, if you have like this karmic need for some kind of handicap or some kind of malady, then just getting rid of it through whatever means is going to be like bucking the tide and it's just going to come back on you because you still have some karmic need for that. In which case, you make your peace with it. You accept it as best you can. Don't let it ruin your life.

Unless it's just you've got that bad of karma that you just have to have your life ruined.

Now, I guess I'm just going to move on this question. And we've been going for an hour and a half here. I think I'm over halfway done. This might be less than three hours. I'm on the ball. I've got what it takes.

This next question is from S Papaalapa.

And some Papa says, "Do you have any construction trades you've enjoyed doing or learning about throughout your life?"

I bet Burmese construction was wild.

Well, let's just deal with the idea that Burmese construction was wild. I mean, the average Bur Burmese like village

carpenter has like three tools. You have to have a hammer. You have to have a saw and you have to have a chisel, which is something that most carpenters in the west really don't use very much. A chisel, but they you and a machete. You have to have a machete.

And I mean, the the chisel is used for like making mortise joints. you know, you're the the the carpenters in Burma, aside from just like having a a swath of con of destruction all around whatever they're fixing. I mean, that's unavoidable. But they they use like the the chisel and to some degree the machete to just make notches in the the

ends of the wood and then they just fit them together like a puzzle.

And they still use nails though. But like driving a nail through teak or through ironwood, I mean iron trying to drive a nail through ironwood is bad.

And there's even worse. There's a kind of aacia wood that's so hard and brittle. I was trying to drive nails through this stuff and it was just causing chips to fly out of the wood. It was just breaking the wood and it was like trying to drive a nail through a rock. It just doesn't work. And trying to drive a nail through teak. It's like trying to drive a nail through lead. It's not that teak is really hard. is

just super dense like lead.

But uh I did a little bit of carpentry work when I was a boy, like a teenager.

Just like a grunt laborer for uh my stepdad's construction company.

And uh you know, I did a little bit of framing, that kind of stuff. But the construction trade that I've enjoyed doing or learning about throughout my life, the only thing that would really apply would be like rock masonry, you know, making rock walls and so forth.

It's I it's really satisfying, you know, just getting the right rock that'll fit right in that place, you know, that's that would be the the only

construction trade that I've really been had any real fascination towards is just like being a a stonemason. I think I'd make a good stonemason, but it's too late to be changing to stonemasonry at this this stage in my life, I think.

So, let's see here. I'll just move on to the next question. This is from Alba Coina,

and this is a really easy one to answer. Alba Coina says, "What are your thoughts on Steve James from the Guru Viking podcast and just the Guru Viking podcast on a whole? Would you be willing to be a guest on the podcast if given the opportunity?" Okay, that's actually two questions with two question marks. So, I

got to separate these.

Okay, first question first. What are your thoughts on Steve James from the Guru Viking podcast and just Guru Viking podcast and all? I've never heard of it.

I mean, I've heard of it. I've just never listened to it. I've never seen Steve James before that I know of.

And the dog wants to get petted, so I'm petting it. So, yeah, I've never never been exposed to a groove. making podcast probably on on the Discord server associated with me in general the Q&As's and so forth. Um there have been links posted but as a general rule I don't look at very many links that are posted.

That's I wouldn't have much time to do anything else if I just like investigated all the links that are sent to me.

So yeah, I mean I haven't heard anything bad that I can recall. I do think that there are some people on the Discord server who speak respectfully of Guru Viking

and I think actually somebody may have suggested that I would be a good host on Guru Viking but who knows because I I really don't I really don't know about this Guru Viking.

So that's that's my thoughts on Steve James and Elbow Cacina's second question is would you be willing to be a guest on

the podcast given the opportunity? Yeah, I' I'd be cool with that. I'm generally willing to be a guest on just about any any kind of show or interview or podcast so long as the person is in good faith. Sometimes even if they're not entirely in good faith, I might still be willing. Anyways, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from RFS. And RFS is taking us back into the realm of psychedelics. He says, "Do you think people who use psychedelics as medicine or for spiritual purposes are in violation of the fifth precept?" Um, not necessarily. It's again, it's according to the fifth

precept is I undertake the precept to abstain from ale, wine, and other intoxicants which cause cloudedness of mind or heedlessness.

And so if the psychedelic isn't causing that, that's not your intention, you're not just partying, that you really are sincerely trying to, you know, open your your throat chakra or something, then yeah, I think that it at least, you know, I've I've already discussed this like like an hour ago, but you know, at least it would be controversial to the extent that some people would agree with you at least. I mean, it's it's not just a clear-cut yes

or no. It would depend on who you're talking to and so forth. Then what your own personal position is, like with regard to why you're taking it, what psychedelics you're taking, you know, for what reasons, that kind of thing. So, I don't think that people who use psychedelics as medicine, I mean, that if you're taking it for medicine, that wouldn't necessarily violate the fifth precept anyway.

Let's see. or for spiritual purposes.

Yeah, I mean I I really don't think so.

There but there are people who would disagree with me like real like diehard conservative Buddhists who just think

any kind of mindaltering drug including even like caffeine should be avoided.

But personally, yeah, I mean, you have to be honest with yourself and know yourself fairly well. And uh if you really think that you you're going to get benefit from that, then I mean, even if you think that you're in violation of the precept, I mean, like I was saying earlier, like an hour ago, sometimes you may consider it to be worth worthwhile to break a rule. the old saving the drowning girl, for example, giving malaria medicine to a villager.

Okay. So,

I guess I guess I answered that one.

Let's just move on to RFS's next question.

Do you think that a micro dose of psilocybin or something stronger like DMT or iawasa

could both be seen as skillful means on the path? Well, a micro dose is it's not going to be making you real like clouded of mind.

But again, it's it's essentially the same answer as as to the previous question.

So yeah, I mean my spiritual path involved, especially in my younger years, involved taking psychedelics,

especially LSD at the time because that's mainly what I had access to. And I don't regret it and I think it really helped me. But it doesn't necessarily help everybody. Some people, you know, you just have like some latent weakness in your mind that can just cause you to break if you you get exposed to too much stimuli or, you know, the wrong kind of stimuli or whatever.

So, I'm just going to move on to RFS's third question, which is as follows.

Are there any plans for future talks with Brian or Otto? Well, Brian, we generally every month or two, one of us

will contact the other with some idea for a talk. I think Brian recently was going through another manic episode. So, I've been kind of maintaining a polite kind of I don't know don't want to call it distance, but really I haven't been engaging with him uh recently, but I mean every few months, every couple months approximately that one of us will say, "Hey, why don't we do a video on this or that?" And then we do it. So, the my videos with Brian, I mean, they're not nearly as regular as they used to be. I mean, we were doing like three videos a week back when I was a monk,

but still, I don't I mean, there's been no parting of the ways or anything like that, so it's it's very likely that we'll be doing more videos. I just don't know exactly when. And with regard to Auto, yeah, I'm always open to that. I think he's always open to that. Uh, he has made a few suggestions with regard to videos we could do. Um, my videos with auto seem to be wellreceived. I think one of the most popular videos that I've got on YouTube is an interview with Otto discussing um esoteric Hitlerism from a more or less Buddhist perspective. So yeah, there's a good chance of it. I mean, we don't have any plans in the

works at present, but it's always it's always open, you know, it's always on the table, I guess.

I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Ruie.

And Ruie says, "Do you see any viable relation between the following or is it too much of a stretch?" And then he quotes the Logian 71 from the Gospel of Thomas

and it says, "Jesus said, I shall throw down this building and no one will be able to build it." Unquote. And uh the Buddha says, "Oh house builder, now I have seen you, you cannot make a new house for me." So Ruie is asking me if I

see any viable relation between loian 71 of the gospel according to Thomas where Jesus is saying that he shall throw down this building and no one shall be able to build it and the Buddha his first words uh allegedly after his enlightenment is house builder you are seen you so you will not build a new house for me and I mean this loian 71 from the gospel of Thomas if I remember correctly that's in the new Testament also. In fact, that's supposedly um one of the accusations leveled against him by the Pharisees was he said he was going to tear down the the temple. And I do think that in the New Testament when Jesus says he shall throw down this

building that he's referring to the temple of the Jews on on, you know, the the mount of David, the city of David in Jerusalem, which now doesn't have the Jewish temple anymore. It's just got the wailing wall and there's a big mosque there.

But I think according to the New Testament, he's referring to the temple as the building. Um, and I think even if he's being metaphorical, I don't think he's referring to his own body. I don't think he's saying that he's not going to get reincarnated again. I think he he's just sort of like it might be applied to, you know, he's going to tear down

sort of the mainstream Judaism or something, which I'm sure the Pharisees didn't like very much.

So, it is it is kind of a stretch, I think. But who knows what the original context was. It may be that the New Testament has just taken that quote of Jesus out of context and applied it to something else. And I haven't really read the Gospel according to Thomas lately, but it seems to be just a collection of aphorisms or sayings of Jesus um without much context there either.

So

I would guess that they're not applying that they're the Jesus and the Buddha

are not referring to the same thing that it's just sort of a coincidence that they both happen to be talking about buildings.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Xenithoid. Oh, somebody just asked a question, but they're too late.

Xenithoid says, "Metallica or Mega Death?"

And

I mean, I've never really been heavily into either one. Metallica is they get played on the radio a lot now. There's some bands that never get played on the radio anymore. And then there's other

bands that just sort of counterintuitively they get lots of radio airplay and I don't really understand why. Like Mega Death, I don't know if I've ever heard them on the radio. Maybe I have once or twice.

Metallica, they're on the radio all the time. And I have said that Metallica, I've I just have not been impressed by the vocalist. This the singer for Metallica just does not have a musical voice. It's like he's just talking in tune. It's not like he's really singing. I just for some reason I just do not like the the voice quality of the vocalist for Metallica. With regard to Mega Death, I'd never really heard of

Mega Death until around like 2016. I saw um a meme called Magade Death and it had like like the cover of of like a a Mega Death album except the faces were replaced by Trump and and uh what's his name? Pence and let's see, Cruz. And then there was like what's her name that who used to be the the spokesperson who's doing the the press briefings and all that.

So then I I listened to because of that Magade meme, I looked up Meadeath on on YouTube and played Symphony of Destruction. And I like Symphony of Destruction. So um I think I would if I had to choose between Metallica and Mega

Death, I'd choose Mega Death if only for Symphony of Destruction.

So, I'm just going to move on to Zenos's next question here,

which is, "I know you don't like Extreme Metal, but please give your thoughts on Rational Gaze by Mishuga and an analysis of its lyrics."

Well, I mean, I started listening to the actual song and you can't really hardly tell what the lyrics are because in this kind of of metal, death metal or extreme metal or whatever it is, they're they're essentially just screeching or roaring, you know? It's like it takes a real effort. It's sort of like some punk rock. I remember

I just kind of as a joke I got this cassette tape back in the late 80s is we're the Meatman and you suck and it's they're just like screaming at high speed. You can't tell what the lyrics are. You just have to read the lyrics on on like the the little fold or the little paper thing that's in included in the in the cassette because otherwise you're not going to know what the hell they're saying. And it's the same way with this song, unless I'm just not used to it. Maybe people that listen to it a lot can just hear it clear as day what the actual words are. But I I did look up the lyrics. In fact,

I think uh I think Xenithoid actually included the lyrics below the question, but then I looked it up just before this one, too, because I it pretty much I I did it like a week ago, you know? I I read the lyrics a week ago. So, I read the lyrics again just a couple hours ago and uh it's talking about how, you know, we're not experiencing reality and we need to see more clearly or actually in one I think towards the beginning it's saying you have to squint your eyes in order to see reality better or something. And I mean it's just a common theme in like poetry and just art in general. artists, you know, they they're operating at like a different level of

reality from just the mainstream normies. And so I really don't think that this song by Mishuga is about enlightenment so much as just, you know, seeing past the mainstream narratives and, you know, just seeing some other narrative essentially.

Well, it really hasn't converted me to liking extreme metal. It's just the throat screechy stuff. I just do not get it. It's like it's like modern art where it's it's largely a matter of sour grapes. I think where sometime in the 20th century artists finally decided, well, we can't do anything better than

the great masters already did. So, let's just make ugly [_] on purpose.

Let's just stop with poetry that rhymes.

Stop with music that's actually musical.

I mean, I guess you could say extreme

metal. It's got some really good like

guitar riffs and stuff in it. That's

fine. But the throat screechy stuff is

is just deliberate ugliness for

ugliness's sake apparently.

I'm just going to move on. Next

question. This is from Yoshi Buouie. And

Yoshi Buouie says, "There are videos

circulating on the internet claiming by

multiple sources that if you're looking

at a beam of light while on DMT, you

will see lines of codes in the beam of

light." Assuming that this is true, it would seem very odd to any ordinary person. Have you seen these videos? Well, if the question here is, have I seen these videos? And the answer is really easy is no, I have not seen these videos.

But I mean it would seem that the the implication is that if you take DMT it helps you to like get out of the matrix enough that you're actually seeing code like Neo. And I I rather doubt that. I mean the idea that we are living in a you know what's the word?

Oh gosh, what is the word? Like like the matrix. We're living in a simulation.

That's it. A simulation. Yeah, I I can agree with that. It's just that the simulation is is mindmade rather than computer generated.

I do not believe that we are living in a literal matrix generated by computers that we're just like in the in the memory of a of a computer.

So yeah, if if people on DMT are seeing that, then I would guess that a lot of the people on DMT that are seeing that have seen the Matrix, maybe really got into it. Um or they've just seen, you know, one person happened to like the Matrix and saw that and then he posted it on YouTube and other people saw that and then they're kind of already ready

to start seeing code and beams of light while they're on DMT.

But uh I'm I'm relatively skeptical of there being any empirical reality to that. But who knows? I could be wrong.

It has happened like two or three times already that I've been wrong about something.

So let's just move on this question.

This is from Kundrew

and Kundrew says,

"You talked about the Bavad Gita and how it was Arjuna's dharma to be a warrior and kill. Can you speak briefly on this story and how his actions are justified and in accordance with Hindu morality?"

Well, that's going to the Mahabharata in the beginning of the Bhavad Gita where you have these two tribes, you know, you got sort of the good guys and the bad guys. The leader of the bad guys is blind, which is it's it's all very symbolic. I had uh a Balinese monk who was born and raised in Bali explain some of the the symbolism of the Mahabharata War.

And so you have kinsmen on both sides, you know, sort of like the Civil War in the United States. And you know, they're lined up on the battlefield getting ready for the, you know, the bugles to sound and they're going to start killing each other. And Arjuna, who's

like a noble on the good guy's side,
he's I mean, he doesn't want to be
killing his own cousins and uncles and
this kind of thing. So, he just says,
"I'm not going to fight, you know, I'm
just going to sit this one out." And his
charioteer, because you know, the nobles
fought on chariots, his charioteer was
Krishna, who was the god Vishnu. He was
an avatar of Vishnu. And so Krishna
starts explaining this is this is like
how the Bhagavad Gita starts. Arjuna is
refusing to fight against his own
relatives in this war. And Krishna is
explaining to him why he should. And so
Krishna is explaining how what you do I

mean this is sort of like the the main one of the main themes of the Bhagabad Gita is you just offer up the fruits of your actions to God. You know it's it's all it's all God. It's all on you. So you do something good you don't do it because you want good outcomes for yourself. You just offer it up to God like you're offering a flower. And you know, you do something bad which is nevertheless your duty which makes it not so bad. You know, it's Arjuna was of the warrior cast. That was his duty in life was to be fighting in wars like this. So I was one of his duties anyway. So it's just like you do something like that. So long as you are doing your

dharma, so long as you are doing your duty and as a warrior that's your duty, you just offer up the fruits to God. So in a way it kind of make it's it's almost like a Christian kind of approach where in a way it's kind of purifying you when you're when you're doing something that is uh would normally be considered, you know, evil. But you're just whatever it is, good or evil, you just everything you do, you just dedicate your life to God. You just offer your life to God. You're just you're just like God's slave. You're God's puppet.

just in just assuming that God knows

better than you do. Anyway,
so I mean that's that's essentially
how how the how the story starts, you
know, that's that's the story right
there. And eventually Krishna shows
Arjuna his true form or at least as much
of his true form as a mere mortal can
withstand without just being vaporized.
you know, he's just got like a a
thousand eyes and a thousand mouths and
a thousand arms and just it's just like
this river of beings going into his his
nashing teeth to be devoured. You know,
death, time and death, you know, it's
all God.

So, it's all just part of the divine
play that just the way it just the way

it is.

So yeah, his actions were justified in accordance with Hindu morality in that I mean it depends on what kind of Hindu morality is is broad spectrum. So of course some Hindu morality takes aims very seriously. You don't even kill a flea. But at this this other level this this other branch or strand of Hinduism then I mean it's you do your duty even if your duty is fighting and that's one reason why the Buddhists were wiped out by the Muslim conquerors in India and the Hindus managed to survive because they had like texts scriptures to fall back on in their religion like the

Bhagavad Gita that's saying it's It's
your duty to fight
that sometimes killing is okay. It's
like I mean in the Bhagavad Gita they
even adopt a kind of heretical
philosophy that's mentioned in the poly
text sometimes and that you know it's
like nobody really exists anyway and so
there's nobody really dying anyhow that
kind of thing.

So I think I answered that question. I
hope I did because I'm moving on to the
next question. This is from Dharma
River.

Indama River says, "Is enlightenment a
personal journey with a personal
conclusion depending on one's karma or

is it a onesizefits-all formula?" And then he says, for example, if two people practice exactly the same way, is it possible one person will get enlightened but the other one will not? Well, let's just deal with this second question first, which is like a sub question. And um yeah, sure. If two people practice exactly the same way, it is certainly possible that one person will get enlightened but the other one will not just because of you know the other p one person's got all these karmic stumbling blocks and inhibitions internal blockages and so forth the other one doesn't.

So yeah just outwardly their practice can look exactly the same. One will make great progress and the other one might make hardly any progress at all because internally people are not exactly the same. Even Siamese twins are not exactly the same like with regard to their their mental states.

So let's just get up to the the main question here. Is enlightenment a personal journey with a personal conclusion depending on one's karma or is it a one-sizefits-all formula? Well, I mean it's you could say it's a personal journey with an impersonal conclusion because when you become enlightened, personal is out. It's just

not in the picture anymore.

So I mean Nirvana is impersonal.

So it's a personal journey with an

impersonal conclusion

and the personal journey is the samsaric

aspect and the impersonal conclusion is

the transcendence of sams samsara.

Wow, I studied a little bit there.

Must be the cold coffee.

So, let's see. Did I answer the

question? That was I mean, it was too

easy of a question. The question didn't

take long enough to answer. You know,

it's sort of like the the insecurity of

being the first person to turn in the

test.

It's like insecurity is being the first person to turn in the test and insecurity is also being the last person to turn in the test at school.

So let's see. Is enlightenment a personal journey with a person? Yeah. I mean it depends on your karma.

Certainly.

Yeah. So I'm just going to move on this question. This is from Maximin

and Maximin says, "I do trail work and sometimes work on wildland fire crews.

I'm a skilled sawyer and looking to transition into a more timber or logging jobs since it's been getting harder to find steady work as a federal employee.

I sleep out in the forest every night

and always notice what feels like
spirits or just the energy of the space.
I believe in karma and rebirth and
sometimes feel weird after felling trees
all day. I hunted as a kid and it's
nothing close to the experience of
killing large animals, but cutting green
trees can at least have a minor effect.
Would you say felling trees for a living
is wrong livelihood?

Well, I mean, it's it wouldn't be on the
the official list of wrong livelihood. I
mean, official list of wrong livelihood
is selling intoxicants, selling animals
for slaughter, selling slaves.

Um,

let's see. Selling poisons, weapons,
that kind of thing. Um, and also just
any kind of dishonest livelihood. You
know, ripping people off, that also
would be wrong livelihood. So, I mean,
technically cutting down trees would not
qualify as wrong livelihood. But

um

yeah, on the one hand, I have to
admit there's there there's just this
deep satisfaction in cutting a tree so
that it falls exactly where you want it
to fall, like right in between those two
other trees, just pinpoint accuracy.

There is a certain satisfaction in that.
I'm pretty good at cutting down trees. I
know how to do it. Um but when you're

cutting down a tree, first of all,
there's is the tree conscious? You know
does the tree have a kind of
consciousness in ancient India it was
believed to be a kind of jiva like I've
said before one faculty life you know it
doesn't really have a thinking mind but
it does have a sense of touch you know
there is a kind of simple primitive
consciousness there but more important
than that I think is that a tree isn't
just a tree a tree is like a little
ecosystem there's all kinds of living
beings that live in that tree there's
squirrels and birds and insects and all
these invertebrates

all kinds of I mean it's just like an
environment

that is there that the whole environment
is essentially being killed.

So I mean even though it might slip
through the cracks with regard to what
is officially considered to be wrong
livelihood in Buddhist texts

still I mean you are even though that's
not your purpose you know you're not
really trying to do that still I mean it
does result in the death and suffering
of lots of little forest creatures.

So there is that that depends on how
robust your conscience is and whether
you think that it's just your dharma you
know offer up the fruits to God you can

do that I suppose

but karma is a mental state and it's going to be determined like if you feel like you feel bad about doing it or you feel guilty like you feel like you're doing something wrong then probably you're better off doing something else but I mean if you think you're not doing anything wrong and Technically, it isn't wrong livelihood from a Buddhist point of view as far as I far as I can remember. Then I mean it's your choice to make.

Let's see. I mean, putting out forest fires, I mean, that would be good. Even though you might have to cut down trees

to make like a fire break, that kind of thing. Still, I mean, you're doing way more good than harm by, you know, fighting forest fires, that kind of thing. Let's see.

See timber or logging jobs? Well, my father was he made a living by loading logs onto ships.

See, that's neither here nor there.

Yeah, this is kind of interesting where he says he sleeps out in the forest every night and always notice what feels like spirits or just the energy of the space. Yes, there's definitely going to be a change in the energy of the space when the trees get cut down. I mean, it also depends on what kind of logging is

being done. I mean, is it clear cutting or is it like selective logging? Like, I grew up in the Pacific Northwest and clear cutting was the norm in the Pacific Northwest. Partly because the Pacific Northwest rains a lot and so the trees have shallow roots. They don't need deep roots. Like the the climax community of trees like around sea level is the Douglas fir pseudo suga menesi. And so because it has shallow roots, it doesn't need deep roots to get to the water because it rains all the goddamn time that they just form thick stands where the trees hold each other up. And so if you do selective cutting with

individual trees, they just get blown down in the next strong wind if even if you don't cut them down.

So in in something like that, clear cutting is pretty much the only feasible way of going about it. But other kinds of forests, you could do selective cutting, which probably wouldn't be nearly as damaging to the whole environment of the place as clear cutting would be.

But I've said pretty much all that I really can think of to say with regard to this that again, I mean, people have to make their own decisions. And you know, you got to look within yourself and see how you feel when you do this.

If you feel like you're doing something wrong, you're probably better off doing something else.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question here, which is from Gordon.

And Gordon says, "I once heard a theory that the Bible is purposefully riddled with contradiction and nonsense because it keeps people discussing it. It stays topical and thus continues to occupy real estate in people's minds regardless of whether those same people think it's true or not." Thoughts? Well, I wouldn't say that the Bible is purposefully riddled with contradiction and nonsense.

It just may be that it's like a an unintended side effect that actually benefited Christianity by just sort of inadvertently being riddled with contradiction and nonsense which does keep people discussing it and keeps sort of the ideas alive because people keep discussing them.

But I have read that the Greek Orthodox Christians in particular deliberately play up the paradox of the Holy Trinity as a way of not so much keep to keep people discussing it, but just to sort of emphasize the incomprehensibility of God, how God can be one and three at the same time. And it's never really worked

out in a logically satisfying way. So yeah, I maybe that aspect at least among orthodox Christians is is purposeful in just sort of emphasizing a paradox, but it's not so much to keep people discussing it so much as to induce humility in us mere mortals because we just cannot grasp the godhead.

But I I think that yeah, this this phenomenon

um it can be real. It's just that I don't think that it was done on purpose.

I think you just had, you know, irrational religious fanatics to some degree coming up with irrational ideas that later people look at and it seems

irrational and they try to make sense of it. And just for centuries some Christians have been trying to make sense like int intellectual Christians trying to make sense of some of these contradictions and paradoxes and so forth. The trinity being one of them. Yeah. But I I really don't think that it was necessarily done on purpose. So, I'm just going to move on to Gordon's next question, which is, "You mentioned a while ago that Abid Dhama was considered to be the first of the Buddhist teachings that would be forgotten. Do you think that the theory from the previous question would apply here?" No, because Abidama is the most

controversial. People are talking about Abidama way more than they're talking about Vineyia, which is the first which is the first pitica of the the Buddhist typica.

So that would keep Abuid Dhama alive because it gets talked about more especially in Burma. Everyone's talking about Abidama in Burma. Almost nobody's talking about Vineia, including the monks. Most monks don't even really try to follow Vinnie other than just the the obvious superficial stuff that could get them in trouble. You know, they're not going to just be wearing blue jeans or a sarong. You know, they got to at least

look like real monks.

So yeah, I think it would be almost the opposite effect with regard to Abid Dama. I mean the reason why Abid Dama is considered to be the first um aspect of dharma to disappear from this world is just somehow somebody came up with the idea that the typica was going to disappear in reverse order. So it's going to start with the last book of Abidama which is Patana which is unreadable even to Abidama scholars pretty much. I mean it's very dense. I mean even like the translations or even like the original poly versions like in the Burmese uh sixth council version of the typica they just condense it down

you know just they eliminate the the repetitions and so forth just because I mean nobody's nobody bothers to read the whole thing anyway

but just Abidama itself gets a lot of discussion there's like the national Abidama tests and so forth um so it's just that somebody came up with the idea it's just going disappear in reverse order. So the last aspect of Buddhism that will remain will be the four parajika rules

which are the four most important rules that monks have to follow

which is I mean this emphasis on monastic discipline is almost completely

lost in the west you know western
Buddhists you know they're secular
Buddhists they don't give a [_] about
monastic discipline as a general rule so
they really can't wrap their head around
the idea that The book of monastic
discipline is numero uno. That so long
as the monastic discipline still exists,
Buddhism still exists. That's what they
say in Burma. Even though most of the
monks don't even bother to try to follow
monastic discipline very well. I used to
point out in Burma, it's like they're
making so much effort to keep Patana
alive by blasting it over loudspeakers
day and night sometimes and then they're
just completely ignoring what's what's

considered to be more important or at least more fundamental to Buddhism. You know, they don't follow the rules.

They're blasting patana over loudspeakers to keep the last book of of like the typica alive just so it won't, you know, the entire typica will be safe because the last book is going to be the first to go. They don't need to bother trying to preserve any of the rest of it. So long as you preserve the last book, you're preserving all of it because the last book's going to be the first to go.

Meanwhile,

everybody ignores most of the monastic

discipline rules.

So yeah, I I do not think that the theory from the previous question really applies here. And it's it's almost like the opposite effect.

So let's see here. I'm just going to go move on to Gordon's next question, which is could you go back to being a monk if you wanted to? Oh, I could, but I don't want to. That's that has run its course.

You know, I got what I was able to get out of it and now I have moved on to something else.

So, and I do think that I'm in the right place right now. I need to be with my woman right now.

So, yeah, I could, but I don't want to.

Moving on to the fourth transgressive question. What is the probability of you answering transgressive fourth questions?

And the next question is from PSA.

And PSA says, "Were you ever harassed or bitten by stray dogs in Myanmar when you were a monk or any wild animal? Monks usually walk everywhere barefoot, so they're consistently exposed to everything. How did you handle it?"

Well,

he's got two qu three question marks here. And then the second question mark is comes at the end of or any wild animal. So, I have been bitten by lots

of wild animals. Although most of them were like mosquitoes, bed bugs, ticks. Yeah, those kind of wild animals. I was bitten by a lot. Let's see. But let's just let's just move on to dogs here. Were you ever harassed or bitten by stray dogs in Myanmar? Okay. I was bitten by a dog once when I was a monk in Burma that I can that I can remember. And I even wrote like a blog post about this retrospectively.

Um yeah, I don't I don't know what ever happened to the blog post. It might not be online anymore, but I was living at Tomulu Chelson Doya in central Burma about 100 miles south of Mandalay I

guess maybe 5000 something like that and
it was I I went for alms round in let's
see Pima village I think it was called
Pimina

is that right Pimina yeah I think it was
Pimina

could be wrong though Pindlay no Pindlay
was different. No, maybe it was

Pintolay. Yeah, Pendle village. It was

It started with P. Anyhow, and there had
certain routes that I would take and I'd

have to like vary the route because

sometimes one route would get too hot.

There'd start being too many people

trying to offer food into my bowl. My

bowl would just get completely full,

overflowing, and people would still be wanting to put more bowl more food into the bowl. I'd just try be trying to get out of the village as soon as I possibly could just to avoid more people trying to put food into an already full bowl. But anyways, there was this one route I would take and there was one house. It was one of the larger houses in the village where there was a lady who would come out and give me relatively good food. I mean, some people just give you like a little cup of rice and that's it, but she would give me a little cup of rice and like some kind of curry to go with it. and usually like a like a little piece of cake or something that

went along with it. And I noticed there was an older man there was the father or the father-in-law probably who lived in lived in the same house who would kind of look on disapprovingly somehow. I mean, he wasn't religious in the same way she was. You know, she really liked offering food to the monk.

And anyways, one day I stop in front of the house, you know, just because the lady's gonna come out and give me the the rice and the curry and the the little piece of cake or whatever. And there's a dog there that just kind of trots right up to me and just bites me right on the back of the calf of my leg.

And it starts like circling around and I'm like, you know, once it bites me once, you know, I'm I'm on defensive, you know, I'm trying to keep my iron bowl in between the dog and me and I'm like circling around just always facing it. And the old man who would gaze upon us disapproving or gaze upon his daughter or daughter-in-law disapprovingly when she'd be offering food, uh, he lets out this groan because he saw his dog bite me. And uh you know he gets the dog away and he brings out some kind of ointment or something you know some sort of Burmese herbal ointment stuff and puts it on my leg and I'm just saying you know

it's no problem but there was a little
bit of blood you know he the dog did
break the skin when it bit me
and you know I just went on my way but
then I I'd switched to a different route
and when I'd switched to a different
route people on the other side of the
village would say, "Did so and so's dog
really bite you?" I mean, it became like
this village scandal and also I never
saw the dog ever again. You know, even
when I go back to that that house, you
know, later later weeks, the dog was
gone. And that old man just started
taking a just a real obvious dislike to
me. Like one time he would he would aim

or it was more than once he he'd ride his bike. He was riding his bike somewhere and he'd head straight at me and I'd have to jump out of his way in order to avoid a collision because he was I mean he was just or another thing he would do is if the o other monks were going for alms in that same village he'd get off his bike and walk it past the other monks and then when he'd see me he'd just get on his bike and ride past me just to deliberately show his disrespect like he wasn't going to he wasn't going to like get off his bike from me And I assume what happened was that the their family or you know the owner of the dog he uh he became like

this

subject of scandal because his dog bit me and so maybe he had to kill his own dog, you know, at the very least he apparently got rid of it because it I mean it bit the famous western foreign monk, you know, and I think he resented that. I mean, I really I I mean, he kind of resented me even coming to their to their house for food apparently. And then when he had to get rid of his dog, it just he just didn't like me at all after that. And then one day, I was just in a bad mood, you know? I just I was just in this [__] it kind of mood. And I'm so I'm walking into the village down

this this back road with like cart ruts in it, dirt road with ruts. And I see the old man riding his bike towards me and he's heading straight for me. And I was just in that kind of mood where it's just like, "Fuck it. Just let him run into me. I don't give a shit." And so at the last second he realized I wasn't getting out of his way. You know, I'm still looking down. I could see him with peripheral vision, but I'm just like pretending I don't see him. I'm just like looking down just I don't give a [__] And so at the last split second, he just veers his bike out of the way, goes into one of the ruts, and I don't even bother to look back, but I can hear

the crash. And I just I just keep walking. I don't care.

But he brought that upon himself. You know, never ride your bike directly towards a monk in a bad mood.

But that was the only time I ever got bitten by a dog. And it was I mean, I like dogs. I feel sorry for Burmese scy dogs that are having to live on rice and fish bones and like baby poop and dead lizards and this kind of stuff.

So, as a general rule, I I really my heart went out to Burmese village dogs, although don't particularly enjoy being bitten by them. But I didn't come down with any rabies or anything like there

is there is rabies in Burma. The one old monk that I lived with who eventually got bitten by a cobra and died. He told me that one of his granddaughters died of rabies. She got bitten by a mad dog just like 10 miles away from from the monastery.

So anyways, I'm just going to move on to PSA's next question, which is who is better at manipulation, politicians or women?

Well, I think it's a different scale. I think women are they're better at manipulation at the the local level whereas politicians are at least they try to manipulate. I mean it's I guess some politicians are good at

manipulation other ones are just like really bad at it other than just the people that vote for them might take them seriously.

But uh yeah, the thing with women is that I mean up until really recently, up until modern times, men were for the most part calling the shots, especially outwardly in society. At home, you might have henpecked husbands or even husbands that that take beatings sometimes. You know, it it would happen. But, you know, in society, you know, men ran society. women would produce the the the babies and you know they'd be like the main role model for new humans for the first

few years which is a huge responsibility
but as a general rule men pretty much
ran things and so I mean since
prehistoric times

I mean definitely long enough for it to
get involve evolve into our like the
hard wiring of our brains and everything
that women

um they just instinctively
try to get their way through
manipulation or there's like using their
mouth, using language skills
in various ways or sometimes like
withholding affection, that kind of
thing also as a way of sort of trying to
steer their man in a direction that that
is more pleasing to the woman. And it I

mean it's been happening for a very long time.

The best kind of manipulation is where they're just sweet and nice and please you in every way they can give you a excellent meal and then you know just smother you in their embraces and then tell you that you know as you're lying there in the afterlow tell you that the house needs painted something like that. I mean that's the ideal situation.

I mean the the other end is just like angry scolding and nagging and just making the man's life a living hell so that he gives in just for in the hope of getting some peace and quiet for a

little while.

But with politicians uh I mean I don't know with regard to manipulation maybe that priests and and in modern times also just journalists or propagandists have been more important with regard to manipulating the like the beliefs and the actions the behaviors of the populace.

I mean certainly like in the middle ages I'm pretty sure that it was like priests that were manipulating the masses more than kings were. I mean kings with regard to like superficial stuff like paying taxes. Yeah, sure the kings were were doing that but it's with regard to how you view reality was more in the

realm of the priests.

And that's nowadays it's more propagandists than priests at least in in the west.

So who's better at manipulation? I think women have it sort of built in as an instinct at least the certain tendencies that could be interpreted as attempted manipulation.

Whereas politicians, I mean, you've got female politicians that could be worse.

But I think Angela Merkel, I think she may have caused more damage to Europe than Adolf Hitler did.

That's that's certainly debatable, though.

But politicians, yeah, I don't know.

Politicians, it's it's hit or miss with regard to manipulation on the part of politicians. Or maybe I'm just more immune. You know, I I've I'm more separate from politicians than I am from women because I I encounter women every day, but I don't encounter politicians every day, except for maybe indirectly through the through this computer.

But PSA, I think, is just uh stirring the pot a little bit there.

So, I'm just going to move on to the last question. Yeah, this is way less than three hours. Somehow, I've gotten more concise. I don't know how I did it because I'm digressing all over the

place.

This last question is from Avenity and Avenity says, "Has the Buddha ever mentioned anything about having pets or animals in general in the sutas?"

Well, I think the main animals that are mentioned in the sutas are cows because I mean the Buddha existed right towards the beginning of a money economy in northern India like the Ganges Valley and before that traditionally it was cows that was your wealth instead of kahapanas it was cows long before it was rupees it was cows so I mean there are some many mentions of cows in the sutas including a kind of

strange sutta in I think it's in the
sutin pata that's talking about how cows
are just like the great benefactors of
mankind and the Buddha is just bashing
sacrificing animals particularly cows
you know cows do nothing but good to us
and

well for the most part they do nothing
but good to us I mean bajia was killed
by a cow

but I mean you know there there are
great benefactors you know in the suttas
you see that cows are like the great
benefactors of mankind it's like cow the
cow is man's best friend and I should
mention getting back to ah being bitten
by dogs I have had one or two cow or

bulls sort of like pawing the ground at me like threatening me and one time I think I might have been in a bad mood that day too I was just wasn't paying any attention and I could see in the corner of my eye this bull standing there just kind of pawing the ground like it's getting ready to just gore me or something and I just ignored it. You know, it's like maybe I'll just diffuse the situation by refusing to acknowledge this bull's existence. But then it was like either the owner of the bull or just some kindly village guy just took it upon himself to uh take the bull and lead it away and like take its rope and

wrap it around like some post somewhere else.

But getting back to Aven's question, um, dogs are mentioned in the text, but I I mean there may be sutas in the in the sutapitica where, you know, there's this man who loves his dog and, you know, it's like this wholesome relationship between man and dog. But as a general rule, I mean, Asians, including ancient Asians, really have not had a high opinion of dogs that like in in the book of monastic discipline, there's the list of 10 kinds of meat that a monk is not allowed to eat. And dog meat is on the list because dogs were considered to be just dirty,

just unclean kind of animals. You know, they eat poop and that kind of stuff. So um yeah there's there's mentions of dogs you know it's like there's like the the simile of the mangy dog you know the person in samsara is like a dog with mange where the dog kind of gets in one position and it's just not comfortable and then it changes position and that's not comfortable it scratches itself and it's might relieve the itch for a little bit but still it's it's just always restlessly trying to deal with this itch and of course the Buddha then applies that to the average human being living in samsara living in this world is just

always dealing with this restless itch
just always keeping us you know just
always wanting something different
different position different different
whatever

there is a mention uh I think it's in
vinia of a monk who had a trained monkey
um actually there's there's more than
one story about a monk with a trained
monkey one of them he's actually having
sex with it so that was that was a bad
situation

The Buddha did not endorse that at all.

But I guess there was another
case. Oh, one time the Buddha himself
was was fed with a by a monkey. There
was um the monks were squabbling over

some pickyune dumb excuse. It was like something about uh filling the water pot in the outhouse or something. And the just the monks formed two factions and they were just like bickering over this. And so the Buddha just took off and lived alone in the forest. And there was a monkey and an elephant that were attending to him. You know, they were like bringing him food and this kind of thing. And it is allowable for a monk to I mean he can't provide his own food. But if somebody else who isn't a monk provides him with food, including a monkey, he can do that. So I think in Ajantisro's book on monastic discipline

he told how he had heard of a a monk in Thailand who was like a hermit living out in the forest who had trained a monkey to offer him food.

And elephants are mentioned elephants are noble beasts. You can't eat elephant meat not because they're unclean but because they are a sign of nobility. They're emblems of the king.

And elephants are considered to be this sort of like a noble intelligent sort of animal. Um, they're also called naga.

I mean, not only are cobra dragons called naga, but bull elephants are also called naga. Sometimes the Buddha is called naga, which means bull elephant rather than cobra dragon.

So,

let's see. But that's not really pets.

Uh, there's there's a story in the

Dhamapata commentary of somebody keeping

a pet bird. Um, it was like a stork. I

think it was some kind of stork that

they kept. Why? Why you keep a pet

stork? I don't know. But yeah, there.

So, apparently in ancient India, people

did keep pets. Dogs are just kind of

universal. I assume it would be similar

to dogs in modern Burmese villages

where, you know, they're just kind of

background animals. You know, a lot of

people have them, but they don't get

much conversation. You know, they're

just kind of these dirty, grubby animals that bark when strangers come and clean up baby poop and other garbage.

So, they were kind of a very low status kind of an animal. Cats, I'm not so sure about. I mean, they had cats in ancient India. There's a mention of bags made out of cat skin. Of course, that could be some kind of wild cat.

And then pet birds.

Also, I guess there's a there's a prohibition on monks like causing quails to fight. You know, it was sort of like [__] fighting except it was quails, male quails, I guess.

Of course, people had like barnyard animals, chickens and all that. But

yeah, there's really not much mention of having pets in the sutas. You know, me dogs are mentioned, which presumably were pets. They weren't all just feral stray dogs. But I mean, it's just it wasn't really emphasized in the text just because it wasn't considered to be important enough, I guess.

So, yeah, but keeping animals in general, I mean, pretty much everyone was a farmer that didn't live in the city in the Buddhist time. So yeah, everyone everyone had animals pretty much.

But uh pets were not nearly as important to ancient Asians as they are to modern

westerners where a lot of modern
westerners they've got dogs or cats that
are like surrogate children. And I've
noticed that in myself that um you know
you just sort of your parental instincts
get like redirected towards the dogs
sometimes.

Well, that's it. I guess we're done. By
golly, and it's uh way less than three
hours. So, that's that's kind of that's
kind of a plus.

And so, like I should always say at the
beginning and only have done once to my
recollection, do you have any questions
you think I can answer, especially about
early Buddhism, Terravada Buddhism,
meditation, Buddhism in general,

philosophy in general, Dharma, questions like that. questions about me personally living in Burma or that kind of thing that that's that's fair game. Also, anything you think that I can answer.

And I mean, if you just have this offthe-wall desire to know, you know, my musical tastes or something, I mean, that's that's fairly easy. I mean, I'd rather that that not be the majority of questions asking me about Metallica or Mega Death, that kind of thing.

And uh let's see. Like and subscribe if you have not done so already and be happy. And now I'm supposed to uh hit this button here that says stop

recording.

Alrighty then. It appears we are recording.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 166.

I am your host Ponyo Basa. And of course 166 is not prime. It is in fact $2 * 83$.

And this is my beverage. I'm not drinking coffee this time because I already drank three cups of coffee today and I'm fairly zinged on caffeine.

So, we're going with orange juice.

I do have an emergency backup beverage, but it's highly unlikely that I will have to resort to that because this is going to be one of the shortest Q&As's in a long time. I think there's only

like 16 questions, something like that.
So apparently I've been very successful
in answering everybody's questions so
that they're running out of questions to
ask which could result in me reducing
the frequency of these Q&As's to or Q's
nas

to maybe once every two weeks or so
which is easier for me I guess.

So, with that is kind of a lame hobbling
kind of introduction. I suppose I should
just wade right into this.

Maybe it'll be less than an hour long.

Who knows? Well, I guess you guys can
know just by looking at the time, but I
don't know yet. First question is from
Siovakian Cipad. And Sioipad Zeta says,

"Allants have no delusion, but they still get rebuked by the Buddha.

Similarly, it's pretty obvious the Buddhist tradition is a lot more based in reality and is much wiser than mystical type traditions that may have produced some enlightened being. What is the difference between wisdom and non-delusion cuz it seems like there is actually a difference.

Well, there's a little bit to unpack here. I think at the verse at the very beginning here he says all arroants have no delusion but they still get rebuked by the Buddha and I cannot think of any example

Zidana may have something fresh in his mind that caused him to say this but I cannot think of an example of the Buddha actually rebuking an arahant a fully enlightened being there's I can think of one case where there was a fully enlightened being who was actually the cause of making a new vineia rule. It's the rule against a monk storing food because this Arahant was going for alms like maybe once a week and then just like drying the extra rice out in the sun and just eating dried rice um with whatever else was with it. Um and so the Buddha said, "No, you shouldn't do that." But it it was the the Ara hadn't done anything morally

wrong.

So I mean why would the Buddha rebuke an arahant if he really hasn't done anything wrong?

So I mean there was one case I can't remember now if this monk was fully enlightened but there is a case where I think it's with regard to the rule against drinking alcohol that some monk I mean he wasn't trying to get drunk or anything. It was like he took something that had fermented or some such he drank that and became drunk. Maybe it was some kind of medicine that he took. I don't remember now. And he had psychic powers. He had defeated some cobra dragon using

psychic powers, you know, some naga. And then he essentially passes out with his feet pointing towards the Buddha which in ancient India and modern Burma is you don't point your feet at another person especially if they are like higher status than you or like older than you because it's

it's just bad manners in like Indian culture and in cultures that use like classical India as their like cultural foundation. to some extent you know like in the west we use like like in America especially Rome is like our classical predecessor and we kind of look to ancient Rome for a lot of ideas that kind of thing in

some place like Burma it's India

so you don't point your feet at people
that especially if they're respectable
people

um you don't use your foot to point at
anybody and just like if you're sitting
at a like a like a doma talk, let's say
you're you're like up against the wall
in the back because you got like your
back is sore or something. So you want
to lean back against the wall. You don't
have your feet pointing out towards the
teacher. Bad manners. So it this monk
who I mean the Buddha was kind of making
fun of him, you It's like look he he
defeated this cobra dragon and now look

at him you know he's lying there
pointing his feet towards towards his
teacher you know could he defeat a cobra
dragon now and all the other monks are
saying no venerable sir he could not so
something like that but still it's not
really a rebuke I mean the Buddha knows
that this monk really hadn't done
anything wrong if in fact he was an
orant because in the text or really do
not misbehave I

There can be some sort of accident or
something that's just sort of um a
violation of protocol, that kind of
thing, but they're not going to
misbehave deliberately, which would
be the cause of a rebuke.

So, I'm not I don't know what Sioat Zena is thinking about when he says that fully enlightened beings get rebuked by the Buddha.

So,

and the windows open and people are exploding fireworks outside. I do not know why.

Let's see.

Okay. No, they're still exploding. Let's see. The Buddhist tradition is a lot more based in reality. Oh, just a minute.

Let's close this window.

I don't know why fireworks are going off lately in America, but they have been.

So anyways, let's see.

H the Buddhist tradition is a lot more based in reality. Um I'm not exactly sure what seovad zir means with regard to this unless he's referring to like empirical reality which isn't really reality at all. And that's um you know that's that's kind of a sticky a sticky point here because any kind of mystical tradition if it's really like advanced mystics is going to be based in reality even though it's not particularly empirical with regard to samsara.

But that's neither here nor there. I guess I guess I can just move on to the actual question. What is the difference

between wisdom and nondelusion?

Um well

I guess there's two ways of going about this of answering this question. First of all like according to Abid Dhama that pa or wisdom and amoha or non-delusion are synonyms. They both mean exactly the same thing. So when you have zero moa or zero delusion you're enlightened.

So from the orthodox point of view, there really is no difference between wisdom and non-delusion. But I mean, you could say, okay, um, this this glass of orange juice has no wisdom, but it also has no delusion because it has no mental states. So you could say that a rock has

no delusion, but nevertheless, it has no wisdom either. But so long as you're referring to a mind, to the extent that that mind is without delusion, it is wise.

And the more mind is there without delusion, I mean maybe you could say the more wisdom is there.

But still from the orthodox point of view, zero delusion is the same as just maximum wisdom.

Okay. So

I think I'm just going to move on to SEO of action cad's next question which is a biology question. It's about the evolution of life on this planet or like the origin of life on this planet.

He says you said that self-replicating enzymes were probably the first things to arrive. So with regard to the first protolife, however, I don't see how these enzymes can perpetuate in a controlled manner before a differentiation from inside an outside environment or cell membrane. Similarly, I don't see how these all of a sudden, let's see, I don't see how these all of a sudden these enzymes could be coded for by RNA afterwards either. What are your explanations for these if self-replicating protein enzymes came first? Well, I was saying in a previous Q&A like the first protolife, you

know, would be like a self-replicating protein

and at some point the I mean that was like the the original genetic material was probably like a protein and at some point very early on proteins got replaced by nucleic acids as the genetic material. But um I guess he asked another kind of question before this. Um see I don't see how these enzymes can perpetuate in a controlled manner before a differentiation from inside and outside environment or cell membrane. Well, I mean at first it wouldn't be particularly controlled.

So that's that's one thing. I mean, it would just be these you've got like this

pond of like this organic soup, this organic broth or what early biologists referred to as protoplasm that is, you know, it's just like the pond itself has become a kind of very simple organism even though it's big and it's just all these organic molecules, some of which are simple proteins which are h I keep forgetting the word of what it is exactly that an enzyme does that facilitates a chemical reaction.

Anyways, that you know there'd be some of these simil simple proteins would be like enzymes that are co like facilitating the production of more of themselves. And it could be like a group

effort of different different simple proteins each responsible for like one step in the process whatever. So I mean it wouldn't be really controlled at first. It would be haphazard at first and a differentiation from inside and outside the environment. It would be the pond and what is outside of the pond. So yeah, I really don't see much of a problem there.

um cell membranes very probably came later.

Anyways, um he says, "I don't see how these all of a sudden these enzymes could be coded for by RNA afterwards either." Yeah. How it is that nucleic acids replaced proteins as the genetic

material, I don't know. I mean, I don't know how the first proteins that were like simple simple enzymes that were like self-replicating.

I don't know exactly how that happened either other than just millions of years of trial and error just random chance random alterations due to like ionizing radiation and so forth over the entire surface of the planet

that I mean that's a very big laboratory and you have enough you know monkeys typing at typewriters

um or I guess nowadays it would be like computers that you're eventually going to wind up with some sort of elaborate

sentence. I don't know if you're going to wind up with, you know, the the the complete works of Shakespeare, but still you're eventually every once in a while, you know, you've got millions and millions of these monkeys just typing at random, just through random chance at some point or another, you're going to have some sort of coherent seeming sentence.

And that would be like the the the enzyme or how exactly it is that nucleic acids replaced enzymes or or just proteins as the genetic material. I don't know. But there is evidence that the genetic code did evolve. And I was kind of blown away by this when I was in

college and I first noticed you're looking at the genetic code, which it means you're looking at what three nucleotides in a nucleic acid code for one amino acid and a protein. And it is apparent that originally it was two or two nucleotides would code for one amino acid. But because you've got like four possibilities, what? Guanine, cytosine, adenine, and and tyrosine. Starts with a T. Thymine. Thymine. There we go. That you've only got 16 possibilities. So long as you've got two nucleic acids coding for one amino acid, then you can only have 16 amino acids. And that

apparently wasn't enough. And so you can see by looking at the genetic code that that at some point very early on a third nucleotide got added to the to the genetic code just so you could have more than 16 amino acids. I think it's like 20 in humans. And for the most part that third nucleotide is just is redundant. I mean it's unnecessary. It's only in a few cases where you're going to get um the third nucleotide actually counts in the genetic code. I mean, it's like you can have like CA anything for example and it's going to code for the same the same amino acid regardless of what the third nucleotide is.

So I mean that is some circumstantial

evidence that the genetic code actually did evolve that it was originally two nucleotides coding for one amino acid and then it somehow through mutations like random chance or I mean something guiding evolution

that it got um increased to three.

But how it actually happened, I mean, other than just millions of years of essentially trial and error, like random trial and error over the surface of the planet. And I mean, eventually stuff's going to happen. It's stuff is going to be created. But then let's say you you let's you don't want to believe that that could happen just through random

chance. I mean, you don't have to just leap into like Christian creationism that I mean, it could be something like Schopenhauer's will with the capital W that's helping to guide the evolutionary process. That's possible. I mean, it could be that the evolutionary process is actually fueled or at least guided by something, influenced by something.

But again, it's like so many people, especially nowadays, it's like this challenging established narratives is really in fashion lately.

That's why you have so many conspiracy theories and I'm not even using conspiracy theory in a derogatory sense because so many conspiracies conspiracy

theories turn out to be true.

So, let's see what was where was I going with that? Oh, yeah. So there's so many people that I mean they're just sort of going against the established narrative sometimes just because and so you know even people that aren't Christian creationists are like bashing Darwin now and saying it's just mathematically impossible and so forth when they seem to be it seems like they never offer up any kind of alternative any plausible alternative other than God did

But I mean Schopenhauer's will I mean that could that could definitely help along the evolutionary process.

So to me it's it's
the the idea that evolution occurs just
based on the fossil record for example.
I mean it should not be that
controversial. It's pretty damned
obvious to me that the fossil record is
clearly showing like a change in the
development of organisms over time. Like
just getting into the vertebrates, you
had fish first. The oldest vertebrae
fossils are fish. Then you had
amphibians. You didn't have mammals,
reptiles, or birds yet. You had fish and
amphibians. Then after the amphibians
evolved, then you start getting into
reptiles. And then after the reptiles
evolve, only after the reptiles evolve,

you start seeing other things like dinosaurs and mammals and so forth. So there's obviously this developmental sequence going on over time.

And that was I mean the most plausible explanation for that is evolution.

So what's causing the evolution? If you think Darwin was wrong, come up with some other cause. But if you start bashing evolution itself, then essentially you're bashing empirical reality or just empiricism, which I mean you can do and you can say, well, this is all just the matrix. It's all just a simulation and so it's all just irrelevant how we got here or or

whatever.

Let's see here. I suppose I answered that question and then uh answered it like five 10 minutes ago and then just kept rambling.

So I guess I'm just going to move on to Seova Caden's next question which is kind of a political or cultural question.

Ancient Greco Roman civilization versus modern western civilization. Which was or is greater in your opinion? because I remember you saying ancient Magada was the greatest. So I'm curious how you compare these two. Well, I did say that um I have often considered that like the Ganges Valley of India during the

Buddhist time was like the zenith of human civilization.

You know, it was just sort of a miracle that that that happened.

Um, it was just sort of a culture that was had one of its most burning causes being enlightenment, which is not the case anymore. Now, it's just sort of um, you know, we we're kind of going going along with the sort of the Greek ideal of just intellect. Just keep developing intellect, at least with regard to science.

And that's only for like the the intellectual elite, you know, the normies remain just they don't care

bread and circuses.

So getting to the question which is which do I consider to be greater like classical western civilization you know Greco Roman like pre-Christian paganism versus modern western civilization. Well I mean each side has its advantages and disadvantages. Like modern western civilization, we have the advantage of science or just empiricism helping to guide our knowledge of what causes sicknesses. For example, we are much much less likely nowadays to attribute it to curses or witchcraft or just strange off-the-wall guesses for example. Um also one advantage we have in modern western civilization is

we have abolished slavery. I mean ancient Greco Roman civilization there were lots of slaves in in a lot of places slaves were the majority of the population especially like in cities.

So I mean I'm not pro-slavery.

I mean I'm not I don't I I don't think that we should have just complete equity. I mean that's communism.

But I mean there's a certain class stratification is fine so long as there's mobility between the classes, but slavery it's just a little too much for my tastes. So I would give the like the point to modern western civilization with regard to that. Although modern

western civilization like now I mean
we're getting into postmodern at this
point and postmodern western
civilization with its like championing
of degeneracy for example no that's
that's not stable and it's it's sort of
in decline. So like western civilization
now is sort of like Roman civilization
towards the end of the empire.

And modern civilization, I mean, we do
have a more developed sense of
compassion, for example, like nowadays,
you try to have um like
gladiators killing not only each other,
but just like killing wild animals in
the arena, fighting against wild
animals. I mean, that would be

considered cruelty to animals. And I mean, if if there were such a thing, I do think that um any kind of combat like that, the animals should at least have like a one in three chance of winning.

At bare minimum, one in 10. I mean, the animal should win sometimes. It's not you just go out there and kill them.

I remember reading I think it's in Gibbons decline and fall of the Roman Empire where the emperor Kimotus who is probably best known from the movie Gladiator that he would do gladiatorial combats in in the arena like the coliseum of Rome and he would kill a lot of kill a lot of animals and he was

using arrows with like a crescent-shaped head to cut off the heads of of ostriches. you know, he's shooting ostriches and decapitating them with this this kind of crescentshaped arrow head, which I mean, if the arrowhead is spinning, I'm not exactly sure how how he'd work it out like that, but I mean, it's that kind of stuff, just this um acceptance of cruelty as just the way it is. I do think that modern western civilization is uh is superior to the ancient Greco Roman civilization. So I'm I would guess I mean if if you're talking about modern western civilization not necessarily as it is now just like when you refer to like

classical civilization in Europe you're not referring to it as it was you know as Christianity was taken over and it was becoming more medieval you know this you're sort of getting into the medieval age so

all in all

I do think that modern western civilization let's say preworld war I you know late 1800s you know like the the industrial revolution is going strong that modern western civilization would have been superior with regard to ethics and just the power of the civilization

modern western civilization has pretty much converted the entire entire earth almost the entire planet to modern western culture to a large degree even like China you know they're wearing western clothes now they're they're living in westernstyle cities that kind of thing they're still talking in Chinese but still they've adopted western political systems western economics western infrastructure western clothing western music styles all this western stuff. So I mean Rome didn't do that.

I mean within within like a a smaller scope they did but yeah I think probably uh modern western civilization despite

the Christianity I mean there's obvious pros and cons. I mean there's winds on both sides but overall um I would say modern but not postmodern western civilization would be preferable to say early Roman Empire or let alone classical Athens. Classical Athens was kind of a [__] show, you know, and that was sort of like the Italian Renaissance where you got all kinds of [__] just [__] hitting the fan on a regular basis that nevertheless created enough chaos that it inspired genius somehow.

The Renaissance was like that. Ancient Greece was like that. You know, just

sort of small city states chronically at war with each other. A lot of experimentation. you know, they're just kind of breaking new ground all the time and just civil wars, uprisings, riots, this kind of stuff was just going on and on and on and on.

But it it produced like like Athens like the the population of like male citizens and only males were I mean active citizens with regard to you know creating the culture and so forth that I mean there's only a population of like 20,000 and it's just out of those 20,000 people you just had all this like inspiration and genius coming out of it. And the modern west just doesn't really

have that kind of inspiration partly because it has reduced the chaos to a large degree.

So I guess I'd just move on. Next question. This is from Romeo. And Romeo says, "Erica Kirk, Charlie Kirk's widow, gave a speech at his funeral in which she forgave his killer." I've always seen this aspect of Christianity to turn the other cheek and love your enemy as a doctrine for suckers. Like it or not, the world is full of lots of cruel people. And such people only see this turn the other cheek stuff as a weakness to exploit. Unlike Christianity, Judaism and Islam certainly don't seem to have

an issue with condemning and destroying their enemies. This got me wondering where Buddhism stood on the issue.

And then he says, "How would Erica Kirk be expected to react to Charlie Kirk's killer if she were a Buddhist?"

Well, I think Buddhism, I mean, it's it's more neutral than Christianity. I mean, it's not saying that you should positively love your enemies, although I mean, you should have like equanimity like have enemies in your mind. I mean, Christianity is that way, too. It's like people who hate you are kind of your enemy like objectively but not like in your own heart they're not your enemy. And Buddhism pretty much goes the same

way as Christianity with regard to this.

Um

like I mean I'm reminded of this weird story of Mangala Buddha. You know some he lived you know countless eons ago.

Mangala Buddha. He's in the the list of 28 Buddhas and he's towards like the older end of this list of of previous Buddhas on most of which were on previous earths, previous universes.

And there was this Yaka or ogre who disguised himself as a Brahman and went to the bodhicatta of Mangala Buddha. So before mangala Buddha became fully enlightened you know he was he was going

through his you know perfecting his
parames life after life after life and
in one of these lives this ogre
disguised as Brahman came and asked
Mongala Buddha the the proto Mongala
Buddha for his two children and so
Mongalab Buddha just hands over his kids
to this Brahman or to this ogre and then
the ogre immediately starts devouring
this man's children right in front one
of them and according to this weird
story which is probably fiction in my
opinion that Mongala Buddha or his like
the the bodhic sata the forerunner of
Mongala Buddha it I mean he wasn't
freaked out by seeing his kids being
eaten by an ogre he was rejoicing at the

merit he was earning by sacrificing his children to this ogre I mean he wasn't killing the children he wasn't responsible for that. But still somehow in this weird legend, Terravada Buddhist, Orthodox Terravada Buddhist, he was rejoicing and he's he made this kind of a vow. It's like he wanted to shine the way the blood was was like shining as it came from the the ogre's mouth, you know, as he's eating the kids. And that's why when Mongala Buddha became fully enlightened when he become the Buddha Mongala Buddha not God Buddha that he was emitting light at all times you know he was just luminous and it was

because of this occasion and
it's just bizarre but really Buddhism is
just uncompromising even more so than
Christianity I think with regard to this
nonviolence.

Um, so would Erica Kirk be expected to
react to Charlie Kirk's killer? Or how
would Erica Kirk be expected to react to
Charlie Kirk's killer if she were a
Buddhist? Um,
she wouldn't necessarily announce that
she had forgiven the killer. She might
though, and certainly she would have no
ill will towards the killer if she were
like an enlightened Buddhist anyway. But
most Christians can't bring themselves
to love their enemies. And most

unenlightened Buddhists can't bring themselves to have equanimity towards all the badness and evil in the world.

So

this turn the other cheek. Yeah, that's going a little too far. I mean, you could just run away. I mean, that would be definitely an option for a Buddhist.

Like somebody slaps you on the cheek.

You don't just turn the other cheek and wait to get slapped again. You know, you could just sort of, you know, block it.

Get away.

So,

love your enemy. Yeah. In Buddhism, you don't necessarily have to love your

enemy, but you can't hate your enemy.

You can be sort of indifferent towards your enemy, but uh hating anybody or anything is definitely not good

Buddhism. vengeance. Like revenge is definitely immoral bad karma.

So, how would Erica Kirk be expected to react to Charlie Kirk killer if she were a Buddhist?

Um, depends on how good of a Buddhist she was, I suppose. But in all likelihood, she would uh um you know, if not forgive the killer, at least have no ill will or resentment towards the killer. I mean she the the wise thing to do was you know was it was Charlie's comma you know everything everyone's

comma is their own and you know hatred
is just toxic you know it poisons the
system so you know it's just that's just
the way it is I accept the way it is
let's just continue
so I'm just going to move on to Romeo's
second question
which is on a wider scale scale is
defense of oneself and one's loved ones,
even to the point of possible violence,
ever justified in Buddhism? Well, even a
monk is allowed to strike out in
self-defense. I've mentioned this
before. Um, I mean, so you can not only
parry and dodge, you know, block
incoming blows if you can, you know,

refer, you know, like Io, that kind of thing, but you can even strike out in self-defense. Um, so long as you're not trying to, and like your point is not to kill your attacker or even to harm your attacker, but more like Kyle

Writtenhouse, you are just like neutralizing the threat. You're doing whatever it takes to defend yourself.

Um, and you're not deliberately trying to hurt the other person, even though you might be punching them in the nose, just as a way of defending yourself so you can get away.

The thing is though, defense of one's loved ones. I mean, that is one of the main reasons or it's it's definitely a

big reason why monks are supposed to be celibate and cut family ties because you have a family, you have to defend that family. You have kids that have lice in their hair, you got to kill the poor little lice. That kind of thing. And so I mean living the family life just is not conducive to living the life of advanced Buddhist practice according to the texts.

You have to do things as a lay person or at least it's the duty of a lay person to do things that are not particularly wholesome actions going with just this absolute hardnose hardline

approach to Buddhist ethics

because I mean ethics really don't take
into account

your family obligations or your
political obligations anything like that
The ethics are largely universal.

It's subjective. You have certain mental
states. They're going to take you
farther away from enlightenment
rather than closer to enlightenment.

Whatever helps you to become enlightened
is good. According to Buddhist ethics,
whatever takes you farther away from
enlightenment is bad. And hatred takes
you farther away. Any kind of aversion
takes you farther away.

So

really in order to become an enlightened Buddhist, I mean it's it's a kind it seems to me to be a valid argument that you have to stop being human that just humanity itself contains a lot of bad karma just unwholesome mental states and so forth. So, I mean, you could say, "Well, that's ridiculous that you live in society, you can't really follow Buddhism, so Buddhism is just dumb." I mean, there are a lot of people that argue that Jehovah's Witnesses when they're trying to talk somebody out of being a Buddhist, they can resort to that kind of thing. But again, it's like ethics or

dharma is universal. And it's just
it it really doesn't take make
allowances

for your social situation, which is one
reason why monks are supposed to
renounce society, just go off and live
alone in a forest somewhere and
meditate. And then they can be saintly
as they please. They can even just let
people kill them if they want to. You
know there's plenty of cases like um
apparently

um in in the sutas even there's mention
of the Buddha in a previous life he was
in the the kingdom of Kalinga which is I
think like on the east like the
northeast coast of India somewhere and

um there was a king who was in this this park and monks hang out in parks just because you know there's trees and stuff they can meditate under that sort of And so this king took a nap and his herum were just kind of bored. They didn't have anything to do. So they see this holy man sitting under a tree. They go and start, you know, asking him questions and so forth. And the they're, you know, the the Buddha in a previous life is answering the questions. The king wakes up. He's he's one of those psychopathic kind of kings, you know, sort of a Caligula type. He sees his wives all talking to this man over the

over yonder. He gets pissed off and he goes and demands to know what's going on. And and this pre this bodhic sata this says I teach acceptance kiwadi was what he was called you know the the teacher of patience or acceptance. And so the king says let's just see how how accepting you are. And he starts having his hands the this bodhicatta's hands and feet cut off. And I think he cut cuts off his nose and ears too or has them cut off by some lackey. Doesn't want to get his hands dirty. And then uh he just kind of leaves him there. And the the the Buddha the the the pre Buddha, you know, he he just lets it happen. I mean, there's strug he could

struggle. There's no way he'd get away, but still he he doesn't struggle, you know, he just accepts it and then he just accepts it, you know, kiwi. That's that's what he was. That was his emphasis in that life. You know, the parmmmy that he was perfecting was acceptance or ki.

And so he just bled out and died.

And it's it's not human really, but that's the way you're supposed to be in accordance with orthodox terra Buddhism. You're like this superhuman saint and there's just no allowances for well you live in society you get drafted in the army you got to go and kill people

maybe and you know you somebody attacks
your family you got to attack the
attacker that kind of thing I mean
there's no allowances for that so if you
want to follow dharma at the highest
level you renounce the world you
renounce society
that's one of the the first paramities is
nikama or renunciation.

It's like the third pie out of the list
of 10.

Donna sila nama is the third
renunciation.

And I mean with the orthodox terravada
point of view, forget what modern
western weasna people are saying. It's
like you want to practice dharma

correctly

practically numero uno renounce the
world

become a hermit living in a forest.

So I guess I'm just going to move on to
uh Romeo's third question which is a
followup of the second one. He says, "If
not, how can individual Buddhists or the
dharma itself be expected to survive
amidst other less less specific people
and religions?" Well, you got karma. You
got better karma. And so, you're just
going to be more likely to just be
living in a peaceful area, that sort of
thing. But there's no guarantees.

I mean Buddhism has existed for 25

centuries despite the fact that the
official position of Buddhism is just
uncompromising nonviolence

aims

nonharming

and there's Buddhist still here.

So

yeah,

I think I answered that one. I'm going
to move on to the next question. And
this is from Stellar Supreme, formerly
known as Liberlam, and also known as
Liberlam, formerly known as Stellar
Supreme.

So, Liberlam, formerly known as Stellar
Supreme, also known as Stellar Supreme,
formerly known as Liberlam, says, "Do

you find it at all likely that Erica Kirk was a Msad honeypot?"

And I know almost nothing about Erica Kirk. I mean, I I really was not a follower of her husband either.

Um, I mean, TPUSA, I'm Turning Point USA. I mean, I just wasn't really in the orbit. I just didn't pay any attention really. I mean, sometimes you just see a headline or something like that.

Um, I guess Erica Kirk was like she was apparently she's pretty. I think she was in a beauty contest. She may have even won a beauty contest. I don't know. But um I think it's not I mean it's not impossible,

but I think wouldn't put my money on Erica Kirk being some kind of like msad honeypot that was this sort of kind of spy or something that was like an agent sent to Charlie Kirk just to keep him under control. That kind of thing. I don't think she was like a like a Caucasian fang fang, anything like that. So, I mean, maybe, but who knows? I really don't I really have never really followed the Kirk family and know almost nothing about Erica Kirk. Didn't even listen to her speech that has already been mentioned in this Q&A.

But yeah, I wouldn't I wouldn't bet on

it. And I'm just going to move on to
Libra Lamb etc etc's next question which
is uh are meditation cushions
counterintuitive for advanced
meditation? Um not necessarily.

I mean meditation cushion uh I mean it
can be helpful like even when I was a
monk I would have I had a piece of it
was like a palmyra leaf stem and palmyra
leaves are really big. So the stems are,
you know, like this wide and about this
high. Um, and I just had a piece of it
about, you know, a foot and a half long
that I would just put kind of wedge
underneath my backside just to help me
tilt my pelvis forward so that it's

easier to sit up straight. Or another thing you could do is just take a towel and roll it up. So you've got like a rolled up towel, you know, that's, you know, as wide as a towel is. And, you know, it's just kind of like this big around. And you can kind of wedge that up behind your backside. Um, you know, most of your is still sitting on the floor, but you have like this little bit of a wedge that helps to tilt your pelvis forwards to help help you have an erect posture. Is your back straight up and down.

So, I don't think it's counterintuitive for advanced meditation. I mean, it's it's kind of irrelevant. I mean, if you

don't need one, that's fine. Uh if you do need one then I mean I mean even if it just helps if it helps you to sit straight up and down to have like a more alert posture which will help in your meditation. Yeah, there's there's no problem with that. The the big zafuz those um I think are kind of overkill in my opinion. I mean it helps. What another advantage of having a meditation cushion is if you're sitting in the full lotus if you're sitting flat on the floor sometimes one knee will kind of be raised up above the floor so that it's not as stable. That's not like the tripod kind of configuration that would

be ideal for sitting for long periods of time in deep meditation. was if you have like a a little bit of a meditation cushion, it helps to kind of again tilt the p pelvis forwards. Then both knees are firmly against the floor as well as your backside. I mean your backside if you're sitting up on a on a cushion then that kind of makes it less stable. But if you just have a little bit of a kind of a wedge just right behind your backside to help tilt the pelvis forward, that also can help to keep both knees on the floor.

So I would not say that meditation cushions are counterintuitive for advanced meditation. Although all the

the fancy benches and you know the full-size zafu and the zabutan and all that I mean if you're a Zen Buddhist it might just be part of the tradition but it's not really necessary.

Most meditators in Burma they just sit on the floor.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Ruie and this is kind of a strange one. I don't know exactly what to make of this one. Rui says, "What is meta for a pacheka Buddha?"

And Pacheka Buddhas are mythological beings.

Um, I mean, Mahayana Buddhism has just

completely reinterpreted them. But originally, a Pacheka Buddha was a fully enlightened Buddha who nevertheless lived in between times when dharma is in the world. He was like a hermit. He had some sort of limitation where he could not or just would not teach dharma. So he was like a Buddha but he didn't start Buddhism again. And you can only have pacheka Buddhas when there is no Buddhism in the world. And that the Mahayana Buddhists just kind of did away with that and reinterpreted uh what a pacheka Buddha is just as they reinterpreted a lot of things.

So what is meta for this mythological alleged pacheka Buddha? Um who knows? I

mean it's like what is meta for an elf,
you know? It's like
who knows?

First you got to find an elf and then
you've got to like psychoanalyze this
elf.

Find a pacheka Buddha and ask him. He'd
probably be able to at least answer that
much.

But you can't because there is dharma in
this world right now. Buddhism exists in
this world. So going with terra Buddhism
there could be no pacheka Buddhas.

But I assume the meta for a pacheka
Buddha would be like meta for anybody
else. You know it' be like the Buddha's

meta. I mean he's not like actively
acting upon it like like a Buddha might.

But

I mean, just goodwill. May all beings be
well. But I mean, then you're
secondguessing the mental states of a
fully enlightened being, which probably
better off not doing.

So yeah, who the hell knows
what is meta for a pacheka? I'm I'm not
sure why Ruy asked this question other
than maybe, you know, how much meta can
they have if they're just a hermit and
avoid the human race.

But

you you read the sutas and it's like
monks who are hermits and avoid the

human race. They're just sitting in solitude beaming meta in all directions. And there's probably nothing to stop a a an alleged pacheka Buddha from doing that. Personally, I'm rather skeptical of the whole tradition with regard to Pachka Buddhas, which shouldn't surprise some of you very much because I'm skeptical with regard to stuff that's even more basic to orthodox terraota than Pacheka Buddhas.

Let's see. Did I answer that question? Which I mean, how do you answer the question? What is what is meta for an elf or an enlightened elf? an enlightened hermit elf. Who I mean, how

can you answer such a question? It would just be similar to the meta of some Buddhist hermit who even though he avoids the human race is still beaming goodwill to all beings.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Jeffrey. And Jeffrey says, "I've started meditating again after many years. Not I think he means now for many years now. Is there any shock the monkey brain tricks to shut the monkey up? Well, I mean there's kind of a a shortterm short range kind of trick to shut the monkey up and that's just try to watch what the next thought is going to be, what your next thought is going to be.

Just watch your mind carefully and try to catch the next thought as soon as it arises. And that has a kind of suppressing effect. I think in Zen Buddhism it's called shikantaza or something along those lines. A meditation somewhat along those lines where you just watch the mind and try to catch the next thought as it arises or as soon as soon as you can. And for some reason watching for the next thought helps to suppress the next thought. But it's I mean it's it's really more difficult than it sounds. And that kind of meditation is relatively intensive kind of meditation. It's more difficult

than just breathing in breathing out
breathing in breathing out. Well, the
other way to shut the monkey up is just
gradual practice. And when you got I
mean I've mentioned this before. If
you've got a restless mind, you've got
what what is it called? Adicha this
mental restlessness adicha in poly I'm
pretty sure um then you got to have like
an active meditation technique. So if
you've got a restless mind and you're
trying to do some very subtle kind of
meditation then your mental states are
just going to like spill over. They're
going to overflow the meditation so to
speak and you're you're just going to be
wandering. your mind's going to be

wandering and you'll be sitting there for half an hour and finally realize that you haven't been meditating, you've been thinking about stuff.

So when your mind is restless you need a lot of busy work like you know a lot of noting you know just whatever arises note it note it note it and you use labeling and like at first when your mind is just like all over the place you've got to use a really like labor intensive meditation technique just to keep your mind occupied.

But then as your mind quiets down, then you you go to a a more quiet kind of meditation.

Because if your mind is quiet and you still got like this busy work kind of meditation where you're noting and labeling everything, then you're just kind of stuck at the ABCs. You can't get into deeper meditation. So you have to know yourself well enough to know how restless your mind is so that you can sort of adjust your meditation to account for the restless of restlessness of your mind without overkill.

So it's good to to know more than one kind of meditation simply because I mean your mind changes from one day to the next from one hour to the next. So I mean when I was doing intensive meditation as a monk I'd have you know I

I was talking about four gears you know
fourth first gear second gear third gear
fourth gear and um you know one kind of
meditation it's not working very well
you just try a different one. So, it's
good to know more than one kind of
meditation just because your mind isn't
always the same or at least mine isn't.
There are some people that can just
meditate the same way every time and
they're fine with it. But with me, it's
like sometimes my mind would be more
restless than other times I'd need more
quiet meditations and more busy
meditations just to sort of fit what
state I was in at the time.

But I mean just carefully observing your mind and trying to catch the next thought that arises does have a suppressing effect. So that shuts up the monkey mind briefly. But if you want the monkey mind to really be quieted like longterm in a sustainable way, then it takes lots and lots of practice.

It doesn't happen all at once.

And so I guess I should just move on to the next question. And this is from

Newman. And Newman says, "How do you discern a legit weird in the sense of wyrd

occurrence or liinal moment from just your own skits like misinterpretation.

For example, if you think a monk has

read your mind or seen through you and possesses insight that wouldn't be possible otherwise or some kind of communication asking because if it is authentic then that's a serious signpost to take heed of. If not then if any actions are done under the miscalculation that it is real then they could be inospicious or errant and you can just end up being a dumbass.

Okay. So

you're you're in the presence of let's say some meditation teacher and some weird event occurs and he he just happens to mention something that you just happen to be thinking of at that

moment or you know he just says something about you that he couldn't possibly know through ordinary ways according I mean to the best of your knowledge then I mean you shouldn't just jump to the conclusion that he's psychic. I mean, it could just be synchronicity, you know, it could just be like a weird coincidence or I mean, in the worst case scenario, it could be just a deliberate fraud who's finding out stuff about you in order to say it to you to blow your mind, that kind of thing.

But the thing is, I mean, you shouldn't really make up your mind one way or the other. You shouldn't I mean if some

dharm teacher you know apparently reads your mind for example well I mean just I mean you shouldn't consider it to be a big deal. It's just something that you you just sort of remember it you know you can consider that and if it just keeps happening then that's just adding to the evidence. But still I mean you should never be absolutely convinced one way or the other.

I mean that's like one of the most famous books of of Jay Krishna Murdy is called freedom from the known which is really freedom from what you think you know because anything that you know with your thinking mind isn't reality anyway.

So uh another thing that has occurred to me over the years is if you want like the miraculous

to be common place in your life then you shouldn't think it's a big deal. you should just accept it as it happens and then it just helps with the the flow of that and it it's more likely to happen.

But if you think, whoa, that's such a weird thing, then it sort of reinforces the idea. It just reinforces the likelihood of it being rare.

So, let's see. Have I answered this question yet?

Let's see. How do you discern a legit weird in the sense of wyrd occurrence or liinal moment from just your own skitso

like misinterpretation? You just don't nail it down one way or the other. You just

I mean you're aware of the situation.

You consider it. It's like h all right and then you just keep going. I mean you shouldn't just make up your mind one way or the other. You know it's like the wise man is never sure. The fool is always positive.

So, it's just evidence.

It's just something to consider.

I mean, Paul Lo when he was alive, I just recently found out that he had passed away like last April, which is kind of sad to me, but Paul Lo would

say, you know, when he was teaching somebody, he'd say, "You shouldn't even believe what I'm saying." And and um there is some evidence that the Buddha was like this, too. It's just don't believe something just because I tell you that.

I mean really you shouldn't believe anything. That's so one of the central teachings of the atakobaga is don't believe anything. So you you're aware of it. I mean you can remember it. You can even consider it but don't just make up your mind once and for all that such and such person is an enlightened being because you couldn't really know anyway or that he's a fraud. Because I mean

sometimes you can have like a sage who's nevertheless kind of rascally so that they can be a little bit of both.

Just accept it and just note it, be aware of it, consider it, but don't make up your mind one way or the other regardless

unless you absolutely have to. you know, if you're in a situation where you just have to make up your mind about something, but uh as a general rule, that doesn't happen very often, at least in the in the realm of spirituality. I mean, you want to decide whether or not to accept this person as your teacher, then I mean, you don't have to make up

your mind once and for all that they have psychic powers.

I mean, you can consider, well, he did say that that one time. That's considerable.

So, I mean that could be like a mark in his favor, but still I mean I wouldn't just make up my mind once and for all that such and such a person really is fully enlightened or you know

um

one thing I mean one thing that happens between my woman and me is we're just we we have like this group mind that's like this third entity that's like the us entity and sometimes if I'm sort of like open to that more than at other times,

then I'll just blurt out stuff that she's thinking. But it's not deliberate, you know? It's it's it's not like I'm deliberately reading her mind. It's like synchronicity or just we happen to be on the same wavelength and we're used to each other and we kind of vibe together. So that, you know, it's like our minds are kind of, you know, thinking along the same lines sometimes.

So, I mean, you could say that there's synchronicity involved and and it's kind of a paranormal thing from modern western point of view that you even have like a group mind that that is even a concept.

So, I mean,

doesn't mean that I'm enlightened,

doesn't mean that she's enlightened.

It's just something to consider. You

know, you you don't want to just nail it

down. And I guess saying that it's a

group mind thing is a way of nailing it

down. But it could just be like

synchronicity or so forth. The group

mind thing just kind of fits in with my

interpretation of how Samsara works.

You know, it's like the the block the

uncarved block of marble that contains

an infinite number of statues. And some

of those statues are group statues.

So the US statue is in there just the

same as the me statue and the her

statue.

Okay.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Tzasquez is and Trzasquez is he uh he engaged in the most common typo that Buddhists ever ever do. The most common typo for Buddhists is saying mediate instead of meditate

because the spell check doesn't catch it.

Anyways, Tzask says, "How be bikunis meditated or mediated if they couldn't cross their legs." Yeah, it's it's an obscure rule of Manass discipline that bikunis fully ordained Buddhist nuns are

not allowed to sit cross-legged, which of course all the new bikunis claiming to be Bikunis, they just break the rule because they don't want to follow the rules properly.

So the way they would sit, I assume, is that they would sit the way a proper Burmese lady sits when she sits on the floor with both feet kind of tucked up beside her, which kind of makes you sit sideways like this.

But I don't think the monks really cared very much if the bikunis had to sit a little bit like slanty ways like this when they meditated. And the reason why bikunis are not allowed to sit cross-legged is according to the texts

that some bikunis were consenting to the touch of the heel. And I mean what's her what's her name? uh IB her who was like this Victorians

type like scholarly virginal type proper English lady who was the first person to translate

um the the vineyapitica into English most of it there are some parts that were so runchy that she she couldn't bring herself to translate them but there's this quaint innocent little

footnote that she leaves you know when when the bikunis some of the bunies were considered descending to the touch of the heel. IB her has this footnote where

she's talking about like the question here is whose heel are they conscending to the touch of and she had this weird idea that bikunis were sitting in the full lotus position with their you know their legs kind of like this and their heels were rubbing up against each other which I think might be anatomically impossible. I mean, they'd have to have them really weird like this to have their heels rubbing up against each other. But I think I understand that uh the real meaning of this because I had this female friend long ago before I was a monk who told me that as a kid she learned how to masturbate by sitting on her heel and rocking back and forth. And

that's probably what the bikunis were doing. They're like sitting on their heel kind of.

And so that's the reason why Bikunis are not allowed to sit cross-legged, which indicates that they weren't even sitting in the full lotus. They were sitting in like the Burmese position or the easy position where you don't have your feet like this. You've got your feet kind of one in front of the other with that heel like conveniently kind of close to the PP area.

So that's kind of a long semi-rounchy digression I suppose referring to auto erotic beunis in ancient India

but I think we should just move on this question which is now for something completely different task says what is your favorite coffee and

I don't I don't have a favorite brand really I mean like something like folders is just I mean it doesn't even taste like coffee to me.

So yeah, this rule out folders, but any kind of like dark roast coffee. I mean if it's organic so much the better. Um I like dark coffee better than than uh like light roast coffee. And I like lots of milk in my coffee. So some kind of organic dark roast probably. I like Arabica better than Robusta.

So, some dark roast organic Arabica coffee with lots of milk in it. And I'm just going to move on to Jersey

Askas is his third question. Is milk in Burma better than industrially produced milk in the USA? I don't think so. I mean, with regard to like its molecular content, its nutritional content, something like that, maybe. But I really didn't have any way of analyzing the milk in Burma when I was there. Um, I think a milk in the USA is better to drink partly because there's refrigerators in the USA and out in the villages in Burma, not much refrigeration. So when you drink

milk in Burma, it's pretty much room temperature and the rooms are pretty warm because it's in the tropics. And also the milk is not homogenized, which means that milk in Burma has like this layer of like rubbery cream stuff floating on it that's chewy. And I remember telling this this lady who had given me some milk to drink cuz she knew that I drink milk. And I I was just observed that milk is better if it's not chewy. if you don't have to chew the milk. And then she was like she was her mind was blown by this. Ah I oh Malay I I have to pay extra for the for the cream stuff in that.

But the thing is Burmese people don't

drink milk. So milk really is kind of
it's you don't see it a lot in Burma
partly because
um you know the milks are the milks the
Burmese are you know they're not
Indo-European they they're lactose
intolerant for the most part dairy
products are just not a big thing in
Asia

I mean the most common dairy product in
Asia or in Burma anyway is sweetened
condensed milk that people put in in
their tea.

Cheese is a rarity. I mean, when I would
get cheese in Burma, it was usually
imported from either New Zealand or

Poland.

So, milk in Burma,

um, and if you get milk in Burma, you

should at least consider that it's been

like warm for hours before you get to it

and it's chewy. And I'm just going to

move on. Next question. This is from

Drip Walker. And Dripwalker says, "How

accurate is this chart?" And so I'm

going to have to bring up the chart that

he included with this question. And

it's a chart that has across the top

pagan values, Christian values, and

modern values. And then there's like

different like categories or topics down

the side. So the first one is religion.

So under pagan values it says

spirituality. Under Christian values it says Abrahamism and under modern values it says scientism.

And I mean I could say with regard to religion

I mean obviously the religion of Christianity

is Abrahamic. The religion of like modern secular western society

pretty much scientific. But the the

religion of the the pagans like you know

pre-Christian Romans I don't think it

was any more spiritual than that of a

Christian or a person who follows

scientism that you know is paganism for

most pagans in like Greece and like

earlier Rome wasn't so much spirituality
it was just like the pacts of deorum you
appease the gods so that you have the
gods on your side rather than against
you.

Spirituality, I mean, it's it's
different from just religion that most
religious people aren't particularly
spiritual. You know, spirituality is
you're actually getting into uh like
altered states of consciousness,
mysticism, that kind of thing. At least
from my point of view, it's not it's not
just superstition. It's not just going
along with traditions that there
actually has to be some emphasis on
waking up in real spirituality. And I

don't think the ancient pagans had that anymore than like medieval Christians or modern scientists do. Some did, but it wasn't mainstream.

So then under the next category, we have morality. Pagan values is master morality. Christian values is slave morality and modern values is relativism which yeah that's all right. I think I do think that morality in ancient times was a kind of master morality that you should be um what's the word magnanimous but uh yeah it wasn't the same kind of morality that arose with Christianity where you glorify the weak and kind of

demonize the strong whereas you know the pagans they were more glorifying the strong not necessarily demonizing the weak, not even really exploiting the weak all that much with regard to ethical ideals,

but still I mean the strong were it was sort of more nichian than than

Christianity is definitely. So then we got patrons

and then under the pagan values it has heroes, Christian values it has saints and modern values has victims. Um yeah, I don't I think it would be more like culture heroes. It's not patrons.

Patrons are the people who are mainly supportive of the tradition. And you

know, it'd be like kings and emperors
for the first two and you know,
presidents, prime ministers for the
third probably. But I mean, with regard
to the culture heroes, yeah, in it's
it's well known that like the ancient
Greeks and Romans, it was men of action
were were the culture heroes. you know,
Thesus and Perseus and Julius Caesar and
people like that were like the people
that were really looked up to. And then
with Christian values, yeah, it was
saints. It became more the saintly
people. And then with regard to modern
values, I mean postmodern you're getting
into victims, but for the most part it's

like athletes, rock stars, actors and actresses, you know, it's like celebrities or like the culture heroes of modern western civilization which is definitely a step downwards from saints and even from men of action.

And you got women. In pagan values, women were celebrated. Christian values, women were suppressed. Modern values, women were just a gender. Well, again, this this chart seems to really be trying to glorify paganism because pagan values, I mean, some women were celebrated just like some some women are celebrated in Christianity. You had all these female saints, a lot of female saints. You got the

Virgin Mary. So some women were celebrated in in like medieval Christianity. But in in paganism, I mean like classical Athens, Athens at its peak, respectable women, they were veiled like Muslims are, you know, they they couldn't really attend the Olympic games. They couldn't go to go to the theater, that kind of thing. They just were pretty much just kept property in a house. And then even if a man came to visit some male friend of his, for the most part, he wouldn't see his friend's wife and daughters, they'd be in the back of the house just like in this sequestered kind of area where they

didn't come across other men.

So it may be that pagan values celebrated women a little more than Christian values. But I mean this is really a glorification saying that pagans celebrated women and Christians suppressed women when there was a lot of suppression going on in on in both camps when in modern values. Yeah. Women is you know you had Katangi Brown Jackson when she was being questioned before being uh chosen for the Supreme Court. Someone asked her what a woman is. She she said I can't tell you that. I'm not a biologist, you know. It's just postmodernism running a muck in that case. So anyways, let's just keep

continue with this chart. You got clergy. And under clergy, under pagan values, you have priestesses, divers, oracles, and mediums. Under Christianity, you've got the Vatican and church church and pastors. And then under modern values, you have scientists, media, and activists. Well, again, they're glorifying paganism. Like the clergy of paganism under Rome, it was mostly like politicians, you know, as like um Julius Caesar before he became emperor, he was a a a priest of of the god Jupiter. I mean, among other things, but I mean, he was still like a a military commander and a

and a a politician and all this. And it was these were the people the high status people would get the the high status like ecclesiastical positions.

And then of course the emperor was um he was pontiffects maximus. He was the high priest of the religion

up until uh what was his name? Gracian.

Gracian. He was I think he was the first

he was a Christian Christian um emperor

who he was the first one who just said

no I'm not going to be pontiffects

maximus anymore I don't want to do that.

So priestesses

yeah I mean there was more priestesses

under paganism than you know any kind of

high highprofile female leader like some

saint like St. Terresa of Avala. Divers,
yeah. Oracles, yeah. Mediums, I guess
so. But still, the the actual clergy
like in the Roman Empire was mostly
politician types

because it wasn't really all that
spiritual. It was like just maintaining
the Pax Deorum, keeping the gods
appeased and on your side.

So, let's just move on to deities. Under
pagan values, it's got primordial
archetypes and energies. Under
Christianity, it's got unnamed, distant,
singular god. And in mo modern values as
Saturn, corporations, deep state. Yeah,
I'm not exactly sure where Saturn comes

in other than just sort of the the early
Roman god Saturn who was um the
Saturnalia was named after him.

Um yeah modern values the deities of
like modern society would be like laws
of physics like the laws the laws of
physics are kind of the have taken the
place of deities.

Um with regard to pagans yeah the
deities were some of them were
primordial archetypes and energies but I
mean some of it is just kind of
mythology.

Yeah.

Still, it's it's this chart is really
trying to glorify paganism and make it
look like it's the best. So, let's just

go on to virtue. So, pagan values is
manifest divinity, embody virtue.

Christianity says pity, modesty,
submission. And then modern values is
virtue signaling, arguing and debates.

Um

gosh, where do I start with this one
with regard to virtue? Again, virtue was
different for like the ancient Romans
than it is for us now because virtue
would include like killing enemies and
so forth. Um, I guess in modern society,
not everyone's Buddhist, so I guess that
could still be in there. Um, embodying
virtue, that's kind of what the
philosophers were going for, but your

average pagan probably was not trying to embody virtue. They were just trying to avoid pissing off the gods and keep the gods on their side through, you know, sacrifices and rituals and so forth.

Um, yeah, with regard to modern values, I mean, there's more to modern virtue.

It's more utilitarian. You've got a utilitarian ethic in modern values. And I think this this chart is confusing modern with postmodern.

So, I'm just going to go to philosophy.

Under pagan values, it is solar and varied. Not exactly sure what the solar part really is is getting at. Uh,

Christian values, it's Judaism with a lot of Greek philosophy added in. And

then under modern values, it's
scientism, materialism, and freemasonry.
So yeah, I mean the philosophy of like
modern western civilization is pretty
much just been taken over by science
that science used to be called um
natural philosophy but then it just kind
of adopted a life of its own. And
philosophy aside from science or
scientism, scientific realism,
philosophy is in a way it's just
degenerated into like an obscure branch
of psychology or something.
liberal arts, that kind of thing.
Um, pagan philosophy. Yeah, it was
definitely varied. Tended to be rather

extroverted in most cases, not necessarily always.

But yeah, I think we can just skip over that. Let's just go to ideals. Pagan values, the ideals are attaining godhood. Under Christian values, it's salvation, indulge in heaven. And under modern values, it's accelerationism.

Well, again, they're really trying to make modern values look as bad as possible, but like the ideals of modern western society was like progress, scientific progress, also just rational progress where you're you're striving towards a more utopian kind of society.

I mean, it doesn't doesn't actually work that way because human nature is human

nature and whatever society we're in is going to be like the product of upgraded apes. So, there's always going to be a lot of badness going on. It all balances out positive and negative. You you create some new thing which is good and it's just going to have some unintended bad side effect. and you get rid of some bad thing that I mean it's just gonna cause like this vacuum which is going to cause some new bad thing to take its place. You know, you cure some disease, some new disease crops up to take its place. That kind of thing.

But again, the ideal of paganism isn't necessarily attaining godhood. For some

for the heroes who would actually become gods like Hercules or what was his name? Oculapius.

probably said that wrong. Essipius, you know, the he was like a god of healing. He had he had been like this really wise doctor or physician before he he was became a god. You know, some some heroes, some people would become gods, but I mean that could be considered an ideal, but for the most part, the ideal is just keep the gods from being pissed off at you, keep them on your side.

And then in summary, pagan values, challenge everything. Fortune favors the bold. Well, you don't want to challenge the gods. A lot of like Greek drama and

poetry and so forth is just full of do
not challenge the gods,
you know, that's hubris.

So yeah, you challenge the gods, the
gods are going to [__] you up.

So yeah, don't I really think that this
chart is just trying to glorify paganism
as much as it can. And I think they have
deviated from like objectivity in doing
so. And I'm just going to that's I spent
a long time on that one an answer to
that one question. So it's time to move
on to the next one. And this is the last
question already. See what we got going
here. Yeah, this is the last question
already. This is from Jimmy Lad. In

Jimmy Lad he gives a timestamp of 1 hour and 59 minutes in the previous Q&A and he says does this heretical philosophy have a name in poly and I was referring to the Bavad Gita towards the beginning of the Bavad Gita when Krishna who is Arjuna's charioteer is persuading Arjuna to fight in this war against his own relatives

um he gives this

um from from a Buddhist point of view

would be a heretical explanation as as

one of his justifications where it's

like I mean nobody's nobody's really

being killed you know it's just you know

bodies are being killed maybe but I mean

the bodies are just made up of molecules

and so forth and it's been a long time since I've read the the the Bavad Gita so I don't remember the exact argument but I mean it essentially amounts to you're not really killing anyone anyway so it doesn't matter.

And um Jimmy Lad is asking, "Does this heretical philosophy have a name in poly?" And I tried to look it up. I spent several minutes trying to find the stereotyped

um philosophies of the six heretical teachers that were contemporaries of the Buddha. And there's one of them in particular who has this famous explanation of how you could go up and

down the banks of the Ganges River with this like rotating razor sharp metal disc and just leave piles of flesh just chopped up beings all up and down both banks of the Ganges River. You wouldn't have done anything wrong.

I think I I don't know if it's that teacher or a different one who's just saying that, you know, there's just atoms. And so when you cut off somebody's head, it's just separating the atoms. The atoms don't die. You know, you're just kind of disrupting a configuration of atoms. And so you're not killing anybody. You know, there's no karma. That sort of thing. So that heretical philosophy in general would be

called Charvaka, which isn't a a poly word. I mean it's just like the traditional branch of philosophy in ancient India, North India was called Charvaka. And they were materialists. They didn't believe in rebirth. They didn't believe in karma. You know, they was they were just like the ancient equivalent of a modern materialistic atheist. And they kind of filled in the same ecological niche in Indian philosophy that the Epicurans did in like the classical western philosophy. They they took a lot of heat. I think I'm pretty sure that the Kama Sutra was a Charvaka text where it's just like the

whole purpose of existence is just
experience as much pleasure as you can.

So, I think that

that would be a name, but it's it's not

a poly name. I'm not I don't remember

exactly what the poly equivalent of a

Charvaka would be. Um, and I don't

remember which of the heretical teachers

were teaching this. So you may have to

look it up in the poly texts but in

Indian philosophy that general point of

view um not what Krishna is teaching

because

you know he was kind of teaching

something kind of along those lines but

at the same time he was god you know he

was an avatar of Vishnu so it wasn't

just um it wasn't just like atheistic
materialism that was being taught in the
Bala Gita obviously

but this whole idea that all you're
doing is just separating atoms. The
atoms don't die. You can't destroy the
atoms and you know you're just there's
no karma involved anything like that.

That would be Charvaka in in Sanskrit
anyway and I do not recall what the poly
equivalent of a charvaka would be
unfortunately. I do apologize.

And so we're done. That was it. This is
kind of a short one. So, like I should
always say at the beginning and never do
except for one time, if you have any

questions you think I can answer,
especially with regard to dharma, but I
mean biology and politics are fair game
because I know a little bit about those
also.

Um, but my my main field of expertise is
like early Buddhism, like Theravada
Buddhism and like pre-theravada Buddhism,
that sort of thing. So if you have any
questions you think I can answer
philosophy, dharma, whatever, then no
more than three questions per episode,
please. You can leave them in the
comments below
and like and subscribe if you have not
done so already. And be happy.

Alrighty then. I think we are recording.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 167.

Oh, I got to mute this.

Okay, I am your host, Pony Basa.

And you can see we're going for a slight change of scenery this time. I've got like one of those fake backgrounds behind me so that you'll think I'm living in a house.

This is my beverage with a little paper umbrella signifying my sophistication and class.

And I do think 167 is a prime number. So there's that.

And we've got sort of the [snorts]
medium number, the middle path number of
questions to answer. So, I suppose I
should just uh dive right into it. See
here, unless there's anything I've
forgotten to say by way of introduction.
I can't really think of anything,
though.

So, and if anyone's triggered by the the
fact that this TV looks like it's
crooked, it's not crooked. It's it's
level. It's just that it's kind of
tilted at an angle, which from this
angle makes it look crooked, but it's
not crooked. So, don't even don't even
think about it.

First question is from Yoshi Buouie. And

Yoshi Buouie says, "It's been explained several times in past videos, but would you mind explaining again the differences between an Araant, a bodhicattva, and a Buddha?"

Okay. Well, an arant I mean literally means worthy one. And before it got like adopted by spiritual systems like Buddhism to signify an enlightened being, it was just an honorific like I think judges were called ara and also [clears throat] ara just meaning worthy. It can also mean like I I believe there's a word in poly dandaraa which means worthy of punishment. So [clears throat]

um I mean arant itself is just it just means worthy one and in Buddhism it signifies at least in terra Buddhism it signifies a fully enlightened being. So the Buddha himself was an arahant like namotasa

arhat samas buddhasa that arhat is directed towards the Buddha. The Buddha was an arant.

So an arant is just any being that is fully enlightened, has no more delusion and no more dooka, at least no more like mental duke. Still they can feel physical pain allegedly.

But

aside from that, they've they have escaped from some sorrow at least after

they die. They don't get reborn again according to orthodox tradition. So they have won. They have laid down the burden and are free.

With regard to a bodhic sattva, I think I'll just skip that one and go straight to a Buddha. A Buddha, I mean a Buddha is an arahant. At least um the Buddha himself is called an arahant as I already mentioned. But a Buddha according to tradition is [clears throat] a person who has perfected all of the 10 parames and they are the ones who rediscover dharma after it has disappeared from the world. So it takes special talent,

special genius, special perfection for a fully enlightened being to be able to discover dharma on their own without a teacher teaching it to them. So that would be the main difference between a Buddha and an ordinary or even though a Buddha is an sort of like the difference between a frog and an amphibian. Not that I'm trying to compare the Buddha to to frogs or any such thing.

So Buddha is like a special class of orahant in this case. Although originally I do not think there was necessarily a difference that it was largely a kind of apotheiois of the Buddha glorification of the founder of the system that made like a radical

distinction between an ordinary enlightened being and a sama Buddha with a number of different like classes of enlightened beings in between like below a sama Buddha would be a pacheka Buddha who is like a Buddha. I mean, he's he [clears throat] has discovered dhamma um on his own, but he just opts out of starting a religion and just remains a hermit living in a forest somewhere, a fully enlightened Buddha who just doesn't teach Buddhism, doesn't start the wheel rolling again. And then below that you got like the chief disciples like in in the case of the historical goddam

[clears throat]

galana are the two chief disciples and they have to they're like at a higher level than an ordinary enlightened being then you've got the great disciples of which I believe there were 80 and then below that you've got ordin and then even the ordinary arhants there's different levels of that even you know there's different kinds different classes of arant that we don't really need to go there because

[clears throat] I think it's all academic.

I think a lot of this is just the ancient Indian philosophical mind that was just obsessed with classifying

everything and making hierarchies and
all this that they just went to town on
really you're either enlightened or
you're not.

So

then there's [clears throat] the bodhic
sattva and the bodhic sattva is a
mahayana concept. It's based on a terra
concept the bodhic satta
and I mentioned before that bodhicattva
is probably even a mistranslation
of the [clears throat] earlier term
bodhicatta
which um bodhic satta I mean it was
translated into Sanskrit as bodhicattva
by people who thought sata meant being.

So a bodhic sattva literally would be like an enlightenment being.

But it seems kind of counterintuitive that you call somebody an enlightenment being when in Mahayana Buddhism they are postponing enlightenment indefinitely until all beings are liberated.

But sata can also be a kind of past participle acting as a noun. It's a past participle of the verb sagi which means to be attached to or to be bound for.

And originally in Theravāda Buddhism a bodhic sata was somebody bound for Buddhahood.

You know they were destined to become a sama buddha in the future.

[clears throat]

So

according to like orthodox tradition, in order to be a bodhic sata, you have to receive what in Burmese is called a biadate, which is a sama Buddha has to declare you a bodhic sata who is destined to become a sama Buddha in the distant future. So in the case of our Godma Buddha according to tradition again it was [clears throat] the Buddha Deepankura who was like 28 Buddhas ago in some on some different planet earth in a different India who declared the Brahman Sumedo to be he's going to become a Buddha in this

distant future.

So in [clears throat] order to be a Buddhist sata you have to have already mastered Janna I believe according to tradition and you have to have this announcement this prophecy you know this prediction or like I guess it'd be a prophecy from uh a Samasan Buddha that you will become a sasan Buddha in a future life and then starting with that you are a Buddhist sata and you just spend eons and eons perfecting your virtues the 10 parames like the jataka stories it's a a a generary of Buddhist literature it's in the typic um you know it's like the Buddha life after life he's perfecting his virtues

sometimes he's an animal sometimes he's
a human sometimes he's some other kind
of being

um

and he's just like working on perfecting
himself

So that they came up with this idea that
a Buddha is just like orders of
magnitude beyond an ordinary enlightened
being even though technically their
wisdom is the same. They have both have
zero delusion which means they have both
maxed out on wisdom.

But then the the the the Mahayana

Buddhists took the term bodhicatta

apparently mistranslated it as bodhic

sattva

and they changed the meaning of it as um

a kind of

a being that in a way is superior to a

mere arahant just get downplayed in

Mahayana you know they're considered

somehow like deficient. In fact, the

term Hinayana in Mahayana Buddhism is a

derogatory ter derogatory term for the

pre-Mayana Buddhist schools which

includes terra even though they may not

have had terra specifically in mind. And

he is like a past participle that means

like deficient. It's like a past

participle of the verb heed which means

like to to lose to fritter away to

squander to not have enough. that kind

of thing.

So an arant just as review here before moving on to the next question. An arant is any fully enlightened being. A bodhic sattva is [clears throat] a mahayianist like mutation

of the earlier bodhicatta. A bodhicatta was just someone who is destined to become a Buddha. But a bodhic sattva is a being who just essentially vows to postpone enlightenment until all beings are liberated. Even though an infinite an infinite length of time has already passed and we still have an infinite number of unenlightened beings living in a quasi reality. These beings are

ultimately not even fully real.

So it would seem to me that if you want to liberate all beings, you just liberate yourself like Gorma Buddha probably was teaching people, you know, in this very life if you are able.

And then you just you realize that all these suffering beings um are just sort of virtually real anyway. And then you've liberated them by sort of rendering them no longer ultimately real in your perception.

>> [snorts]

>> So, I think I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Herie Gertie Man.

Herie Gertie Man says, "I'd like to ask

a very basic but fundamental question.

Why is our will and our existence not in harmony? What is the reason of this ultimate absurdity that we find ourselves in where conscious will is not law? What went wrong?" Well, in a way, conscious will is law. It's just that we [clears throat] are only I mean our ego only has like encapsulated within it a limited

bandwidth or just a limited scope of what really constitutes our consciousness. So we think that we are you know our ego you know what we are this this person this me is consciously aware of but there's other aspects of

our mentality that extend beyond this
like Freud talked about the the
subconscious mind Jung talked about that
kind of stuff too in fact he he referred
to the collective unconscious there's
all this subconscious
or unconscious mind and you I think
unconscious mind would be just an
oxymoron. But what it means is that
there's consciousness extending beyond
the limits of our ego and the ego is
only aware of itself
or at least with regard [clears throat]
to our mentality. There's other kinds of
communications coming from the
subconscious mind like through dreams
and so forth that that affect us that

can communicate to the ego.

But still the ego is is not the entirety of the consciousness that is influencing your life. That there's all this subconscious stuff that's going on that the ego just is not aware of. In fact, the ego can be unaware of some of other aspects of the ego just because, you know, some people just be clueless with regard to their own motives, their own genuine motives, that sort of thing.

That's kind of getting into the realm of what Freud would call hysteria.

>> [snorts]

>> So

um some people that aren't particularly

Buddhist like Hindus for example like Ram Das used to say that after you die then you you have access to more of the full scope of consciousness and then you can make decisions like well I guess the best thing for me in my next life will be to be born to a drugaddicted prostitute and then I will get brutally murdered in a back alley at the age of 19. All right, that's what I need for my spiritual development. Let's do it. And Buddhism doesn't really teach it that way. But still, I do think that there's like an element of truth to that. That there is like [clears throat] after you die, in all likelihood, assuming that consciousness persists, you're going to

be aware of lots more stuff than you're aware of now, like past lives and so forth. and a fully enlightened being or just like a sage that is very developed, he's going to have access to a lot more of the mind that in most people is subconscious. So like [clears throat] a spiritually advanced person can remember past lives for example going with Buddhist philosophy. So let's just kind of get back to this question here. Why is our will and our existence not in harmony? your will and your existence are in harmony. It's just that a lot of that will is beyond the scope of your ego. It's

still working. It's still going on. Like karma, for example, karma is a mental state. That's one of the most important aspects of who we are, who we think we are, is our karma. But we're not consciously aware of our karma. Unless it's like

while we're making a decision, you know, we can be aware of our like superficial vitions.

But the deeper volitions, the deeper like

I don't know, life plans, that kind of thing,

the conscious ego just is not aware of that sort of thing. Um, at least not in a a fully lucid way.

So I mean the ultimate absurdity that we find ourselves in is that this one aspect this like thinking part of our mind has um this sort of assume that it's all that there is that it's all that exists of our mind because it just cannot grasp other aspects of our mentality. They're are there it's just that they're invisible to to the thinking ego.

So what went wrong is the the conceit I am that is conjured up by the ego.

And let's see, is there anything else I should respond to before moving on to the next question?

Our will and our existence really is

pretty much in harmony. It's just that we're kind of reckless drivers. We're we're not conscious enough not to have bad dreams. For example, like last night I had a weird bad dream or someone was like shooting at me. That sort of thing. I mean, my conscious ego didn't I didn't decide, well, I'll just have a dream where somebody's shooting at me and then I'm like locking myself in a cave to get away from the maniac with the gun. This kind of thing.

It just it just happened. It's like some deep aspect of the personality, you know? It's like working on on various issues or whatever and it just kind of percolates up into the conscious mind

through remembering dreams you have in your sleep.

So let's see here. Yeah, the ultimate absurdity is we think this limited aspect of our mind is us when really there's much more to it.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Jimmy Lad and Jimmy Lad says, "Can you please speak more about other cosmic Buddhas in previous cosmic cycles?"

Um, yeah. Well, I already mentioned Deepankara was in reference to uh the the whole Buddhist Sata concept. Um, is first of all, first you had Gorama Buddha. I mean, he's sort of the OG

Buddha. He's like the founder of Buddhism, Gotama Buddha, you know, the Shakyamuni, the sage of the the Shakya clan. He was like the Buddha. But even he in the sutras will refer to enlightened beings before him.

And that sort of opened the door to this vast cosmos like cosmology or mythology I guess it would be of [clears throat] um just an endless line of Buddhas in an endless line of north Indians um just going back just it's like the earth respawns with a new India a new Vedic culture and Buddhas arise speaking Pali or Sanskrit, some Indic language. Um, and so the Indians who really had this vast

concept of time and distances and so forth, you know, they're measuring how many incalculable eons and world cycles like culpas, you know, and that, you know, they're trying to describe what was happening, you know, just a zillion gajillion years ago.

So a lot of it is just mythology. It's it's sort of elaborating on Buddhist [clears throat] ideas and just creating this this elaborate Buddhist cosmos and mythos that people can believe in.

People need to believe something. They need to cling to some kind of belief

system which is really contrary to what the Buddha was teaching. You shouldn't believe in it. Belief is delusion.

Belief is thinking that you know something you don't really know.

I'm waving my hands around a lot probably because of the the

[clears throat] background is making me look like I live in a house.

So I think there's mention of seven

Buddhas. I mean I really never really

took this very seriously. I mean all

that really matters to me is God Buddha.

He's the only one that that has any kind of historical evidence really. All the

rest lived zillions of years ago. I

mean, even the Buddha's predecessor was

Kasapa Buddha who lived on this planet.

Um, I [clears throat] think there were like seven Buddhas living just on this earth.

Um, but it's like you have a Buddha and then after the Buddha passes away, you've got Dharma abides. You know, you got Buddhism in the world and then finally Buddhism dies out because everything that has a beginning has an end. You know, the law of Anicha and so then you have this lawless period of no Buddhism, no dharma, just civilization degenerates [clears throat] and then finally some some new Buddha rediscovers.

He rediscovers Dharma and sets the wheel turning again. And so um I think earlier than the 28 Buddhas is like the seven Buddhas and then they started going back into previous earths all the way back to Deepanka. He's really the first Buddha that gets talked about in Buddhist mythology. And he's the one who gave the the prediction or the prophecy that our Buddha would become God Buddha [clears throat] or you know that that Sumido the Brahman of that time in some previous earth just incalculable eons ago that he [clears throat] would eventually become God Buddha on this planet.

And if you read I mean the the main text

that discusses this sort of thing is the Buddha the lineage of Buddhas. It's a relatively late text. It's not common to all the schools of Buddhism. And it goes back to Deepanka I'm pretty sure. And if you read the like the biographies of [clears throat] these previous Buddhas, you find that our Godma Buddha was by far the shortest Buddha. you know, he was only 27 feet tall according to tradition. You know, the other Buddhas, they're like 100 feet tall.

And he went through a very our our Buddha went through like six years of dukari of just these aesthetic practices just sort of almost killing himself.

Whereas some of these previous Buddhas,
it was only a few weeks for them. and
their life cycle. I mean, the Buddha was
also our Buddha, our Godma Buddha was
like the shortest lived Buddha because
some of these Buddhas were living like
84,000 years, this kind of thing. So, I
mean, I've ne like I say, I've never
really been able to take it very
seriously
that I'm sure there have been fully
enlightened beings in the past before
Gamma Buddha. I got no problem with
that. I mean they weren't even
necessarily Buddhists
but this like archetype of you know
every one of these some Buddhas you know

all 28 I guess Mata the future Buddha
will be or Maitraa in Sanskrit would be
what 29

be like the eighth Buddha of this planet
if I remember correctly really like I
say I've never really taken this kind of
stuff very seriously

but [clears throat] They all have the
same life. They you know they all live
in a palace and whichever cast or varna
wa in pali is considered to be the
highest one the Buddha is always born
into that cast. So like in the time of
gorama buddha the khatria cast the katya
cast in pali or or the katya wana was
the highest cast or considered to be. So

the Buddha was born as one of those. In other um iterations of Vadic culture when the brahinss are considered the highest which eventually became like the status quo in India after the Buddhist time. Then the Buddha is born a Brahman always male. There are no female Buddhas according to ancient Buddhist tradition. And then they all have to go through they see the signs. They all have to renounce the world. They all have to practice. And they when they renounce the world they do it there's like four possible vehicles you know they can be on a horse and a chariot um on an elephant or in some kind of flying castle or flying palace called a weim

mana

and then they all have the austerities
they all have to have [clears throat] um
like a group of aesthetes practicing
these austerities with them. The Buddha
had the smallest number of all of them.
He only had five. And in some some of
these previous Buddhas, it was like
thousands if not millions.

And then always they have to be offered
milk rice by some lay woman, right? On
the eve of their enlightenment, they all
have to be sitting under a a specific
kind of bodhi tree. Each Buddha has its
own bodhi tree. Some some uh bodhi
trees are like, you know, different

kinds of trees. Our goab Buddha was sitting under a uh a peeppole tree ficus religiosa.

So

I mean I think that it's mostly just madeup mythology to tell you the truth.

All religions have made up mythologies and that's that's some of the Buddhist

madeup mythology that happened

relatively early on but not like really super early times but over the first few

centuries of the existence of Buddhism

in India. This sort of thing developed

largely along with devotionism

just glorifying the Buddha and coming up

with all these legends about him and so

forth.

So Jimmy Lad [clears throat] then asks,
"What do you think of the prophesied
Maitraa Buddha?" And in Poly that would
be Matea.

Um [clears throat]
it's I think it's just part of the same
system of the of the 28 Buddhas just one
Buddha like projected into the future.
And I think he's the the future Matea
Buddha. He's not going to come to this
earth until Buddhism as it exists now
has died out because you cannot have
another Buddha arise to rediscover
Dharma until Dharma is has disappeared
from the earth and then he can
rediscover it.

So there have been a lot of people claiming to be Maitraa Buddha. In fact, I think even Elron Hubbard, the founder of Scientology, was declared at least by some of his followers to be Maitraa Buddha,

but I think it's I mean it's it's mythology in my opinion.

So, I mean, that doesn't mean that there isn't going to be like a future Buddha, but like all these explicit details about his name and all this sort of stuff. It's it's guesses in my opinion.

I mean, just think of what the poets did to like Greek paganism. They just messed it all up with all these weird stories of the gods being all rapy and stuff.

It's just it just kind of ruined
paganism. Um after people became more
sophisticated in their culture, they
just couldn't take it seriously anymore.
And I think a lot of this mythology
in Buddhism, it's already kind of most
westerners just can't really take it
very seriously if they don't know much
about it. You know, they just hear
Maitraa is going to be the next Buddha.
They can take that seriously. They can
believe that. make him believe that the
OG God Buddha that he actually predicted
that Mataya Buddha would be his
successor as the the next Buddha
probably millions of years in the

future.

But the more you study this kind of stuff like you read the Buddha Wamsaw and its commentaries and it's just it's like Monty Pythonesque. It's like most westerners, unless they're very faith oriented and are capable of believing anything, they're just not going to be able to swallow it very well.

So, I'm just going to move on to Jimmy Lad's next question,

which is as follows. Could it be that Christ was the Maitraa Buddha whose sacrifice on the cross enabled the projection of a pure love and mercy that it reordered the nature of samsara and enabled others to latch on to this love

via devotion and karmically level up so to speak and enter heavenly realms where they could practice more devotion in this love meta produced well again just based on orthodox tradition you can't have another Buddha which would be Maitraa Buddha or Matea Buddha until Buddhism has disappeared from this earth. There are some people um who maybe are a little bit cynical who would say well true Buddhism is already gone. In fact, there's the famous prophecy that given in the the poly texts where the Buddha says the true dhamma will survive for only 500 years. But that would uh still rule out Jesus of

Nazareth because um I mean Jesus of
Nazareth was a little under 500 years
after the time of the Buddha. I'm pretty
sure

especially with revisionist um estimates
of when the Buddha actually lived. And
of course then you have to go through
the cycle of the degeneracy of the human
race, the lifespan getting down to like
10 years, that kind of thing.

which had didn't happen. So, and

[clears throat] then going just with
Orthodox tradition, Jesus would not have
been fully enlightened because like he
cried, Jesus wept outside the tomb of
Lazarus, Lazarus. Um Jesus got into bad
moods, that kind of thing.

Um, so going from just a strictly

Buddhist

traditional

metric, Jesus of Nazareth, he he he was

no doubt a a holy man, but he was not

fully enlightened just going by Buddhist

standards.

Uh, with regard to Yeah. So Christ,

Jesus Christ or just Jesus of Nazareth?

Um, yeah, I don't that's really a

stretch. I that my Buddha is itself this

kind of mythology and then trying to

like impose Indian mythology on a

somewhat mythologized

Hebrew.

It it's just yeah I I really don't think

that it it fits. It doesn't stick.

So his sacrifice on the cross, I don't really I'm not even sure that Jesus Nazareth being being crucified was much of a sacrifice. He was a political criminal being executed by the government

and enabled the projection of a pure love and mercy. Well, I mean [clears throat] the Buddhists were more merciful than the Christians. I mean even Jesus according to the New Testament was helping his disciples catch fish for example, which is not very merciful to the fish.

Whereas in Buddhism, you don't even kill animals. In fact, a Buddhist monk isn't

even supposed to damage a living plant.

So, [snorts] let's see here.

I do think that Christianity in the west, it was kind of an upgrade of like the spiritual caliber of the mainstream of Western civilization. It brought like compassion, you know, it was like the first openings of the heart chakra in mainstream western civilization. Not that there weren't compassionate, merciful,

benevolent, even relatively enlightened people in the west before the time of Jesus. It's just that he kind of brought it into the mainstream. He and Paul kind of collaborated and brought

compassion into the mainstream in west.

I mean, you read older like

[clears throat]

pagan

literature like fiction, you know, read

the like the golden ass of Aulus and

people were I mean they were very harsh,

you know, they were hard callous people

back then just because death was so

prevalent, you know, public executions

and all this that nowadays, I mean,

people just couldn't deal with it. I

mean, we we have gotten very much more

compassionate in modern times and also,

of course, much more feminized in modern

times is we're much less militant

than we used to be and just less stoic

with regard to just accepting the harshness of life.

You know, it's just something is just part of life. Harshness and suffering and death is just the way it is. So just deal with it. That was sort of like the ancient classical attitude. Die gloriously. Don't die in bed. At least if you're a man.

Die with honor.

So yeah, I do not think that Jesus of Nazareth was my Buddha. I don't think that he was any Buddha. Um I'm kind of skeptical.

I don't I'm not sure that he was fully enlightened. I think he was a wise and

good man. I do think that he had what a Buddhist would call psychic powers that I would not at all be surprised if he healed the sick or even walked on water. But you don't have to be fully enlightened to heal the sick or walk on water. That's psychic powers that come from, you know, deep realizations, just sort of breaking the mold of the samosasic normie, so to speak.

Taking the red pill.

So, let's see here. I guess I answered that question. I'll just move on to the next question. This is from Xenithoid.

H, excuse me. I apologize to Xenithid for semib belching while saying his

name.

Xenithoid says, "Does this meme accurately describe the primary culacea of each section of the political sphere?" And I forgot to bring up the the the meme that he's referring to, so I'm doing that now. Okay.

So, he's got this meme that is the traditional um political compass map. You know, it's like this square grid, and you've got authoritarian at the top, libertarian at the bottom, left on the left, and right on the right. And you can take these like quizzes, these tests to see where

you fit on the political spectrum. And I've taken the test a few times and I always wind up sort of towards the middle just slightly below the the line between authoritarian and libertarian.

So anyways

um mapped onto this map are the seven deadly sins. He calls them kilasis which in in poly mean is usually um translated as defilement.

Kem is defilement, but it's it's the seven deadly sins of Christianity. And so the far authoritarian left corner is envy. The authoritarian right corner is wrath. The libertarian left corner is gluttony. And the libertarian right corner is greed. And then right in the

center you've got sloth. And then the center like authoritarian center between left and right is pride.

And the center between left and right at the libertarian extreme in the middle is lust.

And let's see, let's just get back to the question here. Does this meme accurately describe the primary kila of each section of the political sphere?

Um, I think it could be like a general trend. I don't know. Maybe somehow you could figure out how to do a statistical analysis to see if there is some um like a statistically valid correlation, but I'm not exactly sure how you do

that. So, the authoritarian left is mainly governed by envy in a way, like resentment kind of. Um, maybe

the authoritarian right is wrath, which I don't know, not necessarily. I mean, really, the authoritarian right the authoritarian right might be more into pride than wrath, you know, it's just honor, following orders, that kind of thing. So, you know, like feudal Japan could be arguably called something like authoritarian right. And they weren't so much into wrath as just like pride.

And let's see, libertarian left, gluttony.

Uh, I mean, it kind of works out that way, but lust would fit in there just as well. Sloth would might fit in there.

Um, just about any of the seven deadlies could fit into

uh like an extreme leftist libertarian.

And then [clears throat] libertarian

right is is greed, which I mean that's

that's kind of what young people think

about like conservatives, you know,

they're just greedy. They want money. At

least that's the way it was when I was

young. You know, it was like the

Republicans are the people out for as

much money as possible. Whereas

ironically nowadays most of the multi

multi-billionaires are leftists or at least they promote leftist causes.

So yeah, I think there could be like a general trend in this kind of direction.

You know, it's like an authoritarian rightist is might be more likely to be wrathful than an authoritarian leftist or a libertarian rightist might be more likely to be greedy than a libertarian leftist. And the libertarian leftist might be more likely to be gluttonous than a libertarian rightist and so forth. But um yeah, I I think you'd have to do a statistical analysis to see if there really is some kind of statistically valid correlation going on. But I mean there could be like

general trends, you know, not a majority, but at least like what is it? What is it when it's not a majority, but it's still the highest number of the a plurality? It might be pluralities, but I I don't know. So, I'm just going to close that window out and uh move on to the next question with all due respects to Xenithoid. I might not have done proper let's see what I've done it uh what's the word. Gosh, I don't know. I just didn't do it well enough or something maybe. I don't know. So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Gordon.

And Gordon says, "How does the clergy interact with or help the lay in traditional Buddhist societies? I know lay Buddhists give food to monks, but how do the teachings of the monks filter down to the lay? Do they go to a building once a week like Abrahamics, listen to talks, etc. How familiar with Buddhist doctrine are the lay?" So that's two questions right there, isn't it? which is going to bring us into the uh transgressive realm of fourth questions.

But

let's just do it. I mean there's four question marks in this one question which is already a red flag. I mean one

question should have one question mark.

So how does the the clergy basa interact with or help the ley in traditional

Buddhist societies? Uh I know le

Buddhists give food to How do the

teaching of the monks filter down to the

ley? Okay. Do they go to a building once

a week like Abrahamic? Yeah. Like in

Buddhist

Buddhist Asia, especially Terraova

Buddhist Asia like Burma, you've got

Uposeta day, which is the the full moon,

the new moon, and the half moon,

or at least it's it's called that, but

it's it's done according to a tradition

that isn't always astronomically

correct. You know, you can be one or two days off the actual full moon on Uposeta day. And on Uposeta days, it is the tradition for lay people to go to the monastery. They take eight precepts instead of just five. And then they'll listen to a dharma talk. And then they'll like help around the monastery. They'll do stuff that monks aren't supposed to do like, you know, pulling weeds, that kind of thing. And, you know, they'll drink tea and they'll talk and have a nice time. You know, it's kind of like their day off. And then they go back home again.

And uh let's see.

So there is that. But also if lay people

have a problem in their personal life, they often go to like the village monk to ask for advice. And when I was I spent some time in Bali in Indonesia and there was an Indonesian monk there. He was Theravada Buddhist. And when he was there I mean he spent most of his time in Burma. But when he would come back to visit his family or whatever in Bali, it was it was just like people were just coming to him all the time. It seems to be more of a a cultural thing in Bali than in Burma that you just go to the monk with your problems. And so it's like, you know, this guy's fighting with his mother. You know, they're not

getting along. They go to the monk and ask him ask him for advice, that kind of thing. And a lot of the time it works fairly well. Although really a monk, especially a monk who was ordained as a child and never really lived a worldly life, you know, with interacting with with women and and kids and and like having to pay bills and so forth that there's some questions they might not be really good at answering, which is one thing in the West, one reason why Western Buddhists often prefer lay teachers to monk teachers is that the lay teachers have more experience in the kind of problems that lay people are more likely to have and so they're

better able to give advice with regard
to that

and health advice. I mean, some

[clears throat] monks will just give

horrible just quack medical advice to

lay people and monks in Burma,

especially famous monks, seats,

um, they just kind of have people

assuming that they're infallible for so

long that they start assuming it

themselves and they'll just start

blurting out decrees and so forth that

it it doesn't always work out that way,

you know, like Um, there was this one

doctor that I knew in Burma. He had this

like like a a scrapbook of just gnarly

pictures of like [clears throat] a woman comes to a monk in some remote village. She's got like a lump on her breast. He just assumes there's a boil. He just takes a needle and and pops it, which then causes the the cancer cells to metastasize and get worse.

So yeah, you shouldn't go to a monk for like medical problems um or even like family pro I mean family problems maybe I mean it can just be a universal dharmic answer you and your mother aren't getting along the monk can just suggest after hearing the the details you know just send meta you know be patient you know have respect for your parents you know within this context

just you know they can give sort of general generic kind of advice, but with regard to specifics, you know, how should I invest my money, that kind of thing, or you know, what should I do about this pain in my leg? That kind of thing. You're better off not going to a monk about that sort of thing. Something that has really something central to do with dharma or dharma, you know, something that can be answered in terms of Buddhist philosophy or Buddhist practice, then you maybe do well to go to a monk. In fact, you'd probably do better in cases like that, going to a monk than going to a lay person.

You might do better going to a monk with regard to like psychological issues than you would by going to like a a licensed therapist because psychologists and psychiatrists for the most part are basket cases. Most of them are nutty or just like very samsaric.

So I hope I answered that question. So [clears throat] now I'm going to answer sort of the last part of that question, the fourth question mark, which is how familiar with Buddhist doctrine are the ley? And in the West, they're fairly ignorant. In fact, some of the monks are fairly ignorant of of like Buddhist doctrine in the West.

I've I've I've sat through a few dhamma

talks given by western monks in in the west and Burmese villagers would know more about dhama than this monk. You know the monk saying like the first verse of the dhamapara says that the mind is like an ocean. And I mean he said that this this one monk said that twice like in two different dhamma talks. makes the same claim that the first verse of the Dhamapata says that the mind is like an ocean. You can read there's no mention at all of oceans in the first verse of the Dhamapata. It doesn't say that at all. But the lay people, they just loved him. You know, they were just soaking it up like a

sponge because they didn't know any better. Whereas some Burmese villager with a fourth grade education, I mean, their mouth would be open, you know, or they might be like snickering behind their hand at the the Burmese villager sitting next to him like, "You hear what he just said?" Because Burmese villagers, even if they only have like a fourth grade formal education, they know about Abid Dhama. They know all the stories from the commentaries, they know basic tenets of of Buddhism. If they're devout Buddhists, I mean, if they're just don't care, then, you know, they're just very superficial Buddhists. Just like a lot of Christians in the West are

just very superficial Christians that don't, for example, even know that there's a book of lamentations in the Bible. The book of Lamentations. A lot of Western Christians would be surprised to hear that there's a book of lamentations in the Bible. Yeah, it's one of the books of the Bible. So there's a lot of sort of superficial Buddhists in that are just Buddhists because they were just born into a Buddhist culture. But still there are lots and lots of Burmese villagers who have they you know they go and listen to the the the monk give the talk on today and they they'll even like um like read

Buddhist books and so forth and they know more about Buddhism than a lot of Buddhist teachers in the west just the average Burmese village Buddhist.

So yeah, the ley at least the devout ley in Buddhist Asia like like in Burma especially that's the one place that I have the most experience with. So I can I can speak with more authority with regard to what Burma is like than any other Buddhist country that yeah they understand their dharma fairly well.

In fact they understand it better than a lot of Buddhist teachers in the west know it.

So, I think I'm just going to move on to Gordon's next question, which is as

follows. From what I've heard from you and others, in Buddhist cosmology, the universe dies and is reborn. A Buddha comes into being and teaches eventually those teachings are forgotten and everything descends. What do these Buddhist end times look like [snorts] before another Buddha arises?

Is anything written about it? And maybe I should have looked up the reference, but there's this long weird sutta towards the end of the digaya where the Buddha talks about this sort of thing. You know, he's talking about sort of cosmology. He's talking about like the origin of the earth and everything which

in other sutas he won't answer. You know, it just is that's just a waste of time bothering with that sort of thing. But in this one long suta towards the end of the digaya um you know he just goes for it. And again I really have never been particularly interested in Buddhist mythology except from maybe like an anthropological point of view. So according to him uh or according to the suta I should say because there's no guarantee that the Buddha really taught this especially considering that he refused to answer these questions in in numerous other sutas and also sutas that are towards

the the back of a collection of of sutas
um just uh like statistically are less
likely to be authentic as a general
rule. For example, the Angura Nikaya,
the numerical discourses, the whole 11th
book, I've heard certain scholars claim
the whole chapter 11 of the Angura
Nikaya is probably later a later
edition. Probably started off just 1
through 10.

Anyhow, [clears throat] the end times,
it just gets civilization degenerates
until um and also the human lifespan
degenerates until you're down to like a
lifespan of 10 years. You know, you hit
puberty at five and then and people are

essentially just there's no dhamma at all. Nobody really is keeping any kind of precepts. There's no virtue. You know, people are just essentially killing and eating each other. And then um it just hits sort of rock bottom and then starts improving again. And then after it has improved sufficiently that you have at least the potential for dharma again, then the next Buddha comes along.

But the end times, it's way worse than any end times that we've experienced recently. You know, it's worse than World War II, worse than, you know, worse than anything in modern history.

So we haven't got there yet.

So from the Buddhist point of view, all we have to look forward to is further decline. Although there can be little bumps, you know, a little bit of uphill before, you know, you continue the downhill slide. Sort of like the decline of the Roman Empire was sort of like that, too. It wasn't just constant decline. Every once in a while, you'd have a good emperor who would make reforms and so forth. Things would get better for a little while and then they'd go back downhill again. So that's kind of the way it is. Um, for us from a Buddhist point of view, you know,

we're we're still on the downhill slide.
It's going to get a lot worse before it
gets any better. Although, there can be
like intervals of improvement before you
hit the cliff again.

So, let's see here. Gordon's
fourth question, I guess, since I
separated out his compound first
question into multiple into two
questions. She says if America were to
become Buddhist majority with no
demographic or government change i.e.
most people freely convert to it. What
do you think the country would look like
after that? What would change? What
would stay the same? To clarify, I mean
the American people become Buddhists as

in they believe and follow it to the same extent most humans believe and follow their religion, not necessarily all become enlightened. Well, if America were to become a Buddhist majority country, the main thing that would change would be Buddhism itself.

Because I mean, you just look at some of the academic papers written by Western Buddhists and it's like queer Buddhism and feminist Buddhism and all this kind of stuff that the Buddha never taught. I mean, he probably would not endorse very much of it.

Um, so what would change is that Buddhism would change and you'd wind up

with something hardly recognizable and which is already happening in the West. It's like um a long time ago. This is this is like the late 80s I think there was I think it was the ABC the American Buddhist Congress or something had this convention this Buddhist convention and one of the keynote speakers there gave this speech about how the top priority for Western Buddhism would be to abolish the SA

and I mean that was what Buddhism was all about originally. The Buddha was a monk. He taught Buddhism to other to monks. You know, it was a monastic spiritual system that if you really wanted to follow Buddhism like really

strictly and correctly, the first thing you should do, renounce the world and become a monk.

And in the west, they just it's just not like that. So, there would have to be a a major change in world view for people to become good Buddhists. like for Buddhism not to just become like mutated into something the Buddha himself would denounce

which is to some degree what has already happened in the west you have like just just dealing with terra you know you've got sort of the the boomer weasna movement which was largely based on mahasi siato's teachings and I mean

there's still some valid dharma in it
But it's just a very secular worldly
kind of dharma where it's more a matter
of trying to sleep more comfortably than
actually waking up.

And then there's the Ginka method which
may I mean despite its superficiality
with regard to philosophy and so forth.

It may be like the best version the mass
version of terra Buddhism in the west
although there are a lot of more like
monastic systems arising in the west
especially the Ajan Cha tradition. So
the ajan cha tradition and just uh like
Thai Buddhism time and western monks in
a Thai tradition like settling in the
west and becoming like missionaries that

helps. But when you've got monks that are missionaries they have to be politically correct. You know it's mostly leftists who are going to take Buddhism seriously because the right-wing conservatives, if they're religious at all, they're more likely to be Christians or Jews.

So you got monk missionaries coming to the west settling down like in a a liberal type of city and you know you got the the people going to the monastery that are wanting like you know gay pride events this kind of thing you know they want to hear more about mindfulness of white privilege and so

forth

and um I mean it just kind of derails dharma to some degree when you have that kind of situation. But you can't have monks just saying like for example according to the second noble truth all suffering is caused by craving. Craving is volal. Therefore all suffering is ultimately self-inflicted. You can't just blame whitey or blame patriarchal men or blame the government you know for your own suffering. It's ultimately self-created.

And to say that kind of thing will have people just I mean they'll just get pissed off. A lot of them will. They just, you know, you'll just be driving

away your your potential Buddhist converts.

But let's say just for the sake of argument that America were to become a Buddhist majority country.

um

with less

leftist craziness

contaminating the dharma because like a lot of leftists they cannot tell the difference between like progressivism and dharma. They just assume that the Buddha was a progressive because he was enlightened.

But then I mean it'd be like it wouldn't really be all that different. I mean,

how many Christians nowadays really take Christianity seriously? Like, how many Christians nowadays in the West gather not up their treasures upon the earth? There's even a uh one of the epistles of Paul, I'm pretty sure, says that if you become a Christian at a time when you're not married yet, you shouldn't get married because Jesus is coming. You got to get ready for that. On the other hand, if you're already married when you become a Christian, then stay married. But I mean stuff like that and gathering not up your treasures upon the earth even like you know love your enemies and bless those that curse you. At least there are some devout Christians that at

least make some efforts in in along those lines. You know they try to forgive their enemies, bless those that curse them. Still, you know, they're they're getting families. They're they need to make as much money as they can. You know, they're still in the world and of the world. And if America or the West were to convert to Buddhism, it would be the same kind of thing. It would be like secular Buddhism for the most part, um, American culture in particular, and there'd have to be a radical change for Americans to really eagerly just get down on their knees and bow to monks, you know, to have like this higher class

of humans. Like in Burma, the word for human being, Lou, isn't even used for monks. Monks are considered to be literally superhuman and that sort of thing just isn't going to fly very well in a relatively egalitarian culture like America. But I think if things get bad, especially, you know, just economically or whatever, there'll be more there would be more and more people who are just taking the the renunciation route, just bailing out of society, you know. Who knows? Maybe a lot of like incelss and so forth would just take that route. Just sort of like latent homosexuals in Burma often become monks just to give

them a socially acceptable
excuse for not getting married to a
woman. And it seems like when I was in
Burma anyway, just about any like mahasi
center in town that was relatively
wellunded, well supported, relatively
comfortable would always have like an
assistant Seattle who was a latent
homosexual.

They would stay away from the rough
forest monasteries, that kind of thing,
but they would kind of gravitate
gravitate towards the more comfortable
places and towns.

So, I mean, if America were to become a
Buddhist majority country, I really

don't think there would be all that much change because I mean, you have to change the religion to fit the mainstream culture. You know, they're not just going to like abandon the military, you know, they're just not going to just shut down the military because that's that's adharmic. You know, you should you shouldn't be harming others, that kind of thing. they're just going to have to they would change Buddhism. So, it really wouldn't be all that different from from Christianity, which may not be the answer that Gordon was expecting, but that's pretty much the way it would be, I'm pretty sure.

Okay,

so I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Romeo

and Romeo is asking kind of a similar

question I think kind of along the same

lines of if some religion were to take

over the West. Anyhow, he says, "Back in

Q&A number 163,

you addressed my questions about whether

you could ever see a revival of the type

of paganism that existed in

pre-Christian Europe gain any

substantial following in the West. You

didn't realistically see this happening

except by a few on the fringes of

society to fill the current spiritual

vacuum that now largely exists in the west. You speculated that a kind of revamped Christianity and even some kind of some form of Buddhism may step in to fill this void. I was wondering if you think Islam could ever realistically fill this gap. Not that I would want it to. After all, Islam has already taken over large swads of Europe. Or is it swavthes? Large swavthes of Europe and is now making inroads and growing rapidly even in these good old United States. Yeah, especially around Dearbornne, Michigan.

If you do think it is possible for Islam to take over the West, what does this bode for the flourishing of Buddhism

throughout the West? Would it just be stomped out? Well, before I actually answer the question, um, first I should point out that I think Q&A 163 was also, um, a prime Q&A. And let's see. Um, there is an I have had this idea that I mean, I don't think it's likely, but it is possible that you could have like a new sort of religious system in the West that would resemble sort of the cult of the emperors in Rome, you know.

Trump could be deified. I mean, it's not impossible. I don't think he'd be declared a god by the Senate, which is the way it worked in Rome. But, I mean, he could have some kind of cult going uh

at some point in the future. Not that he would be like consciously the leader of it. he'd probably be passed away by then. But I mean it is theoretically possible you could have some sort of like emperor worship kind of thing happening in the west especially when you've got this civil cold war which is getting warmer and warmer all the time between left and right where the left they just hate Donald Trump. They hate his supporters and the right is just getting more and more just fed up and pissed off at the temper tantrums of the left. And so I mean eventually I mean it does seem that the right is is winning at present that the left is becoming so

hysterical and so hatefilled and and
it's like in a hypocritical way
declaring the other side to be the
hateful side. So it's like my hate is
justified because they are hateful. that
sort of thing that it really is driving
more and more people away. So that you
could have just this seismic shift to
the right. Not that I'm holding my
breath and it wouldn't even necessarily
be all that good of a thing. It might be
better just to restore the Democratic
party to some semblance of sanity
that you could have like a cult of the
emperors that could become sort of like
a new religion in the West, at least in

America.

[snorts]

But let's see here.

Uh I mean it's possible something like
neo stoicism

could replace religion in the west but
again it would take some really
charismatic inspired sort of teacher of
that to really get the ball rolling or
to get the wheel get the wheel rolling
in a stoic kind of way.

So let's just get to the question though
[clears throat] and see if you do think
it is possible for Islam to take over
the west what does that bode for the
flourishing of Buddhism throughout the
west would just be stomped yeah probably

yeah I think once you get a critical mass of Muslims especially certain kinds of Muslims I mean there's different kinds there's more um intolerant sort of Muslims and but I mean the intolerant Muslims are the ones that are more strictly following the Quran

So yeah, I mean that history would show that yeah, Buddhism doesn't compete very well with Islam. Um especially once Islam reaches a certain percentage of the population because Buddhists are nonviolent and Islam is a violent religion.

It's just right there in the Quran.

[sighs and gasps] So

yeah, I mean Islam entering India pretty much spelled the end of Buddhism in India.

So yeah, I do think that that Buddhism would pretty much go extinct in the West if

the West became predominantly Muslim.

That's just a guess though. Who knows? I mean, for example, I mean, it could be the same kind of deal as I was just mentioning with regard to America becoming Buddhist. If America became Muslim, they'd be like lukewarm tolerant Muslims. You'd probably be have like Muslim queer groups and so forth that would be abomination from the point of

view of the the founder of the religion.
But it's just America or Western
civilization in general is just not very
religious, not very spiritual,
especially in modern times after science
pretty much replaced Christianity as a
way of describing
the cosmos.

So yeah, I mean you cannot serve both
God and Mammon and the West specializes
in Mammon.

So, I mean,
it's possible that Islam, if it took
over the West, would be so lukewarm that
it would just tolerate Buddhism. But if
it were like a fundamentalist Islam,

then yeah, I think even Christianity would be in in dire straits. There'd be like persecuted sects of hardened Christians here and there, sort of like you still have in the Middle East.

But I'm not sure how well Buddhists harden under certain circumstances. They mostly just go away or or get killed.

[snorts]

So,

oh, but whether Islam could take over, Romeo is kind of asking that also, even though there's no question mark right after it. He's wondering if I think Islam could ever realistically fill the religious gap in in the West after the decline of Christianity. Um, yeah,

especially in Europe because I mean in the West it's mostly Hispanics that are crossing the border into America, whereas in Europe there's a much higher percentage of Muslims who are entering, military age Muslim men who make no secret of the fact that they despise Western civilization. They're just there for the free handouts.

So

yeah, I it's I mean Islam

[clears throat] could possibly take over if like Western civilization becomes so degenerate and so feminized that the men of the West just aren't even going to fight back.

They're not going to stand up for their
their heritage and all that. Then yeah,
it could easily happen. Especially in
Europe, I think Europe is definitely
more castrated than America is now.

So I'm just going to move on to the next
question. This is from PSA

and PSA is somewhat of a weissenheimer

I should say and he says in your

esteemed capacity as a as the curator of
a closed aquatic biome how do you

navigate the intricate and

multifactorial

physicochemical equilibria necessary to

sustain a stable internal milieu constancy

within maybe she's trying to say

constantly within our ichthyological

prototype, particularly in regard to mitigating the insidious onset of utrofication and the subsequent perturbations in nitrogenous waste biotransansformations within your finite cartilagynous vertebrae limnological microcosm.

Well, yeah, I have had a problem with utrofication lately. And for those of you who aren't like into ecology, utrofication means excess of nutrients. So, I mean, I actually did an aquarium video months ago where I was discussing this and it was like an unintended prophecy because it happened to me after I was mentioning the possibility of it

where you keep adding food to your fish tank, but you're not doing water changes regularly. you know, you're trying to have like a balanced ecosystem in there so that everything kind of stays in balance. But when you're adding certain kinds of food, there's like certain like minerals especially that aren't being taken back out of the system by plants. See, like with regard to nitrogenous wastes, the fish pee into the water, bless their hearts, and you got plants like hornwort, which is excellent for this. It just sucks the nitrogen right back out of the water again. No problem. But the plants aren't taking out enough of the minerals. You know, they're

taking out the nitrogen and a lot of the organic stuff is just being broken down by bacteria and so forth, but the minerals especially just have been building up in my aquarium.

So, [clears throat] that the water is very hard now. And I've just had to start doing water changes. So, I'm doing like a water change once a week, you know, like a 20% water change once a week. Now, just trying to get the pH and the the water hardness back down to a level that isn't stressing out the creatures. Like the shrimp especially, it's kind of counterintuitive. The shrimp like a little slightly acidic

water with low mineral content. you know, they like soft water, which I mean, you think they're crustaceans, you know, they want calcium in their shells and all that, that they'd like minerals in the water, but for some reason, they're just evolved to live in soft water. And so, when my water started getting hard, I didn't realize what the problem was at first. The the shrimp just stopped reproducing. That was like one of the first red flags. And then some of the fish started stressing out, too. But so I've started doing water changes. Um, have I addressed everything in here? That's uh I still I like having like a

balanced ecosystem like lots of plants. You know, my my aquarium, especially my 32-galon tank is very jungly now. So that a lot of the the fish that live on the bottom, the scavengers on the bottom, I hardly ever see them because they're just living in the in the bushes.

I should have at least 10 ammano shrimp in there. And I rarely see in a mono shrimp just because they're just hiding in the plants all the time.

But having an aquarium where you don't do water changes, if you can have it so perfectly balanced that you don't feed the fish,

then you can do that. you know, it's just like this enclosed system where the fish you just have a few nano fish that are like feeding on biofilm, that kind of thing. And then so long as you're not adding any no more nutrients into the water, you shouldn't have a problem. But if you are adding food, then gradually there's going to be a mineral content is increasing in that aquarium and you're going to have to do water changes at the very least. you know, like a weekly water change just to keep the water like the water hardness down because otherwise it just gets hard in in the tank just due to gradual buildup

of certain types of nutrients or other substances, especially minerals.

But my my aquarium, even though I I rarely or up until recently wasn't doing many water changes or changing the filter much, um I mean, there was no problem with nitrogen because there's so many plants in there, they just suck the the like the fertilizer right out of the water. It's just this mineral stuff that the plants don't need that much and so it's just keeps building up in the water. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from [clears throat] Ruie.

And Ruie says, "Would you say that

samsara is not a region of experience
but the totality of experience?"

Um, I would say that samsara is
perception.

So I mean you can do with that as you
will. You can interpret that as you
like. Is perception the totality of
experience? I think probably not. Just
like bare consciousness isn't
necessarily samsaric
because it's not perceptual.

But to the extent that consciousness is
perceptual, to that same extent it is
samsaric.

Perception is samsara.

Perception is or samsara is meaningful.

[snorts]

So

yeah, I would I [snorts] it all depends
on how you're going to define
experience. I guess if experience is
necessarily samsaric

then you could say well then the
totality of experience would be samsara
but if you think that the totality of
experience is not 100% uh perceptual
then I would say it's just a kind of
region of experience the perceptual
region

and I'm just going to move on next
question this from near

says thoughts on osho

I have heard some of his speeches in

Hindi and I must say the guy was a crazy good actor and definitely seemed very wise. Yeah, I've I've written a few essays on Osho.

Um if my fourth book ever comes out, um there's going to be some significant mentioning of Osho in that fourth book also. Um yeah, there was one essay I wrote in particular. It's like the something the enigmatic bwan because I mean for most of his life when I mean he was the bwan shri nish he didn't start calling himself Osho until right towards the end I think.

Um so my thoughts on Osho I don't think he was enlightened. I've read a few of his books and his books are more glib

than wise. It seems to me that I mean he did have the ability to give a two-hour long dharma talk every day which just blows my mind. I mean when I was in Bali especially I was asked to give a dharma talk every day

and I mean the dama talk would only be like 20 or 30 minutes maybe but still after a few weeks I'm starting to like rack my brain. what should I talk about this time? You know, it's like you just run out of ideas after a while. You run out of topics that really resonate with you and for Osho when back when he was living in Puna, India at the ashram in Puna. Um he [clears throat] was giving a

two-hour long dama talk at least once a day and he was just going with it. But reading his books, you see that I mean he has like these glib answers that kind of makes him seem like he's wise because he can answer so easily. But you think about it and it's like wait a minute, no I I don't think so. That kind of thing. And you just look at how his his whole system worked out and it kind of was a fiasco, one fiasco after another. And of course, Osho really did get first pick of all the pretty syasins and all that. So my personal opinion on Osho is that he had attained something. You know, he was working at a higher level of

consciousness than the average person.

But just because you're at a higher level of consciousness doesn't mean that you're necessarily wiser or better. You know, like a monkey is at a higher level of consciousness than a sheep. But a monkey is a lot nastier than a sheep.

So, or at least they have the reputation for being nastier than sheep.

So, yeah, I think that he did kind of make some kind of breakthrough like through meditation or whatever. And he was clever and a good speaker and he had like the the big dark penetrating eyes sort of like the the Naga king in the first Conan Barbarian movie. You know,

James Earl Jones, is that him? James Earl Jones. He had like those big soulful dark messing eyes. Osho had that too.

But

like when they moved to Antelope, Oregon, which is when I found out about it because I was just living like 100 miles. I grew up like about 100 miles away from there. You see them on the news all the time. always negative stuff, you know, like these these cult members taking over the town of Analopee, Oregon, and importing homeless people to vote and then just kind of abandoning them after they did their duty by voting in these Osho followers

as the new town council and all that.

And then of course Sheila who was like the the rightand person of Osho in in America like literally trying to um influence the the vote by poisoning people in in like salad bars at restaurants in town, that kind of thing.

Like inoculating salmonella into the salad bars at restaurants, this kind of thing to to reduce the the the the people voting on this election. So the homeless people that they imported plus the the the ashram members can you know take over the town council and then they changed the name of Analopee Oregon to Rajnish Puram Oregon and all this. It

was a big scandal but at that time Osho he wasn't even talking anymore. He was apparently taking some kind of drugs and just kind of staying in his cabin and this nutty Sheila woman was just kind of running a muk.

So yeah, I I would agree that he was a good aator and just amazingly could talk for two hours straight every day and not just keep repeating himself. I assume he didn't. Um, and he did have some wisdom, but I do not think that he was enlightened, even though some people are just sure that he was enlightened. Like I remember one time when I was in Bali, there's a bunch of um around the the city of Ubud in central Bali, there's

like an expat community of like artists, western artists and so forth. And there's quite a few uh uh exf followers of of Osho there. And I met a few of them when I was in Bali and I was asking what do you think about Osho? Do you think he was enlightened? And this one German artist who lived there, he just I mean just rolled his eyes and just it was obvious. You know, he was unlike anybody I ever met in my life. You know, he was he was clearly enlightened. And then there was another person who was on the board of directors uh for Osho. He was kind of non-committal. You know, he he he really couldn't answer either way.

That kind of thing. But personally, I'm skeptical that Osho really was enlightened.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from RFS and we've been going for an hour and 22 minutes. Okay. RFS says, "Do you have enough money to live well?"

Um, yeah. I mean, we're getting along.

Um, I mean, I'm not rich, but the house is paid for, the cars are paid for. I mean, I I do make enough money to pay my bills.

And um

so yeah, I mean

we're doing all right. I'm not complaining.

See, I mean it all it would take is like one disaster to to wipe us out, you know? It's like some health disaster or something. Yeah, that could even with health insurance that still I mean you can it can mess you up. But I mean, I've been living my life kind of the way ancient people have lived their lives. You know, people have lived their lives this way for forever. It's just you just have faith that you won't be one of the 10% of the population that just gets wiped out by some disaster.

[sighs]

So, there is that.

Um, but yeah, I answering the question,

which is a yes or no question. Um, yeah, I do have enough money to live well enough. I mean, I was an aesthetic living in a cave with no money for 30 years or I mean in the cave for 20some years. No, in the cave for however many years.

But I mean, I don't have very high standards with regard to quality of life. This this house is just I mean totally beyond what I would have even gone for. This this is largely the result of my woman who has been living sort of a a worldly life more so than me um you know for a few decades anyhow. So there is that like kind of married into money or something to some some

extent even though she doesn't work for a living.

So yeah, I guess so. So next question from RFS is, if you didn't have enough money, would you ask your audience for help? And I don't know. I mean, if there was some kind of calamity, you know, the house burned down and and the somehow we had spaced off paying the last insurance bill. I mean, I personally just do not believe in insurance. The only reason I have any insurance at all is because the law requires it when my woman insists upon it.

But insurance is essentially betting against yourself. You're actually

wagering money that something bad will happen to you.

And in my opinion, it probably increases the likelihood that something bad will happen to you.

So if I didn't have enough money, would I ask my audience for help? Maybe. I mean, we'll just have to wait till we get to that point if it ever happens and then we'll see. Um, I mean, more likely I would just kind of describe the situation and and let people decide what they wanted to do about it. I didn't want don't want to put anyone on the spot, you know, give me a dollar, anything like that.

So,

yeah, at present

life is relatively good. So, I've got no complaints.

Some people have been sending money like generous contributions. One recently for \$77.77.

Like a couple weeks before that, somebody sent a hundred bucks. So, I mean, it's it's appreciated. You know, it's it's nice to know that people value what I am contributing enough that they even think to send, you know, five dollars.

So, I mean that's that's that's kind of uh gratifying, I suppose. And the money is well spent. You know, we we buy

groceries and stuff.

So,

um I just move on to the next question,
I guess. This is from Newman. And Newman
says, "When you were a monk and you were
living with other monks in a monastery,
how did you overcome the tension and
other issues like subtle passive
aggression and other low intensity
social conflicts that arose?"

Huh. Well, when I was a monk and living
with other monks in a monastery, I
mostly just avoided everybody, you know,
just stayed by myself, you know, just
stayed in a little cabin or in a cave on
the outskirts of the monastery, that
kind of thing. Um, but still if there's

problems, tension, and other issues, subtle passive aggression. Yeah, that's I mean, you're more likely in a monastery to have like an explosion than a subtle passive aggression. At least in my experience, because um a monastery or an ashram, some place like that, is a pressure cooker. It's like an emotional pressure cooker because you're supposed to be restrained. Monks are supposed to be restrained. And so when you restrain your urges, they don't just go away. They just build up pressure in the subconscious mind until they start percolating up to the surface in the forms of like hysteria.

That's why you had so many like

[clears throat] oh what was it the the
devils of Ludon

like it was a book by uh Aldis Huxley uh

like a a historical book about this

these uh I think they were medieval or

very early modern nun Catholic nuns in

France that were just going off the deep

end or just like the witch trials like

witch mania among Puritans you know that

the Puritans were so self-restrain or

like the [clears throat]

like like in Spain like in the 16th

century again they were so restrained

through their religious beliefs and so

forth that they just became hysterical

and you're much more likely to have like

witch public witch burnings and so forth
people just freaking out you people
supposedly being possessed by the devil
and all this in these really repressed
environments these repressed societies
and a monastery is like that so I
remember one time there was an attendant
at a monastery in California that I was
staying at who referred to the place as
a accelerator just because of all
this this stuff comes up to the surface
more easily as and partly because you're
trying to like examine yourself you know
it's like everything's under like a like
a magnifying glass so that kind of ex
exacerbates the problem too

so there were a few times when there was
just like blowups at a monastery

Um, you know, quite a few times
wasn't so much of a problem with subtle
passive aggression, you know, it was
more like boom, hitting fan, that
kind of thing.

So, how did I overcome the tension and
other issues? Well, part of it partly,
you know, it's just you're reading the
text that the sutas say, you know, you
shouldn't indulge in angry speech and so
forth. So, I mean, you're just mindful
of it. You watch it arise and pass away.
If you're like conscientious and it
occurs to you to do this,
other monks might uh you know, they

might indulge in backbiting and so forth more than I did.

But uh I remember the first monastery where I was ordained, there was a a a German nun there who, in my opinion, had a classic textbook case of schizophrenia and was extremely difficult to get along with. You know, for example, she saw no reason whatsoever why she should like cooperate with anybody, especially after she started hearing the voice telling her that she was enlightened and so forth. That I mean it was just it was very difficult situation. And at the same time that that was going on, you had like Burmese supporters of the

monastery trying to take over the
monastery from the board of directors
who owned the the deed to the land and
so forth. So there's all this uproar
going on, which is one of the reasons
why I went to Burma. Some of the senior
monks at that monastery told me, I mean,
you should just go to Burma for for a
few years until things settle down here.
So I went to Burma and I stayed there
for more than 20 years because things
didn't settle down, they just got worse.
But how did I overcome the tension and
other issues? mainly just through
self-awareness, observing these urges
arise, noting them and not acting upon
them. That would be just the standard

Buddhist approach or at least the
Theravada Buddhist approach to, you
know, like interpersonal friction and so
forth. Although there was a couple times
when I was early on in Burma where I just kind
of popped. There was one time there was
this monk. I mean, it was like my karma
that I would always be living next door
to the worst monk at the monastery,
assuming that I wasn't the worst. You
know, some people might have seen it
that way, but it's like the least
conscientious monk at the monastery
would be my next door neighbor. And I
was staying at this one monastery. And I
maybe I shouldn't mention his name,

but [clears throat] he was a farmer. He was a village farmer who became a monk um just to kind of take it easy, live live an easy life. But he remained a farmer. He was raising chickens. He was farming, you know, he's like planting crops and so forth just as like a hobby. It was just what he'd done his entire life. And like one time I was I was walking back from all round and I see some guy with a blue towel turban. You know, in Burma, it's it's typical for older Burmese guys to take just a big bath towel and just make a a turban and just wear that, you know. Yeah. Just wearing like a sarong and a and a and a turban. And he's just hacking away at

the ground like digging up some new flower bed or something. More likely a gourd bed.

And I was thinking, man, who is looks like there's some some lay person there digging in who so and so's front yard in front of his meditation cabin. And then I realized that it was Uso and so himself. And I really I mean he he'd be sneaking down to my area to cut bamboo like where my cave was. It was one of the only clumps of bamboo on the monastery. He'd be sneaking down there when I was gone. And one day I just decided I didn't want to go for alms round that day. So I happened to be

there and I see so and so coming down
the the rock stairs into my air into my
little valley, my little canyon with
like a machete and I'm thinking, what is
he doing? And then I start hearing
chopping sounds and it's like the
bamboo. So I just run out there and just
start yelling at him and just snatch the
this machete away from him. Just drive
him off yelling at him.

So then of course I get [clears throat]
called to talk to Seattle, you know, the
Abbott. I explain what's happening and
he said, "Well, you really have to give
his machete back. You know, you don't
want to be [clears throat]
stealing his stuff." That kind of thing.

I was having a few doubts about whether I really was like excommunicated for stealing, for just taking his machete away. Although, according to the the texts, if a monk is he owns something inappropriate, it's like a monk owns a gun or drugs or something, other monks can take that from him and is not stealing because he's not supposed to have it to begin with.

So, that was my loophole, I guess.

But that sort of thing did happen sometimes.

[clears throat]

Let's see. But again, what you're supposed to do is like irritation or

aversion, ill will arises, you just note it and let it go and do not act upon.

And I'm going to move on to Newman's next question, which is as follows.

Did monks mutually believe that their inness

that felt and caused conflicts to be illusory and therefore issues like that were resolved more easily than in secular life where people cling to egos.

Um so this is sort of like a an elaboration on the previous question I guess or just a followup to it. Maybe it was all intended to be one question.

Um yeah, I think that the serious monks um yeah I mean they they would take

dhamma seriously and they would do like
what I said you know it's just like ill
will or aversion arises then I mean you
just say that's not appropriate you know
I'm shouldn't be this I shouldn't
indulge in this sort of thing and if
you're mindful you just note it and let
it go and even if you're not extremely
mindful you're mindful enough to know
that you're feeling irritation at this
other person then still because I mean
Asian cultures are very kind of
self-disciplined anyway like for someone
to lose their in Asian culture is
way worse than for someone to lose their
in America

that it's just like a scandal somebody
like loses their cool in public in Burma
or like Japan

at least it used to be that way in Japan

I haven't been there in a long time but

in Burma it's like you got two people

having a shouting match in public and

it's just like everyone's just their

their mouth just drops open, their

eyebrows go because I mean that sort of

thing is just not supposed to happen.

Everyone's supposed to be calm and

polite in public.

So I mean in Asia that kind of thing is

is more rare than here anyway, I think.

But [clears throat] yeah, I mean, if you

had serious monks, they're going to just

be mindful of the irritation or ill or whatever that's starting to arise. Or even if they can't manage that, at least they know I shouldn't be I shouldn't be like yelling at somebody because I'm a monk in a monastery. I'm a Buddhist. So, you know, they can at least put on the brakes enough that they can sort of get along. You know, there's still monks that kind of didn't like each other. they might avoid each other, that kind of thing. But [clears throat] still, I mean, there's there's real conflicts. Like I mean, I've some [clears throat] monasteries in in Burma, especially like around Mandandalay or

some places in Shan State also, they're just notorious for being snake pits.

Like I stayed at Mahagandon. I've told the story before, I'm pretty sure.

>> [clears throat]

>> and around mandagandon

is in Amarapura which is near just right on the it's like a suburb of Mandalay and just the some of the monks there are just rotten monks why they become monks in the first place I'm not sure they just didn't want to work for a living or they just wanted a free education at a at a monastic university or something they wanted a higher social status from being a monk something like that but they really weren't serious about about

really

striving for liberation any such thing.

So there was one [clears throat]

monk

person in robes with a shaved head that

was living in a nearby school monastery

and school monasteries were they were

among the worst because you know they

were just into the the theory without so

much practice. And anyway, this this

monk supposedly was sneaking into our

monastery during the Yuposa ceremony.

When the the Putty Mocha rules are being

recited, all the monks have to

congregate in the Damahal. So all the

monks are in the Dahal for this

ceremony. This guy would sneak in and steal baatikas, which is a kind of commentary or subcommentary.

Then and in school monasteries, these baatikas are hard to get and they're they're relatively expensive. So he was stealing them from monk's cabins and then selling them at this other monastery. So I mean technically he wasn't really a monk because he was a thief.

So then one of the the the Anu Nayaka siato, it's sort of like the sub seat of that part of the monastery was a big monastery. He decided he was just going to lie in ambush for this guy. So he didn't attend the Padimoka recitation.

He stayed in he lay in wait for this for this guy and he caught him. He was kind of a macho. This this Anunnaka Seattle was kind of a macho monk. He was a tough guy. And so he catches him and then he gets turned over to the police or whatever. He was defrocked because he wasn't a monk anyway because he was stealing stuff and possibly even went to jail. And like a few months later, a friend of this thief sneaks into the monastery, comes up behind that Anunnaka Seattle and just chops him in the head with a machete and kind of grazes the side of his his head, causes his ear to kind of like peel off

like this. So he stay he was in the hospital for quite a while after that. And this is like monks. I remember the first time or second time I went to the Mandandalay City Morg to watch autopsies, you know, because monks are supposed to observe death, you know. So I go to the this the city morg and the the coroner there said that just a few days previously they had found a dead monk and in his opinion that monk had been murdered by other monks.

Just just based on the autopsy they did and and whatever evidence they found. He didn't go into details but that kind of stuff can happen. So if you got serious monks who are like conscientious

devout Buddhists then you know there can be some friction and so forth but still they take dharma seriously and they don't just act out. But at the other end of the spectrum you've got snake pit monasteries in Asia. I mean, they're relatively rare in America, I'm sure, but in Asia, there's just snake pit monasteries where it's it's sort of like Catholic monasteries in medieval Europe where some of them were just really really awful. You know, like the the pope or some bishop will send some reform some some disciplinarian to a monastery to get things back in order and he just

gets killed off immediately. You know,
he just gets murdered by the monks
there. that sort of thing happened and
in Burma occasionally it may still
happen.

So I mean there's there are serious very
devout conscientious monks in Burma and
then they're like the opposite in Burma.
There's there's all kinds.

So

let's see. I mean in the west there's a
little bit of that in the west. Like for
example,

back in like the early 90s when I was a
monk in California before I went to
Burma, I [clears throat] was told that
at Stockton, Stockton, California, there

was a Cambodian monastery who had the
Cambodian SA Raja was living in exile
there. And just just so you know, Yoda
on the in the Star Wars movies was based
largely on this Cambodian SA Raja. and
he was over a hundred years old. But the
thing was there's a lot of like
Cambodian gangs in Stockton, or at least
there were in the early 90s. And when
things were starting to get too hot,
like some gang members got the cops
looking for him, he'll go and hide out
in the monastery. So you have these gang
members with like guns and hot rods and
so forth that just become monks
temporarily, you know, while they're

hiding from the police and you know,
they're just they're not really monks.
They're not really barely even
Buddhists. You know, hardly any more
Buddhist than the mafia is Catholic.
So that kind of thing can happen in the
west also

[clears throat]

but I've kind of completely strayed away
from the question and so let's just
stray all the way from the question and
move on to the next question shall we?

This is from Sedarta Lohachita
and Sedarta Lohachita he's got a sticky
one here. He says my future wife is of
Serbian origin and a practicing Orthodox
Christian. Christian religion is very

important to her. She has no intention or desire to hear about the dharma. For her, everything from India is the same and she doesn't pay much attention. She says that if we have a child, the child must be baptized before the month as the church commands, as she says, I really don't want any trouble or discussion. If you would be me, how would you approach this matter? Leave the child alone and when he or she is older, explain to him or her about Buddha or the Dharma. Yeah. So, that is kind of a sticky situation. It's you got a Buddhist man marrying a Christian woman who insists that any children that they have be raised

Christian.

Um, I would guess

that your children are going to observe the husband doing his Buddhist devotions and have some curiosity, probably ask, "Why are you doing that, daddy?" And then the father, I mean, he has the obligation to at least answer. I mean he maybe he should in order to avoid uh any kind of blow up in the house not try to convert his children to Buddhism but still I mean he should give honest objective answers that a child can understand when the child is asking about the Buddhist altar for example or why daddy is sitting cross-legged on a cushion for an hour every day that sort

of thing.

Um,

yeah. I think maybe I mean if you really do have your heart set on marrying this woman who really has no use at all for Buddhism, then um it may be the wise thing to do is just let your children get old enough

that they're able to think for themselves to some degree and then you can be more forthcoming in your explanations of of dharma and so forth.

So, but I don't think you're going to be able to just completely keep it a secret that you're a Buddhist and not a an Orthodox Christian to keep it a secret

from your children.

So, I mean, sooner or later there's

going to have to be some kind of

resolution

of the situation. Um, I mean, your kids

are probably going to have to know that

you're not a Christian. you know,

they're going to they're going to

church. Maybe your wife insists that you

go to church, too. But still, your kids

are eventually going to figure out that

you're not a Christian, that you're a

Buddhist instead. And they're going to

be curious. You know, why are you a

Buddhist, daddy? That kind of thing. Why

aren't you a Christian? And I mean, what

are you going to do? Just say, well,

your mother won't allow me to say anything about the issue. I mean to some degree I mean you have to be a man and and put your foot down a little bit. I mean it isn't just a one-way street. You don't just obey.

So yeah I mean you would be under the obligation to at least give a brief concise answer to what your children are asking you. I mean you don't have to try to proselytize and convert them to Buddhism but still you should be honest and children are more into imitating their parents than just believing what their parents tell them. So, if you have perceptive children who think that, you

know, you're what you're doing seems to be a good thing just based on the vibe you give off when you're doing it, that sort of thing, then there's a good chance that they will be sincerely curious in a positive way about Dhamma as they get older.

But you know what you're getting yourself into by marrying a woman who is sort of anti Buddhist.

So that's just sort of what you're going to have to work on. You know, that's going to be one of your projects in life, I think, is kind of navigating through that situation.

Unfortunately, I do not have experience in that particular situation. Um,

my woman is interested in dharma.

Although like probably most Buddhists,
including Asian Buddhists, it's like
[clears throat] it's it's kind of held
as like an abstract ideal, but sometimes
it doesn't translate into really
believing it

when when the when the chips are down.

you know it's like karma for example or
or like you know mind over matter that
kind of thing u most westerners
including most western Buddhists are
more materialistic than I am you know
they have more faith in like scientific
realism or that kind of approach to
dealing with with life than I do which

does cause a certain amount of kind of I
guess you'd call it friction it's a word
that I've been using.

But nothing compared with

um just mirroring a woman who really is

just kind of anti- Buddhist who maybe

thinks you're going to burn in hell

because you're a you're like a heathen

or something. I hope she doesn't take it

that far. I mean, you could bring up St.

Joseph. I have been told that St. Joseph

is canonized in the Orthodox church as

well as the Catholic one. And St.

Josephhat I mean Josephhat in this case

is a corruption of bodhic sata or bodhic

satva

and this staphat is a kind of

mythological saint who is based on the
the Buddha and a in a previous birth in
one of the jotica stories.

I mean originally it was I think in the
Arabic translation of the Jotica stories
it was bodhisaf and then it got as far
as I think Georgia was moving westward
along the caravan routes in the middle
ages gets as far as Georgia I think it
became Lodisaf and then when it got into
Greece it was Yoasaf
and then the when it got into like the
Latin areas of Europe at the time at
least Latin was like the the learned
language at the time it became name
yo see yosphat yosephhatus which in

English is Josephhat

and I was told by a German monk no he was a no he was a an Austrian Catholic priest I don't know why I call him a German monk he said there there is a monastery in Germany where they have a shrine to all of the saints and St.

Joseph just has a Buddha image sitting there. Although technically he wasn't the Buddha yet. It was a previous life.

I mean, just because, for example, if I was Henry Ford in a previous life doesn't mean that I'm I'm Henry Ford now or that Henry Ford was me. You know, we're just previous life.

So

I guess uh I guess I answered that

question.

But [snorts and clears throat] oh St.

Joseph, I mean that could be like a foot
in the door anyway for kind of declaring
Buddhism to be at least

harmonious with Orthodox Christianity
that I mean you're not necessarily going
to burn in hell for being a Buddhist.

Something like that. Use St. Joseph fat
is a foot in the door.

Anyways, I'm moving [clears throat] on
to the next question. This is from

Siovak and Cipad Zitan. And Seio says,

"What's with India's obsession with
poop?" And Sioad Zena just does not like
India.

He just I mean he has he was warned in the past about just continually posting derogatory memes about India and Indians.

Well, I mean India's obsession with poop, I do not consider India to really be obsessed with poop. I mean there's cow poop.

So I mean even in in poly texts, ancient India was the same. They would use cow poop as like plastering, you know, they'd plaster walls with cow poop or they would plaster floors with a mixture of cow poop and like clay, that kind of thing. And it was just the cow was man's best friend in in the ancient Ganges Valley. The dog wasn't man's best friend

in the ancient Ganges Valley. It was the cow. And there are sutas or just texts in in the polytopica like some of it's in Vineia where the Buddha is just talking about how the cow is the great benefactor to mankind. It's like they have this idea that anything that comes out of cows can't be all bad. And so that may have had something to do this this pastoralist society of the Indo-Aryans invading the Ganges Valley starting in the northwest of India and then moving down the Ganges that you know um before the Buddhist time there was no money economy in India. I mean it was just starting up around the time of

the Buddha maybe slightly before the time of the Buddha a money economy was entering India.

And so before that wealth was cows. How many cows do you have? That's that's how rich you are. And so it's just it was sort of a

bovine centric uh culture to some degree.

Even now you got the sacred cows in India that just wander around wherever they want to. And so cows have always been a big deal in India. And cow poop it has certain uses. You know you can you can dry it out, burn it as fuel. You can plaster your walls and your floor with it. It has certain medicinal properties apparently,

or at least people believed it did. So, I mean, is that kind of that's I wouldn't call it an obsession with poop, but at least it was an acceptance of cow dung as something that isn't just necessarily just icky and disgusting.

And then of course you can add the fact that in modern India for some reason entire villages just don't see the point in digging outous latrines and they just poop in a field. They just crap by the side of the road. That kind of thing. So that's different. That's not really an obsession. That's just not seeing the point of digging a latrine pit.

So I'm I'm not exactly sure why India

and and some Burmese villages. I've been to a few Burmese villages where they just have like a designated field.

I I made the mistake of wandering through one once. It was a shortcut. I just see this field. I didn't know it was the field. And I start heading out through the field and and people start yelling, "No, don't don't do it." But it was too late. And you start seeing, you know, you're actually in a kind of feal minefield.

and why India is uh so lacadasical, so unmotivated to dig latrines and just are willing to have villagers just crap on the ground in random places. I don't

know, but I don't consider that really to be an obsession.

And it it seems to be on a different order from the acceptance of cow poop as sort of a an occasionally beneficial substance.

But aside from that, I'm really don't know enough about Indian culture to know if there's any more poop stuff that I could discuss here. And I'm just going to move on to Seioat Zero's next question, which is realistically how do we spread Buddhism across the globe.

Ashoka was able to do it in all of India before being replaced, but it has survived in higher IQ places like East

Asia. I'm assuming it can be done today as well, but needs strategic planning.

Well, yeah. I mean, it would take some kind of strategic planning, I guess, to come up with a form of Buddhism that would be acceptable. I mean, you don't want like the the leftist academic queer Buddhism taken over, obviously, because that's just semi Buddhism at best. That's like political correctness with Buddhist flavoring at it.

there's like radical leftist political correctness with some Buddhist flavoring added. Um I mean you consider like medieval Japan that was largely Buddhist, not entirely Buddhist and there was Shinto and even some

Christianity once the Portuguese and Spaniards started showing up there. Um feudal Japan.

Uh I mean they were militaristic Buddhists.

not only the samurai, but you had the like the the military monks that were sort of like the Japanese version of of monks Templar.

So there's no telling. I mean, Buddhism, if you could just turn it into like a kind of the sort of thing that I prefer, which is like a philosophical Buddhism where you're using the philosophy in a practical manner. Just realize whenever you're unhappy, it's because you desire

something. you know, just simple stuff like that that just gets added into the into the culture. Maybe even mindfulness as a kind of panacea, that sort of thing. Yeah, I mean that that's possible, I guess. But in all likelihood, it would continue along the lines of how it's already been going, where America is so eclectic, they just take a few Buddhist ideas that seem to work, like mindfulness to improve productivity and general health among the workers of a corporation or using mindfulness as stress relief in hospitals and that sort of thing. Um, but I mean, just awareness of the second noble truth would just be a godsend, so

to speak.

in American culture or western culture
who are mainly just scientific
materialists.

So how do we spread Buddhism across the
globe? Yeah, just deal with like really
useful helpful stuff. Second noble truth
for example.

I mean, just just that much Buddhism
really taking root in the West would be
a just a huge improvement in my opinion.

Whenever you're unhappy, it's because
you desire something and it's really
ultimately your choice to desire it or
not. So, I mean, it would pretty much
collapse the left if that sort of

Buddhism um

if if that sort of Buddhism really took root because the left seems to, at least nowadays, like the progressive radical left. It's like their bread and butter is blaming patriarchal white men for their problems. Or you just blame somebody else. Blame Donald Trump. you're unhappy because Donald Trump, you know, or you're unhappy because, you know, somebody else and they just do not take responsibility for themselves. It's somebody else's fault if if they're unhappy.

And so, just an awareness of the second noble truth would pretty much cure that. Although, you can't really fix stupid.

So I mean [clears throat]
even a lot of Buddhists in in like Burma
still they're materialists you know that
they'll accept Buddhist philosophy at
like this abstract level but it's much
more difficult for them to actually
bring it into practice and actually use
Buddhist philosophy to improve their
lives.

[snorts]

So let's see here.

Did I answer the question though? I'm
assuming it can be done today as well.
It needs strategic planning. Yeah. Well,
we're just going to have to see how it
works. Just see how the like the western

monastic system. See, you know, see if
if that continues to expand in influence
in the west, especially in America. I
really don't have much hope for Europe
at present. um they're really going to
have to grow a pair in Europe if if
they're going to improve the situation
because it's just I mean the Europeans
have been castrated
as a general rule. Western Europeans and
some central Europeans. Eastern
Europeans, you know, they've they've
survived Marxism and they're still
relatively tough
and they still have some and they they
sort of the pendulum swung swung back
into like Orthodox Christianity to to a

large degree in Eastern Europe. And so they're actually in a healthier position. Also, some of the the Eastern European countries are just refusing to take these these migrants, these illegal aliens flooding the flooding the continent.

So

yeah, I mean for Buddhism to take over the West, I think strategic planning is is fine, but really what it's going to take is some inspired, charismatic Buddhist leader who is able to really persuade people, an influencer of some sort.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question. This is also from Siovak
and Sipad Zenina

and he says a certain monk said that
monotheistic religions inherently lead
to violence because they think all
non-believers are going to hell anyways
and thus don't see an issue with erasing
those people and their cultures either.

I doubt Zoroastrians think like that.

But do you think this sentiment is
unique to the Abrahamic religions?

Gosh, I don't I don't think so. I mean,
just because you're monotheistic doesn't
mean that you're going to be violent. I
mean, the Quakers and the Jehovah's
Witnesses are monotheistic, and they're
not particularly violent. Although, the

the Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe in hell either. They just think that non-believers and bad people will just get poofed out of existence by God, that there is no hell, even though hell is mentioned in the Bible.

Uh, and then I mean you can have like systems that aren't monotheistic that are in like violently intolerant. I would assume there have been some violently intolerant pagan sects over the course of the existence of the human race.

Um, even going back to like feudal Japan that you probably had some violently intolerant Buddhists, even

sort of quasi Buddhists, samurai Zen Buddhists. Anyway,

uh, let's see. I guess the the militant monks in Japan were pure land Buddhists mostly though.

So yeah, I think just the Abrahamism is is really more of an issue than the monotheism.

The Abrahamism, I mean, it's the Old Testament is like the the original Abrahamic scripture, I guess, the oldest one we still have access to anyway. And it's pretty damn violent.

Although the violence was more of a like cultural and ethnic thing than a religious thing. It seems to me that the religion was just used as a way

of strengthening like ethnic claims, you know, over land and so forth.

So let's see here.

Do I think this sentiment is unique to Abrahamic religions? I'm sure there have been other it seems to be mainly Abrahamic religions that justify persecuting non-believers nowadays but that's largely because Abrahamic religions pretty much dominate Western civilization and

I mean I am sure there have been like intolerant Shintoists in Japan or just intolerant certain sects of paganism you know our gods are better than your gods

and so we're going to wipe out your village. That kind of thing. I'm sure it has happened, but it's just that nowadays the trend is that violent intolerance is more of an Abrahamic thing. Not so much of a Christian thing anymore either. It's just seems mostly Muslims and and Jews are the ones whose scriptures endorse violence against humans under certain circumstances. and they just take that to heart and just go for it. I mean, Christianity was relatively nonviolent from the beginning. It became violent like in the Middle Ages especially, which helps keep Western civilization Christian, I suppose, you know, Charles Martell and

all that. Good Christians fighting off
the the Sarissens,
Crusades, that kind of thing.

But yeah, I think it's more of an
Abrahamic thing than a monotheistic
thing. I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Trezasiz.

And Tzas is says, "Is there anywhere in
the monastic rules of discipline mention
of monks being allowed to teach dhamma
only to those who want to listen?" Yeah.

In the seia rules of the padim moa
there's a number there's many rules
preventing a monk from teaching dharma
to someone who is not showing respect.
So I assume that it's not just people

who want to listen but people who want to listen respectfully. Like there's a rule a monk isn't supposed to teach dhamma to someone who's wearing shoes which is kind of weird in the west but I guess in a lot of damals you take your shoes off anyway but that's just that in ancient India it was a sign of respect that you take your shoes off before approaching some wise elder or teacher or you're not allowed to teach dharma to someone who is walking on the path if you're walking beside the path you know a walking path you know someone's walking on the the trail or walking on a sidewalk and you're like walking uh by the side of the road off the sidewalk,

then you shouldn't be teaching dhamma to that person because they're not showing respect for you. You're not supposed to teach dhamma to someone who's holding a weapon just because that's kind of disrespectful. They should set the weapon down, set their knife down or whatever it is before you teach them dhamma.

or you're not allowed to teach dharma to someone who is sitting if you're standing, which that's another one that gets broken a lot just because Western culture is different. But it's considered to be more respectful for the teacher to be sitting and the lay person

to be standing. In fact, there's a weird monastic rule of discipline saying that nuns have to remain standing in the presence of a monk, which of course they don't follow.

Let's see. So there's lots of rules like that where you're not a monk is not allowed to teach dharma to someone who is not showing respect for dharma and for the sa.

So people who don't want to listen would be people who really aren't respectful.

So you shouldn't be you shouldn't be teaching them. I mean, maybe if they're a devout Buddhist and they're just having some kind of crisis or meltdown and you're trying to talk sense to them

and they don't want to hear it at first,
that that could be like an excuse.

But someone who just despises Buddhism,
you know, they think Buddhism is just

or whatever, then a monk

technically is forbidden to teach dhamma
to these people.

And I'm just going to move on. Nice

question from Tzasquez is he says

Buddhist lay people ought to follow five
precepts. What other ancient religions

did follow them also of modern religion

I can think of some Christian sects that
are not using wine like seventh day

Adventist? I don't understand Christians
who think that drinking alcohol is wrong

considering that Jesus drank alcohol in the text. In fact, one of his first miracles was turning water into wine. But let's get back to the question here. Following five precepts, that was just an Indian thing that for lay people to follow five precepts was common to several spiritual systems in ancient north India in the Buddhist time. So the Buddhists had five precepts. The Janes had five precepts. The like the Vadic Brahminists had five precepts. It's just the fifth precept would vary. So with the James, the the fifth precept wasn't a prohibition on drinking alcohol. It was a prohibition on like private property. So it was kind of a

communistic thing. I don't remember what the fifth precept was for like the the the Vadic Brahmanists, the Vadists in the Buddhist time. You know, they weren't technically Hindu yet, but to have five precepts was just sort of a cultural thing in North India. And the first four were common to various groups. It was the fifth precept which in Buddhism is against drinking alcohol that varied among the different schools. So the fifth precept might have been sort of like the latest one kind of like an afterthought or something or just a way of the different schools to differentiate themselves by having a

slightly different list of five precepts with regard to non-Indian spiritual systems. Well, I mean, it wouldn't necessarily be five precepts. Like Judeo-Christian tradition has ten commandments.

And then, of course, the the Jews have Mosaic law, which is, you know, it's like vineia for Jewish people, which is lots and lots of rules. You know, thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadth out the grain and all that.

Which reminds me of that similar rule in the Bible. Thou shalt not boil a kid in its mother's milk, which somehow got interpreted to mean that Jews can't eat meat and dairy products at the same

meal,

which is kind of strange. It's really kind of a stretch in my opinion.

Let's see here. So, I suppose I answer that question. I mean different different religions will have different lists of commandments or precepts or whatever. You know like the Pythagoreans of ancient Greece and ancient Rome, they had their moral codes. There's moral codes in just about any religion.

You know, [snorts] just honor your mother and father. Don't steal. Don't commit murder. Don't lie.

Don't commit adultery. I mean, that's that's basic basic morals.

So yeah, I'd say most religions worthy of the name would have some kind of moral code. Not necessarily five, a list of five though.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. Let's see. We are getting kind of [clears throat] close to the bottom here. So I don't think we're going to go for three hours. [snorts]

This is from Practice Meta.

and practice meta says, "Did you undergo any preparation for your iawasa trips?

In my research, fasting is common since at the very least it can prevent purging." Yeah, getting well they call it sometimes or and sometimes they just call it puking.

Driving the puke, the big white steering wheel. Although I guess in an Iawaska ceremony, you don't have the big white steering wheel. You've got like this little plastic bucket.

So, did I undergo any preparation for an iawaska journey? Yeah, you should call it a trip. Makes it sound like it's a drug or something instead of a medicine. Um, no, I didn't undergo any preparation at all really. I didn't fast. Um, maybe I should have, but I do remember being told the very first IASA journey I went to a ceremony that I really is not an medic. you know, it doesn't have any physiological

like emetic properties that makes you puke. It's just that it's like you undergo such emotional stress that it's like your body's thinking, well, just in case it's something I ate, I better get rid of that. So, it's it's almost like an instinct. It's like a it's like a reflex of responding to stress more than any actual puke inducing properties in the iawaska. And not everybody throws up when they take Iawaska. Um I remember asking this one lady, you know, how was your journey after after the ceremony? And she's like, "Oh, it was it was lovely. It was it was nice, you know, and it's like, did you take the same stuff as me?" I was like, "It just

turned me inside out." And then I knew this one guy who it had no effect on him whatsoever that it's like the the shaman is like giving him concentrated doses, you know. In fact, at one point he was making him eat this ball of the stuff and and it had no effect on him whatsoever. None whatsoever. I he just had like white bread karma. He was like this really cleancut American guy who you'd never expect would have any interest in eastern mysticism or anything like that. But it turns out that he'd gone on a pilgrimage to Ramana Maharshi's monastery or his ashram at Arunachala in southern India. And he he

was trying Iawaska ceremonies and everything, but he was so Richie Cunningham, you know, he was just so straight laced. He just had this white bread karma apparently that just would not allow him to experience this transcendental stuff that other people would experience.

But I'm just like digressing all over the place, aren't I? He's really a nice guy, though.

See, no, I did not undergo any preparations including fasting, anything like that. I just, you know, I just assumed at first it would be sort of like, you know, taking LSD or something. You know, there's no real purification

rituals that are necessary for that. You just take it and it has its effect.

And I wound up puking a lot loudly.

So, I'm just going to move on to

practice Meta's next question. As a

biologist, have you looked into the mRNA

COVID shot at all and whether its risks

were understated in 2020? Man, you can

get banned from YouTube from answering

this question just like a year or two

ago, right? I think nowadays you can

sort of be like honest with regard to

this stuff. God, I hope so.

As a biologist, have I looked into the

mRNA COVID shot at all? No, not really.

I mean, you just pick stuff up through

osmosis, you know, you just see stuff online, that kind of thing. But I I'm I'm a pure blood. I never got the never got the shot. I've had um I've had the KOF at least twice

[clears throat] and so I've got like natural resistance to it now, I guess. Although it does it does mutate like a like a virus like the cold virus you know it mutates so that you know when it mutates into a different kind of strain with different properties then you can catch it again.

But yeah, I mean it does seem I mean I I hope it's it's okay to say this stuff now, but it does seem that uh for older people it may have been beneficial. You

know, people who are immuno compromised,
that kind of thing. It may have done
more good than done more good than harm.

But like like inoculating

18 year olds

when I mean really the effect is is

about the same as a bad cold

then it seems to have done more harm

than good. I think more people may have

been harmed by more young people

may have been harmed by some of the

vaccines than by the virus itself.

But I think I should just move on this
question.

This is from Sam Papalapa and this is

the last question. S Papalapa says, "I

was listening to a sutta called impossible, possibly most likely a later edition and not exactly the Buddha's true words. Maybe, perhaps, I don't know. But in the sutta, Buddha says that two Buddhas can't arise in the same solar system."

What word and cosmic understanding was explained that could be the synonym to solar system 2,600 years ago? Why do you think the translators put solar system instead of whatever the contemporary Buddha saw as the cosmos? I've got I've kind of got an idea of the cosmic model Theravada has. I'm guessing some kind of flat island like area in sensual realms that contracts and expands

through the culpas of change but I just wonder why they translated it that and didn't leave the poly word. Also I'm guessing it has to do with change in the collective conceptions of the word of the world when it comes to a particular worldview a society has. Okay. Well, I I don't know exactly what suta he's referring to, but in all likelihood. The word translated as solar system is chakala.

Chaka means wheel. Va I'm not exactly sure what wa means, but a chakala is like a flat earth. You know, it's it's sort of like this disc and you've got four great continents in the center and

human beings live on the southern continent which corresponds to India and you've got Mount Meu in the center and you got concentric rings of mountain ranges surrounding Mount Meu which probably is based among the the ancient Indians of the North Ganges of the Ganges Valley as the Himalaya mountains. The Himalaya mountains were probably seen as like the foothills of Mount Meu, which was farther north.

And the sun and moon are relatively small, few hundred miles across. And they orbit around Mount Meu. So they're early Buddhism was believed in a flat earth and a sun and moon that orbited around

Mount Meu in the center. And you there was aside from the four continents you had assorted islands you know like Sri Lanka for example and then at the outer edge you had this big wall of like stone or or natural metal of some sort that holds the water in because in ancient India they had really no concept of gravity. You know what caused gravity? They just assumed the entire universe had the same up down orientation. So probably all the checkable laws and there were countless numbers of checkable laws in the universe. They all had the same up- down orientation in space. Sort of like the old Star Trek

where two spaceships, you know, meet in space. They always have the same up-down orientation. You never see one of them in the view screen that's like sideways because just I don't know.

So Chucka. Yeah, that's it's it would be like a world system. And the sutta that says that two Buddhas can't arise in the same world system, the same chakala, it they mean at the same time, you know, it's like you can't have two Buddhas at the same time on the same earth.

That's just one of those one of those things, you know. It's it's just one of those things that Abid Dhama never really explains. I'm pretty sure you

know why it is that all Buddhas have to
like sit under they have to in renounce
the world in some kind of vehicle.

They've got to do austerities for x
amount of time. They've got to have a
you know this entourage of fellow
aesthetics with them as they do their
austerities. They have to be handed the
milk rice by the the friendly lay woman
and they have to sit under some bodhic
tree in order to become enlightened. Why
is it like that? It's just this
archetype.

And why can there not be two Buddhas at
the same time? Just through random
chance, like an accident, the cosmic

order just will not allow it for reasons that are never fully specified.

But this solar system that they translated, it's not a very good translation, but most people probably wouldn't know what Czechala means if you left it untranslated. Probably better would be like one world system. One world. But see

what what word in cosmic understanding was explained that could be the synonym to solar system 2,600. Yeah, it's checkable and there were like an infinite number of them through just throughout space.

So let's see.

Why do you think the translators put

solar system instead of whatever the contemporary Buddhist law is or cosmos? Well, that might be the they're not very good translators for starters maybe. And they just wanted to use some kind of word that would kind of come close to the original meaning. I mean, it kind of is a solar system, but it's it's not a solar system because the the sun isn't even at the center of it in a chakala. You know, the Earth, Mount Meu on Earth is the center.

And then you've got like

[clears throat and laughter] the Assuras are like chained up or some of them are chained up under Mount Maro. The top of

Mount Meo is Tawatimsa heaven

right up at the the the pinnacle. That's where Tawatimsa heaven is right at the very top of Mount Meu or Sumaru as it is called sometimes.

So

let's see here. I'm guessing it has to do with change in the collective conceptions of the world when it comes to a particular worldview of society.

Yeah, ancient India they just assume like most ancient cultures just assume the earth is flat because it looks flat and so long as you don't examine it too carefully like you know curvature of large bodies of water for example that you can see that um but

they just guessed that the earth was flat and I mean it was pre Buddhist I mean the Buddha didn't come up with this stuff he just like when it comes to cosmology ology or or other things also a lot of cultural stuff the founder of religion isn't inventing it from scratch you know Jesus didn't invent like the the sort of protojewish millu in which he he was living you know he just accepted that as just part of the cultural stuff and use that as a kind of framework for teaching what he was teaching and that's what the Buddha was doing in India the Buddha didn't come up with the idea that the earth is flat

or that Mount Mev is in the center. I mean that was just this early mythology um that I mean like other Indo-European groups had a similar mythology like the ancient Greeks you know the gods live on top of a mountain and they had a war in ancient times against the Titans. The Titans were defeated and chained up at the base of Mount Mount Olympus.

I almost said a different mountain, but it was the Greeks considered Olympus to be where the mount where the gods live and the titans are chained up at the bottom. I don't think they went so far as to consider Mount Olympus to be the center of the earth, though. I think like the oracle of deli or something was

considered to be the center of the earth. Then the Romans apparently considered the Mediterranean to be the center of the earth because that's what Mediterranean means, middle of the world. Middle of the Roman world anyway. So yeah, it was just what people believed before the Buddha came along and it was just the culture that he inherited. And so what he had to teach had to be done to a large degree within the context of just the beliefs of the people.

You can't just completely reject the entire worldview of a of a group of people. Like if Jesus of Nazareth just

completely rejected Judaism, I don't think he would have lived long enough to get crucified. He would have been stoned to death by a howling mob long before that.

And also, I mean, he wouldn't been effective as a teacher at all because people would just reject what he said.

You know, if the Buddha is just completely rejecting, you know, he's saying the earth is is a globe and it orbits around the sun, then people just weren't ready to hear that stuff yet. I mean, they weren't even ready to hear the stuff like you shouldn't be eating meat.

So, I guess I answered that question.

I'm pretty sure I did. See, why did the translators put solar system instead of whatever the contemporary Buddhist saw as the cosmos? Yeah, it's just like a loose translation about as close as they could come um without saying world system and chaka. No, most people would not know what a chakala is if they're reading the translation.

And so I'm done. I've I've answered all the questions. At least I tried to answer all the questions. And like I should always say at the beginning and almost never do. If you have any questions you think I can answer like around about Dharma or Dharma, early

Buddhism, Terraata Buddhism, meditation, that sort of thing that you think I can answer, even getting into like biology because I do have a degree in biology, modern politics, because I do keep an eye on that sort of thing. That sort of thing, that's fair game, too. Although really this is a primarily dharma oriented program.

So, if you can like sneak a little dharma into the biology questions or the politics questions, that would help, I guess. And like and subscribe if you have not done so already.

And be happy.

Alrighty then. I do believe we are recording. Hello and welcome to question and answer number 168.

I am your host Pony Bosa. And of course 168 is nowhere near to being prime. It is in fact, if I did my math correctly, $2 * 2 * 2 * 3 * 7$.

[snorts] And few other slight aberrations

you may notice. First of all is again I'm doing this Q&A on a Sunday morning so it's going to be posted later than usual. Um part of the reason for that is that my mate, my lovely woman has expressed a certain amount of dissatisfaction for me starting Q&A too

late on Saturday. So sometimes we run around, go to like grocery stores, fish stores, whatever, and then we come home and by the time I get the Q&A started and finished, it's like late and then we can't really celebrate Saturday night properly,

as any loving couple should do. Also, you may noticed I finally have succeeded in accomplishing the mission. I have a mujolnir bead hanging from my beard braid and it's imported from Ukraine which I guess is appropriate considering that Ukraine is the home of Kievan Roose like the first Russians actually were in Ukraine or at least one of the two main cities

of the the first Russian kingdom or
whatever you want to call it was in Kiev
and Uh, it was ruled by Vikings.

So, we've got the Mjolnir bead, which
I'm pretty sure is right side up because
[clears throat]

I think that rune is thorn, which was
the th sound in like the old English
alphabet, very old English. And who
knows, maybe it's just random. Or maybe
the th is for Thor or Thunor.

Anyways,

I guess I should start answering
questions

and the first question is from Stellar
Supreme at all because he's got so many

names. He is Legion.

And Stellar Supreme at all says, "What are your thoughts on the seeming conflict between the Buddhist saying it was profoundly difficult to acquire a human birth and past life research with children where they verify what human it was in recent history?" Yeah. If you do like past life regressions or like children remembering past lives, it's almost always a human life. Every once in a while you have a past life regression like in Burma where they'll have a past life to like a being a dragon or a a royal white elephant, that sort of thing. I've encountered both of those cases.

But for the most part,
if you remember past lives, you remember
human past lives. But it is true that in
the sutas, the Buddha says it's
extremely difficult to get a human life.
And mainly what he's referring to is if
you're not human to switch over to being
human is very difficult. Like animals,
you know, there's the famous suta, the
blind sea turtle that comes up once
every hundred years.

And the odds of an animal being reborn
as a human statistically speaking, even
though statistics hadn't been invented
yet in the Iron Age Ganges Valley,
would be [clears throat]

I mean the odds of a nonhuman, like an animal being reborn as a human would be about the same as that blind turtle sticking its head up through a yolk floating on the ocean just at random. once every hundred years it sticks its head up for air. They can hold their breath a long time apparently.

And

so [clears throat]

um the the implication here mainly is that there are just an infinite number of beings throughout the universe just nonhuman. Most beings in this universe even on this planet are non-human. You just think about all the copapods swimming out in the ocean. There's

probably hundreds of billions of them
out there.

And [clears throat]

karma really is a kind of psychic
momentum or psychological momentum.

So if you're not like in the human
groove to switch over to being human
takes some doing. I mean, like your best
chances might be if you're like a a
domesticated animal, like a pet dog
that's getting a lot of human vibes that
kind of help you to kind of turn in that
direction, then who knows, maybe your
next this dog's next life would be like
a human child that is that nevertheless
doesn't survive past the first year,

something like that. And then that's kind of like a foot in the door that might help channel its karmic momentum into a more human life.

So yeah, once you're human, then you kind of have human karmic momentum going. And whether that's really in harmony with the sutas or not, nevertheless, it does seem to be in harmony with just common sense and maybe some paranormal empiricism.

if you don't consider those to be contradictions in terms.

So if you're not human, to get into like a human life is extremely difficult as a general rule according to Buddhist philosophy. But once you're already a

human, it's much easier to be reborn as a human because you're making human karma.

And so it just naturally leads to being a human unless you're like a really unusual human. Like if you're an unusually like saintly godly kind of human, you might get reborn as a small G god or goddess. If you're like an abnormally bestial kind of human, you might get reborn as an animal. Or if you're like extremely attached to some worldly thing, for example, you could get reborn as a kind of spirit or ghost that's like like attached to to a certain area. For example,

[clears throat] um there are quite a few people in Burma that claim to be able to see ghosts. [snorts] Lot plenty of people in Asia really who claim that they're able to see ghosts. And one of these people was saying that like certain cemeteries, they look out at the cemeteries and there's just like these spirits just kind of standing around graves because the the person in life was so attached to their body that even after death, they're still attached to their body. Even though their body is no longer functioning and is decomposing under the ground, they still just kind of like haunt that area, just sort of standing watch over their body cuz

they're so attached to it. even though technically it's not really their body anymore.

Which is one reason why Neim Karoli Bama, whose picture is up there on the altar,

would say that cremation is generally better than burial after a person dies just because you're like destroying the body that the person might be attached to, which reduces the odds of them being like a spirit that is just like haunting a cemetery. Of course, if you're just a scientific materialist, then it's all [__] and you don't have to worry about that.

So, let's see. Did I answer the question? My thoughts on the seeming conflict between the Buddha saying it was profoundly difficult to acquire a human birth and past life research with children. Yeah. Yeah. It's pretty much as I said is acquiring a human birth from being a nonhuman is much more difficult than just being reborn as a human when you're already human just because the karmic momentum is like a human momentum at that point.

So I'm just going to move on to stellar supreme at all's next question here.

What are your thoughts on anarchy as it's presented here? And he presents a quote. He doesn't say who the quote is

from, but here's the quote.

[clears throat] I repeat, anarchy for me means autocracy of beauty, of genius, of art, and of all those who possess the willful and selective qualities suitable for dominating, and that mother nature, justly or unjustly, grants and lavishes so generously on a few, while she denies them to most, as if the latter were her bastard children. Everyone can be leveled before society. We are all equal before God, but the selective individual values remain and dominate unquote. So this kind of sounds like Ein Rand to me. I don't know who who the

quote is from, but anarchy anarchy like
autocracy of beauty of genius of art and
of all those who possess the willful and
selective qualities suitable for
dominating.

Well,

let's see. What is that exactly the
question here? What are my thoughts on
anarchy as it's presented here? Well, I
mean, when you're dominating, it's not
really anarchy because you become a kind
of autocrat.

When you're dominating somebody else,
you know, they don't have anarchy
anymore because you are their their
ruler at that point. Like if you're just
imposing your will on somebody else,

then I mean that could be like a one-man
king kingdom, you know? It's like
um I don't [clears throat] think it
would work in reality. Like when you
have this kind of anarchy, then it's
like the most ruthless shark and with
also like the most in cleverness, you
know, the best strategic choices and so
forth is going to wind up becoming like
a a ruler, a warlord or a king or a
chief or something like that. And then
the anarchy of course disappears.

And I really don't think anarchy works
in general unless you can have a kind of
anarchy like a Burmese village where
there's not much government going on,

but it's just people are ruled by tradition. You know, it's this thousand-year-old tradition that people just follow without question. And then you could have a count kind of anarchy like that.

But just to have like no holds barred, you know, just the people that are the most powerful just do whatever they want, including dominating others, then the anarchy just disappears. I mean, with regard to beauty and genius and art and so forth, that's fine. But I mean, you don't need anarchy for that. Just some sort of classical liberalism is plenty.

I mean, you still have to have some sort

of like law and order, some sort of government presumably to kind of maintain law and order among other things.

So, yeah, I'm really not an anarchist. I It might sound good in theory, just like libertarianism, which is, you know, maybe a step away from anarchy. Still I mean it sounds good in theory but still you have to have in order for a nation to be strong and functional you have to have like a shared value system. People have to share values. At least the overwhelming majority of the population has to share approximately the same values and you know be willing to follow

certain rules

and mainly I mean as a general rule you need some kind of government to make sure that people are following those rules.

So I mean people can argue well government systems are corrupt and all this but I mean any human system is going to be corrupt because humans are subject to corruption.

So yeah, I do believe that there can be there there should be a certain equality with regard to equality under the law, equality of opportunities, of rights, that kind of thing within reason. I mean, if somebody is like a convicted felon or some such, sure, you can take

away their right to bear arms, etc.

They're a convicted sex offender, you know, they should be deprived of their right to be like working at a daycare center,

that sort of thing.

But yeah, I definitely I mean I I suppose I qualify as a classical liberal politically and socially.

I do believe in quite a lot of freedom, but still there has to be a shared value system that is sort of like the glue that holds society together and that's value system. I mean the following of certain rules is necessary and there has to be some government some

kind of government enforcing that.

I mean pref preferably a benevolent government where you know the leaders are like patriots who really want to serve their country and so forth and that does happen occasionally but still you're not going to have a perfect system because the system is created by humans who are not perfect.

Not unless everything is perfect. I mean, you could argue everything is already perfect, you know, perfect misery, perfect foolishness, etc. And some saints would probably view the world that way. You know, I got this pain in my leg, but it's perfect.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from

[clears throat] Romeo, and I'm checking to make sure that we're recording early on, less than 15 minutes into it. Yep, the little timer thing is going. The little green bars on the microphone are going back and forth just as it should be.

Next question is from Romeo and Romeo's question is as follows. What is your knowledge and opinion of the theosophical movement founded by Madame Blloovatski in the late 1800s? From what I understand, theosophy attempted to combine aspects of different religions, including Buddhism, into one system.

Well, I really don't know a whole lot about theosophy. I've never really studied it. I never really took it extremely seriously. I read a little bit about the history, you know, Madam Bulvatsky and Colonel Olcott and um that sort of thing. And my sweetheart does watch um YouTube videos of like speeches given by, you know, invited speakers at some theosophical society. So I mean I listen to that sort of thing occasionally pick it up through osmosis. Um but really my knowledge of the theosophical movement I mean it was founded by Madame Bllovadsky and her her cohort Colonel Alcott and Colonel Alcott he was definitely a promoter of of

Buddhism. He's the one who invented the Buddhist flag.

And uh it's also my understanding that uh what's his name? Rice Davids

um who was

pretty [clears throat] much the founder of the Poly Tech Society started off I

think they kind of he and his wife

started off as like Christian

missionaries in Son and then they kind

of became theosophists

and then they were sort of like sort of

Buddhist adjacent theosophists.

[snorts] Um

maybe just they became Buddhists and

stopped being theosophists. I'm not sure

exactly, but theosophy from what little I know about it, um, supposedly Madame Bllovzki was channeling ascended masters in the Himalayas, who I'm pretty sure were some kind of Buddhists.

Um, and then she got busted. like they were doing essentially seances where she's channeling these ascended masters in the Himalayas and these notes from the ascended masters were just like falling from the ceiling you just landing on the table in front of them and then it turned out that apparently Madame Bvatzki herself was pulling a little thread which was pulling the these notes from a crack in the ceiling and where they arrived with this little

poof of like attic dust or something. I think that was mainly the scandal that caused her to get kicked out of her own society and then she got replaced by Annie Basant Basant. I don't know how to pronounce these names. Annie is I'm pretty solid on that one, but the the last name um and it was kind of a newagy kind of thing as far as I can understand. You know, it's sort of like perennial philosophy where, you know, they're just trying to sort of get the what is it? Lowest common denominator. you know, they're just trying to sort of be an eclectic movement, but it was largely Buddhism oriented or at least

like Eastern philosophy oriented
because they they considered in my
[clears throat] opinion correctly that
you have a more concentrated form of
profoundity in certain Eastern
traditions that are more watered down in
Western traditions. They're still there.
Like in Christianity, you can still have
some really deep profoundity, but the
whole belief system, the Abrahamic
monotheistic belief system is such
that, you know, it's it's kind of a a
handicap to like the really profound
teachings that that are available to
humans.

Let's see what else do I know about
theosophy. I mean it was like the the

Mahab Mahabodhi society was largely
Theosophist like Anagarika Dharmapala.
He was supported by the Theosophus
society and he was getting you know he
he was starting the the push to have
Bodga Gaya sort of revived as a Buddhist
pilgrimage site instead of just sort of
like this rundown
ruin kind of in the backyard of a a
Shyvite temple sort of a deal. And what
else? There was one of the Oh yeah,
Krishna Murdy. I mean, he was he was
groomed to be some kind of world messiah
by a branch of the theosophical society
and then he just went renegade and
decided not to cooperate.

[clears throat]

But I mean, the theosophy, if you're if you're into just kind of like an eclectic kind of philosophical approach to spirituality, then that's fine.

um Madame Blovansk's

alleged fraud. I mean, it shouldn't be too much of a problem because as um like George P. Hansen in the Trickster in the Paranormal points out that even like legitimate like psychics and so forth, they can still do a lot of fraud stuff.

You know, it's in a way like the fake stuff is like opening a portal, you know? It's it's sort of breaking rules which then allows genuine ju guu to to enter this version of reality so to

Speak.

But I really I'm no I'm no authority on
theosophy. It is I mean you might as
well just stick with Buddhism. You know
it's an older tradition. It's been tried
and tested for thousands of years at
this point. [clears throat] And I mean
if you're just sort of like a western
eclectic theosophy may work for you. you
know, it may just be just what you need,
but as a general rule, you'd probably be
better off with like established
Buddhist tradition or any other
established like advanced mystical
tradition that is, you know, at least
2,000 years old.

[snorts]

And I'm just going to move on to Romeo's next question.

He says, "Aside from theosophy, what is your general opinion of similar interfaith spiritual hybrid movements that combine aspects of different religions or philosophical systems, religious or philosophical systems? I've even heard that there is a Krlam movement of foot that combines Christianity and Islam." Well, one of the first things that this reminds me of is the belief of Renee Gwennon that anything like this is just abomination and it's doomed to failure. He Gwynon, however you pronounce French names, I

don't know, he insisted you have to have like an unbroken like lineage and any kind of amalgamation of various traditions is just, you know, you're creating like a Frankenstein's monster of of religion at best.

But I mean, it can work. I mean they have worked before like interfaith spiritual hybrid movements sort of like Chinese Buddhism like Chan Buddhism was really a kind of hybrid combination of Buddhism and Daoism like Zen Buddhism really is a kind of combination of Buddhism and Dowaism or like Christianity obviously it's like a combination of like Judaism I mean

Christianity really is a kind of schismatic sect of Judaism combined with sort of like Greek philosophy and just more western pagan philosophical ideas.

Buddhism itself has been influenced by Vedic Brahminism. But it's so in a way it's bound to be a certain amount of spiritual hybridism going on you know like the Buddha notoriously was accepting ideas and terminology especially from the Brahmins and also like a John Tiseno claims the word *asava* which is a fundamental Buddhist philosophical term of um you sometimes it's translated as like cankers there's really no good translation for

um literally means influence literally
um that the Buddhists got that from the
Janes. It was originally a Jane idea.

So I mean a certain amount of hybridism
does happen

like Islam itself is fairly hybridized.

I mean, it's like a hybrid mainly of

Judaism and [clears throat] like

pre-Muslim Arabic paganism as well as I

understand it like um what were they

called the Sabatans

whoever had whatever the religious

system was of Petra like I think I

believe that's in Jordan you know the

famous stone city carved into the cliff

that you know there was sort of like a

an Arabic pagan kind of religion at the time that Judaism was probably influenced by that and influenced by just local traditions and influenced by by Judaism maybe a little bit of Christianity. There is mention of Jesus in Judaism where Jesus was considered to be a legitimate prophet.

So I mean it does happen and it does happen successfully.

But if you get too eclectic who you know like new age people some of them you know they can just be like adding mutually contradictory ideas into their own belief system and that's not good. I mean, you don't want to be believing one thing and then five minutes later you're

believing essentially the opposite.

Something that's just contradictory to what you were believing five minutes ago and have it like in your beliefs all fit together somehow.

That's that's not good. That's that's kind of soft-headed actually.

So, I'm not sure what Krislam would be like. Although I mean Jesus is acknowledged as a legitimate prophet. I mean, if you just a follower of Jesus while at the same time just considering him to be not the son of God but just like a prophet, a legitimate genuine prophet of God, then

maybe you know some of the early sects of Christianity before they were annihilated or just out competed in like the early to mid to late Roman Empire, they were kind of like that. you know, the Arian heresy where Jesus was not God,

that kind of thing. So, I mean, under certain circumstances, a kind of spiritual hybrid movement can work so long as you're not so eclectic that you're just bringing in all kinds of mutually contradictory ideas into the same system.

But Renewon would say otherwise. I mean it has to be like an unbroken oh what's the term that he was using where there

has an initiatory
tradition that is unbroken but
[clears throat] I think even he was a
little naive with regard to just how
some of these traditions began even if
they began 2 years ago still there's a
lot of eclectic kind of combinations
that happen at the beginning of a
religious movement like Buddhism with
vadism and and Janism and so forth forth
or Islam with Judaism and like Arabian
paganism and so forth or Christianity
with Judaism and Western like paganistic
philosophy, that kind of thing. So, it
can work so long as it's just not too
muddled and too like self-contradictory.

But if you have a system that already works, you might as well just do that instead of experimenting with trying to create some new system. Unless that's just the way you operate. That's the way you have to operate. So just do your best in that case. And I'm moving on to the next question. This is from Fake Tig. And Fake Tig says, "You spoke a lot about Schopenhauer's will before, but only in reference to other things. Can you explain what it is though? So the philosophy of Schopenhauer like in his his main classic philosophical text the world as will and representation that he starts off with will. It's sort of like a modern physicist starts off

with energy. It's almost an undefined term in science. I mean you have to get down to like such basics that you start off with what are essentially just axiomatic or like undefined terms in modern science it's energy and I mean you can still kind of define you know the potential to perform work something like that but in Schopenhauer's philosophy it was will I mean that is just like the motive force of the universe you know it's sort of his substitute for God almighty capital G God. It's just this will to exist. It's just this this energetic essentially mental force that wants to

exist. You know, it's in a way it's sort of like in Buddhism the conceit I am.

You know, that's what kind of artificially separates one aspect of mentality from all the rest of it.

Although Schopenhauer goes so far as to say that even physical matter, you know, even a hydrogen atom, an electron has this will to exist.

And so

according to Schopenhauer, there's just like this fundamental primordial like mental energy just wanting to express itself in the form of any kind of existence it can manage. And that's what's creating this entire phenomenal universe, creating us.

And Schopenhauer's philosophy, his practical like his yogic spiritual kind of uh philosophy is that we should be defying our own will in order to just get out of this because he agrees with Buddhism that this will is creating uh suffering that you don't have any suffering without this will trying just striving to manifest itself in every possible way.

So, Schopenhauer was just kind of deny the will. Peaceful non-cooperation with the will, which is forcing you to exist.

Um,

and it's it's fairly Buddhist. I mean, I

I've read recently that Schopenhauer is declaring himself to be a Buddhist in his later years. So you know in a way it's sort of like maya in in like Hinduism or just like a vija or ignorance in Buddhism you know it's like the original force or the original phenomenon that is just resulting in the multiplicity of this this samsaric universe

and I guess I'm just going to move on to fake Tig's next question

which is as follows if enlightenment is defined as the uprooting of greed, hatred, and delusion. Doesn't that make someone almost not human in the sense that a person that can't hate or be

greedy or know ultimate reality had almost transcended humanity? And if so, is Buddhism about becoming higher than a human being? Yeah. Well, definitely from the Buddhist point of view, Buddhism is about becoming higher than a human being. And like like I've said in in Burma the word for a Buddhist monk I mean monks are not considered to be human beings. You know, the word for human being is lu in Burmese and or like if you're counting Burmese, the Burmese language has this weird phenomenon of counting numbers. Like like four people wouldn't be like leu. It'd be like lu le ya. Ya is the is the counting word for

counting people or g is for counting
animals. So quay is is dog and lei is
for but you don't say le quay four dogs.
you say quay legon which is dog four
animals

and so the counting number for monks
isn't isn't ya as it is for everyone
else it's ba which is for counting holy
or sacred things or entities

like pilea

uh no no let's see how about uh
which is like the four noble truths
arata Alba. So you count the four noble
truths with ba because they're like
noble and sacred and so forth. You use
the same word for counting monks.
So let's see here.

Um yeah, I mean if you read what what a monk is supposed to be like in order to become enlightened, you know, no preferences, no greed, no anger, no lust, no self view. I mean you are transcending your own humanity. I mean empirically a fully enlightened being would still be a human still be wearing a human body. You know that the DNA would be human DNA. [clears throat] They would still have certain like human habits. You know they might show human emotions and so forth. But the thing is they're not identified with that anymore. You know it's just sort of nature taking its course while they are

just not identified with that. They do not consider that to be me or I or mine. And so you've not necessarily become totally inhuman, but you have transcended the limitations of your humanity. [clears throat]

So let's see here. Now you see my sweeties coming into the driveway, which distracts me because her presence just kind of I've got like Sweetie Dar, you know? It's like my radar is always kind of affected when she enters the the field of of perception.

So let's see here.

Yeah, I mean that's one reason why if you're a monk like just according to the texts then you renounce society, you

renounce family life, you renounce social interactions for the most part because you're you're just sort of separating yourself from that because that kind of holds you into being a human. Whereas, if you just go alone out into the wilderness, you're just like meditating and sleeping under a tree out in a forest, then um it's much easier to be like nonhuman in your behavior and in your your like psychology.

But really, you have to transcend being a mere human being if you're going to become enlightened. At least according to Buddhism. I mean, there's still humanity there. It's just

that you're not identified with that anymore.

So, I'm just going to move on to fake

Tig's third question,

which is I looked up what goes to hell

after someone, he says after someone

does, but I think he means after someone

dies. I looked up what goes to hell

after someone dies. And since Buddhism

didn't believe in an eternal atman, I

couldn't comprehend what it is that gets

reborn into a hell realm. Well, it' be

the same thing that gets reborn into a

human realm or any other realm.

It's just the your karma. This the only

thing according to Buddhism, the only

thing that transmigrates

is the momentum of your karma.

Regardless of whether you're you're
reborn as a human or as a small G god in
some superhuman realm or as a denison of
hell or or an animal or whatever, a
ghost,

some kind of demonic entity, whatever
that it's the same thing as being reborn
um in any any of those cases, which is
just this like the karmic momentum, the
the psychic momentum of your karma, of
your mental states especially your
volitions which is like Schopenhau's
will.

So [snorts] Schopenhau's will really uh
most closely corresponds to karma in in

human you know it's just this
blind force of wanting to exist really
although karma doesn't necessarily
I mean it's it wouldn't be exactly the
same as Schopenhauer's will but like in
the text karma is volition which could
be translated as will I mean it's
So cheduna usually is translated as
volition, but you could translate it
just as easily as will, possibly even
more accurately as will.

So it's will that gets reborn. That's
it.

That's the only thing you take with you
after you die is the momentum of your
mental states, your your like
psychological habits essentially,

especially the deep ones, the
subconscious ones.

So I'm just going to move on to the next
question which is from Tzasiz

and Tzasiz says according to Hinduism we
are living in Kaliuga our people will
get more stupid and [_]

until human race disappears is concept
of kaluga and terra Buddhism well it's
not exactly the same concept but I think
it was just the previous Q&A I'm talking
about or I was talking about
how

uh according to Buddhism [clears throat]
after you have a Buddha then like the
human race starts to degenerate you know

especially after Buddhism finally
disappears from the world I mean dharma
in the world kind of helps to maintain
civilization but then after it finally
fades out because everything is
impermanent including you know any
Buddhist dispensation
then civilization degenerates more and
more there's there's no more dharma in
in the world, you know, so morality kind
of fades out and you just get more dog
eat dog until finally it gets down to
the human lifespan is only like 10 years
and you know you reach puberty at like
five and there's like people are just
there's no morals. just cannibalism all
this kind of stuff going on and then

finally after hitting rock bottom it starts getting better again and it's the same way in in hind the Hindu Kalyuga you know the Hindu dark age where I mean it's not just the end of the world it's just that when you get to the end of the kalyuga at least in this particular case then Khalki on the white horse you know the the the next avatar of Vishnu will come and slay the evil ones and and just get everything kind of back on course so that things can improve again. You know, help bring about a golden age again. But in Buddhism, it's a little different where it just it's sort of like cosmic cycles of up and down of of

civilizations, for example. And supposedly we are on a downhill slide because, you know, the Buddha has already been here and Dharma is in decline. You know, it's it's due to impermanence. So dharma is in the in the process of gradually getting corrupted and and dying out until finally after it's gone then things really start going into free fall things get really bad till you hit rock bottom and then they start building back up again until the situation is ripe again for another Buddha to come. So presumably from the Buddhist point of view, the golden age or the closest we get to a golden age is when there is a Buddha in this world.

Although if you look at there's like this weird suta towards the end of of the dean, I don't remember the name of it where you know the Buddhist talking about the origin of the world and and people start off godlike. you know, we live thousands and thousands of years. We just feed on light, that kind of thing, and then we gradually start degenerating into like the the upgraded apes that we are now.

But a lot of that is just ancient Indian mythology that I mean, every culture has its mythology. You know, why the bear has a stumpy tail, this this all this kind of stuff. Um, and it can be

absorbed into a religious system so that the religion just people think that that's what the religion teaches when actually it's that's what the religious system just kind of absorbed from the the culture because that's the culture that it arose in and uh it's really not the point of the religion. It's just this cultural artifact that just got absorbed through osmosis into the system because that's the that's just the way it happened.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> So

yeah, according to Hinduism, we've been living in the Kalyuga since prehistoric times. The Kaluga has been around for a

very long time already. So I mean there was no silver age or or or golden age or anything like that in historical times, at least going with modern archaeology. So the Buddhists uh have a little bit of an advantage over the Hindus on that in that well maybe depends on how you look at it. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is also from Tzasquez is uh he's just repeating somebody else's question on the Discord server. He's saying do you think some people are born evil or it's all effective environment and experiences with others? Well, how you're born depends on your karma from previous

existences going with Buddhist philosophy. So, I mean, an evil person, you've got a lot of bad, you know, malevolent sort of karma coming into this world. You can be born pretty much bad. And um for a while, we haven't been doing it lately, but my my sweetie and I were watching a certain show before going to bed at night, you know, going to sleep to murder. It was uh Evil Lives Here. It's a show that's still being produced. I think still new episodes coming out. Although uh they've kind of used up all the really the worst sociopaths for the show. And so now it's, you know, getting into the later episodes, a lot

of the time it's just people who are just mean and don't say please and thank you and that sort of thing.

But um a lot of these episodes there's some of the most interesting ones to me is you've got a family and one kid is just a born sociopath. You know, it's the other kids seem relatively normal, but this one kid from the very beginning, from the time he's a toddler, he's already like torturing animals and like getting pleasure from hurting his brothers and sisters, that kind of thing. And just watching that show, it does kind of cause me to tentatively conclude, you know, not once and for

all, but tentatively that some people really are just born that way. And that would be in harmony with Buddhist philosophy where you've got some serial killer who somehow avoids hell or you know some sort of demon demonic realm or something gets reborn as a human and they still have this momentum going from previous lives of just cruelty and malice and just you know getting pleasure from the suffering of others that sort of thing.

So yeah, I do think that I mean a lot I mean ultimately it's all conditioned by karma.

So I mean ultimately any birth that you come into you know it's conditioned by

your karma in previous existences
especially you know especially the
previous existence
but still going with empiricism. I mean,
I've read books on sociopathy and so
forth long ago where there there is like
a a statistically
uh significant correlation between being
a sociopath as like a a juvenile
delinquent and an adult and having
either abusive or neglectful parents.
And the the the mechanism is that some
kid I mean children require attention
just like my dogs require attention.
They're just they're hungry for
attention. And I mean, I can get into

like philosophical explanations for that, but it doesn't it's not really the point here. But

um a child who is just being ignored by his parents will act out and even they would prefer to be like yelled at and punished than just ignored because they need attention. Even if it's like negative, hostile attention somehow.

It's like, well, I I'll get to Mary Baker Eddie here. She says that like babies sometimes will die of what is used to be called sudden infant death syndrome simply because their mind isn't strong enough to maintain their existence in this world yet. And so they need other like more mature

um beings paying attention to them in order to kind of reinforce their existence in this world. And and children apparently are like this, you know, that it's like their mind isn't strong enough to just maintain. I mean, some adults are like this where just their their single solitary mind, you know, their individuality just is not robust enough to keep them in this version of reality without other people kind of helping to lock them in, reinforcing their existence through their own perceptions.

But I've kind of wandered away from sociopaths or people who are born evil.

But I think I mean it's possible I mean everyone has the potential to turn around and start doing good mala in the in the Buddhist text classic example. He was literally a serial killer who later was converted to Buddhism and became a fully enlightened being.

[sighs]

But I think it's definitely the case that you can be born just with a lot of like evil or just sort of cruel or malicious, selfish, sociopathic momentum.

And most people really they they don't have the insight or the wisdom to be able to observe their own character flaws, their own defilements

objectively. You know, they just identify with it. This is me. I'm pissed off. I you know I hate that person etc etc.

So I hope I answered that one because I'm moving on to the next question and this is a person with a German name that I cannot pronounce.

I don't know.

I do speak English though which is a technically a Germanic language. A lot of people don't realize that. A lot of English- speaking people do not realize that English technically is a Germanic language.

Old English was definitely Germanic.

It's just that we absorbed a lot of French and Latin and so forth.

Anyways, Reese

says,

"In your opinion, I guess it's about the same.

In your opinion, how much does

Christianity have to do with mass migration and Islamization?

Merkel is a Protestant and so is Japan's former prime minister Shigeru Ishiba.

Furthermore, the new Pope Leo has

already criticized the mistreatment

in in quotes mistreatment of so-called

migrants in the USA. So the main

question here, how much does

Christianity have to do with mass migration and Islamization?

I really don't think it has much to do with that. I mean the Christianity in the west is in severe decline. You know, we have sort of a a degenerate form of Christianity that's that has become mainstream, which is pretty much what is necessary for any kind of advanced spiritual system like Christianity or Buddhism. In order for it to go mainstream, it's got to be dumbed down and watered down and corrupted.

And so, Christianity has been corrupted almost from the beginning. But it's even more corrupt now. I mean, you've got gay pride flags flying over like uh what was Methodist churches when the Bible itself

calls homosexuality abomination.

And like most Protestants are quite okay with divorce and remarriage where Jesus himself in the New Testament says you just can't do that. When you get married, you get married once.

So

it's more a matter of just sort of corrupt liberal western feminized civilization

that is into mass migration

and it's just largely a coincidence that it's Christianity. If it were if we had maintained paganism from Roman times then it wouldn't be so different. I'm pretty sure. I mean Rome had its own immigration problems like for

example the the the fall of the Roman Empire according to Gibbon was largely the result of this mediocre emperor named Veilence who allowed this mass immigration of Goths across the Danube river. The Goths feared the go the Huns more than they feared the Romans. So they begged the Romans, the Roman emperor, the Roman government just let us settle peacefully in like vacant lands of the of the Roman Empire and Veilence stupidly allowed them to do this and they just started running them up. I mean it wasn't entirely their fault. They were being like treated badly by the by certain Romans. Like for

example, some of the leaders of the
Goths had to have their children held
hostage, you know, in certain like
senatorial class families, for example.
And then they were like being raped and
and sexually abused and so forth. Um,
and so of course that helped the gods to
start running a muk. But still, I mean,
it wouldn't have happened if they had
not if the the Roman government had not
allowed hundreds of thousands of Goths
to just flood across the borders.
So, yeah, I don't think it's really a so
much a Christian thing. I think it's
just sort of a a decadent western
civilization thing, especially after
compassionate females have acquired

equal rights. And like in Europe, I mean, they're more influential politically than the men are.

Apparently,

[sighs] Angela Merkel is here as is an example, although she's kind of fled the scene in disgrace after inviting literally millions of non-Europeans to enter Europe.

So, let's see here. How much does Christianity have to do with mass migration, Islamization?

Yeah, I I really don't see it as a Christian thing. I mean it's not Christianity that's inviting migrants. I mean they it can be used as a kind of

excuse. You know some Christians will say you know just that the Old Testament says you know you should always welcome foreigners. You know you should treat foreigners well because the Jews were foreigners in the land of Egypt. You know that kind of thing. But I mean, you read other books of the Old Testament, like uh the book of Oh, what's it? What is it, man?

I haven't read the I haven't read the Old Testament in a while. The It's It's an obscure book. And it's mainly about just the after the Babylonian captivity ends

that you know there were the the Persian king allowed Hebrews to move back into

Jerusalem and the first thing they do is they build a wall to keep out non-Hebrews.

And I can't remember the name of the book. It's too bad. And I'm not going to go look look it up. You guys can just I'm sure you guys can uh get by with me not spending five minutes looking through a book trying to find the name of the I keep wanting to say Hezekiah, but that's not it.

So, let's see. Yeah, I I think it's just more of a cultural like decadence thing, you know, with compassionate females now having at least 50% of the political power that that's more of a problem than

Christianity. I mean obviously
Christianity in and of itself is not
pro-Muslim. I mean the Crusades were not
pro-Muslim. You know the the reconista
in Spain was not pro-Muslim. It's very
Christian. It was like Christian
nationalism.

So I mean it's it's not so much the
religion itself. It's just like what
kind of society is that religion
superficially settled upon? Because I
mean most Christians

their ideas are not particularly
Christian you know it's just like
western civilization in this case like
decadent feminized liberalized western
civilization with some Christian

flavoring added and I mean some people are devout Christians but most are not and I don't think that it was really Christianity that caused Angela Merkel to invite millions of non-European immigrants into Europe. It was just sort of this feminine compassion stuff going on

which can be suicidal for a society.

And I'm just going to move on this question. This is from Sedarta

Lohachita. And Sedarta Lohachita says, "Modern Thailand and its anything goes attitude." So that's like the title of his question. the the heading of the question is modern Thailand and it's

anything goes attitude. Then he says where once there was only prostitution, sex tourism, now there are thousands of marijuana shops everywhere and alcohol is Buddhist ethics about letting things be

or should that be regulated or prohibited? Well, in a way, it's kind of going back to the previous question. I mean, it's like Christianity doesn't really cause mass like immigration of like migrants that in many cases are hostile to traditional Western values and so forth. And it's not Buddhism so much that is opening marijuana shops in Thailand. First of all, it's just a global thing. recently,

you know, over the past, you know, 20 years or so, just people have begun realizing that marijuana really is no worse than alcohol in my opinion anyway. Cannabis is not worse than alcohol. So why shouldn't it be legalized in a free society? You know, it's not really that horrible.

And like from the Buddhist point of view, alcohol is worse than cannabis.

Cannabis is allowable for monks to use medically. In the texts, alcohol is not.

[sighs]

So, yeah, definitely the the the rampant prostitution

would be worse than marijuana shops in

Thailand. And the ties are just very sensual kind of people. like Burma and Thailand are traditional arch enemies. Sort of like like Sparta and Athens or like England and France. You know, over the course of centuries, they were just like favorite enemies of each other. And the Burmese are more stoic. You know, there's much less prostitution. I've heard that just about any village in Thailand will have like the village prostitute, that kind of thing. You don't see that in Burma, or at least not when I was living there. Um, you know, alcohol, alcohol in Burma, um, like in the movies, the standard

tearjerker like melodrama movie where, you know, boy meets girl, boy loses a girl, girl boohoos for a couple weeks and then marries the rich guy that her daddy sets her up with, whereas the guy just drinks himself to death with Johnny Walker Red Label.

So I mean there is sort of socially mainstreamed consumption of alcohol in Burma. It's mostly the rich and also you'll have like the village drunk, you know, like what's his name? Otis on on the the Andy [clears throat] Griffith show, you know, he's just the town drunk. And you have that sort of thing. And it's drinking alcohol kind of has

the same stigma to it as sort of like
taking narcotics in the west. You know,
it's gradually becoming more acceptable.
You know, you don't want to shame
anybody for being a junkie, anything
like that, for being like a a fentinel
adult zombie on a street corner in
Philadelphia. You don't want to actually
blame anyone for that. And the sun is
coming out. Just a second.

Got to close this.

All right,

that's a little better. I still got
stripes on my face. Just a second.

Not even funny.

All right, that's about as good as we're
going to get.

So, let's see here. I got to get back to the question. Is Buddhist ethics about letting things be, or should that be regulated or prohibited? Well, to some degree it is regulated or prohibited in in Burma because they're just more conservative, whereas Thailand is more liberal. Sort of like France was traditionally more liberal than England or Athens was definitely more liberal than Sparta. Of the two arch enemies, Thailand is just a more sensual kind of society and apparently it it has been for centuries.

Um, so Buddhist ethics, you got to you

got to like choose your hills to die on.

I guess you got the government just has to decide what priorities they're going to have. And in the Burmese military government, their top priority is like they got to stomp out political disscent,

you know, opposition to their power.

That's the their main priority. And you can do other things and they don't really care all that much.

So like I was saying early on this like the Burmese village is mainly governed by tradition. It's almost anarchistic. It's just people follow tradition and they follow Buddhist tradition. And so um things like drinking alcohol or

killing animals is just sort of like a politically incorrect in a Burmese village society. like one of my main supporters, her family was publicly shamed because her brother married the daughter of a fisherman. And I mean, in the west, a fisherman, there's no stigma at all. Fishermen tend to be relatively rich, especially if you're in Alaska catching halibet or salmon or something, you're making big money. But I mean I mean Jesus helped people catch fish. So in Christian society catching fish is fine but in Buddhism like to be a butcher that's low status or to be a fisherman low status because I mean

you're just doing like a nondharmic livelihood. It's wrong livelihood and it's just there's like a social stigma to that at least out in the conservative village countryside. And I'm not really sure I'm not nearly as familiar with uh like village society in Thailand.

Although like I said, I've heard that even like remote villages will have at least one prostitute.

But I haven't even answered the questions yet. The question is Buddhist ethics about letting things be or should that be regulated or prohibited?

Buddhist ethics is generally negative.

Like you read Buddhist ethics, it's not positive. It's not you should do this.

It's you you should not do this. So just to do absolutely nothing is not immoral at all. I mean you can just sit there and watch somebody get murdered or whatever and that is not immoral from a Buddhist point of view depending on your mental states depending on your valitions.

But just inaction is morally neutral from a Buddhist point of view.

So, I mean, you shouldn't like take intoxicants and you shouldn't promote the taking of intoxicants. You shouldn't encourage people to get drunk, for example, or to, you know, break any of the five precepts. You know, you

shouldn't do it yourself and you shouldn't encourage others to do it. But aside from that, it's you're you're doing good.

So Buddhist ethics is

I mean it's subjective. Buddhist ethics is regard to yourself.

You want to keep yourself pure. You want to purify your own mind.

That's that's what Buddhist ethics is all about.

But you shouldn't be promoting immorality to others because in a way that's affecting your mind. You know that's corrupting you by promoting corruption in others. But so long as you're just like patiently enduring the

corruption all around you, then you're not doing anything wrong from a orthodox teraba Buddhist point of view.

[snorts]

Um

I I think I mentioned before that in uh the king the times of the kings in Burma before the British took over that there was a kind of minister in charge of maintaining sa discipline you know sort of like the the the monk police where if a monk was caught you know drunk in public or something you know he'd be thrown into a kind of sa prison that kind of thing. And I guess in Thailand, um, they will actually, um,

defrock monks that are found drunk in public, even though technically you can't do that. And the the only person who can defrock a monk is that monk himself. You can't just force somebody to stop being a monk, which is uh, one reason why in the past, if the Burmese government is going to defrock a monk, they don't just say, "Okay, you're not a monk anymore." because they really do not have the authority to do that. I guess the Burmese government understands this better than the Thai government does. So what they would do is they would have the monk essentially um assaulted by a prostitute because that would be Parajika. If if

you are having uh S CS
and you enjoy it for even one split
second, that's it. You're
excommunicated. So that's how they would
do it. They just bring in a some
voluuptuous immoral female with the monk
who is probably sexually frustrated
anyway from being celibate for so long
and uh she would uh have her way with
him and then he would just stop being a
monk.

But I'm I'm just sort of wandering all
over the place, I guess. Um but all in
all, I do not consider legalization of
marijuana to be necessarily a bad thing.
It's I do not consider it to be any

worse than alcohol anyhow.

And America tried outlawing alcohol and it didn't didn't really do very well and so they had to repeal that amendment of the constitution. And I'm just moving on to the next question which is also from Sedarta Loha.

Do you think it's immoral to make a profit even a small one from teaching Buddhist philosophy or through donations like buy me a coffee in a website?

Well, morality is like I was just saying, it is subjective. It depends on your mental states rather than your outward physical actions. So, two people can make money from teaching dharma. One of them is doing something wrong and the

other one isn't necessarily.

So I mean if if you're motivated by greed then yeah definitely you're doing something that would be um accusal or unh wholesome in in Burmese eth or Buddhist ethics.

Um

and I mean it is true that dhamma should be free

like I really do not like the idea. I

mean, I have my own books of

philosophical reflections for sale on

Amazon, but I've steadfastly

uh resisted any urge to monetize like my

translation of the Atakawaga, for

example. It was always my idea that that

should just be for free distribution.

That is like my gift to the world, so to speak.

I was just performing a public service by making that translation at least with regard to sharing it. I mean the main purpose of my making the Atagawaga translation is I just at the time was unaware of any good translations. So I had to make my own.

Since then there have been better translations coming out.

At least better than the ones I was exposed to. not necessarily better than mine because I'm kind of biased in favor of my own translation of the atakawaga.

Um, [sighs]

do I think it's immoral to make a profit, even a small one, from teaching Buddhist philosophy?

Uh, again,

yeah, it depends on the motives of the person who is making the profit,

but I mean, I would discourage it. I mean, I'm not really in favor of making a profit. Like definitely I do not have any of my YouTube videos monetized.

But the main reason for that is I really do believe in the golden rule. Do unto others as you'd have them do under you.

And I have loathed commercials from the time I was a kid.

So I don't want to subject other people

to commercials which I personally despise.

Uh but making a profit I mean what happens if somebody just freely donates and then you make a profit through not really trying it's just that some generous person values what you have done enough that they have sent you money and that's happened to me several times quite a few times it has happened so I mean that's not necessarily immoral I made no effort to get get this donation really other than just answering questions and so forth. for um [sighs] yeah so I mean really it does depend on the mental states of the person who is

making the profit. I mean are they doing it for the purpose of making a profit? I mean if are you teaching dharma because you want to get famous and or rich or whatever then yeah I mean that would definitely not be um wholesome activity. But if you're just teaching dharma as a way of, you know, performing a public service or you just enjoy teaching dharma and then somebody donates to you without you even asking for it, then that would be sort the other end of the spectrum and that's not necessarily a bad thing. But of course then you got this intermediate zone of you know like saying where people could donate if they

want to. And I mean that's like in the links below this video probably. You know, there's like a a PayPal address or something down there, I'm sure.

So [sighs]

yeah, I mean, life in general is immoral. If you really get down to it from the Buddhist point of view, then I mean, even putting salt and pepper on your food to make it taste better is like wallowing in sensuality. Listening to music is wallowing in sensuality.

Having sex with your own wife, wallowing in sensuality. So I mean from the Buddhist point point of view, I mean it's not like Christianity where it's just white or black. There's all this

stuff that's that's good and all this
stuff that's bad and not much in
between. Whereas in Buddhism almost
everything is in the gray zone.

It's not whether it's immoral, it's just
how immoral is it. I mean, if it's just
sort of like trace amounts of
immorality, then as a general rule, it's
still pretty much okay to do that
because completely avoiding immorality,
I mean, you'd have to be a saint living
under a tree in a forest.

[sighs]

So, I guess I better just move on to the
next question. This is from RFS.

An RFS says, "If a monk commits a

serious offense, are they able to reordain under any circumstances?" Well, the serious offense in question would be parajika. If you commit any of the four parajika offenses, like one is having s
ks even with an animal.

One is let's see stealing anything valuable enough that you could be arrested for it. [clears throat]

Let's see. The next is murder and then the next the it's it's an ascending order of severity or ascending order of just the the heinousness of the crime.

So SECKS, you know, it's the lightest excommunication, then stealing, then murder, which would include like encouraging woman to get an abortion,

encouraging somebody to self-dee,
anything like that, using black magic,
hiring a hitman, anything like that. And
then fourth, the most serious, you know,
the most heinous of the four Parajikica
offenses is knowingly lying about having
attained superhuman mental states. Like
you claim that you're enlightened when
you know you're not enlightened just
because you want to get famous or you
want to get rich or whatever. Yeah,
that's that's even worse than murder
from the point of view of of Theravada
Buddhist monastic discipline.

So any monk who commits any of these
four parajikas that's it I mean you

cannot be reordained as a monk for the rest of your life but you can be reordained as a novice a sana

I read about that in a book by uh a previous Thai sanga raja who wrote the the entrance to the vineia the vineia muka

um he said that he saw some old noviceses and he asked about them Why aren't they ordained as monks since they committed a parajika offense? So that's the highest they can go. They can be reordained as a novice, you know, a 10 precept novice. 10 precepts plus the sakia rules, but you cannot be ordained as a fully ordained biku for the rest of your life. And then any offenses less

than parajika, you're not even kicked out of the monkhood. So you can you can be reordained. If you commit sa deasa offenses and then you drop out and then you want to reordain, you still have to do the penance for the saases you did or the sa dasa offenses that you committed before you dropped out. So there's that too.

[snorts]

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Gordon.

And Gordon says, "What is the Buddhist take on torrenting copywritten media or software?" And I'm not exactly sure what torrenting means. I've I've had it

explained to me before. It's sort of like you're not breaking the rule technically because you're downloading like a movie for example in kind of a scrambled state not in the state in which it [clears throat] was copyrighted but in a scrambled kind of a state or a partial state which is then reassembled in your computer something like that.

Um, but what is the Buddhist take on tor I mean obviously there's no rule against torrenting copywritten media on software because that stuff just did not exist when they were coming up with the the rules of monastic discipline. But um technically it would could theoretically potentially fit under stealing like

copyright theft. So, I mean, if it's illegal, I mean, it depends on the on the law. In this case, it depends on the law of the land, like if you're in Burma and they just don't have copyright laws, then you're fine. But if you're doing it in a country like maybe the USA where they do have copyright laws and there is such a thing as copyright theft then I mean if it's an a severe enough theft that you could be arrested for it then yeah I mean that would [clears throat] that would be theft and if you're a monk who did that then you could be excommunicated for the rest of your life.

If that's what you did, then you're automatically excommunicated whether or not anyone even finds out about it. So monks especially have to be really careful about that sort of thing. But yeah, in this particular case with regard to theft, I mean to take what is not given, I mean, if you have doubts, if you think maybe it's immoral, then you shouldn't do it.

But I mean, if it's illegal, then I mean, technically, you would be legally a thief by doing it.

Uh, but again, Buddhist ethics are psychological and subjective. Stop it. Buddhist ethics are psychological and subjective. And so I mean if you feel

like you're doing something wrong when
you're doing it then yeah that's that's
a good indication that you really are
doing something wrong that I mean it
even if it's just the feeling I mean you
could be doing something completely
innocuous

and you feel like you're doing something
wrong then I mean you really shouldn't
do it because I mean in a way you are
doing something wrong by doing something
that you feel is wrong even if outwardly
it's completely harmless. us.

So you got to watch your own mental
states and know thyself.

And also I mean if you want to be a

stickler on technicalities, you should find out whether it really is illegal or not. Just because something's illegal doesn't mean that it's immoral. I mean driving 60 in a 55 mph zone is not really immoral.

might be illegal,
but it's not really immoral.

But you do have to take the law into consideration with regard to certain things, especially for a monk. You know, like stealing, you know, it depends on like the value of what you're stealing and like whether or not uh you could be arrested for it, that kind of thing.

[snorts]

So,

let's see. I guess I'll just move on to Gordon's next question.

which is as follows. Islam and Christianity more or less accept anybody the instant they express a desire to convert. Whereas Judaism is rather notorious for denying potential converts or putting roadblocks in their way to test their sincerity. Where does Buddhism fall on the ease of accepting converts?

Um, well, before I get to the actual question, um, yeah, even some Christianity is, uh, a little bit particular about who they're willing to accept. For example, I remember reading

or hearing long ago that Michael Jackson wanted to become a Jehovah's Witness and they wouldn't take him.

[sighs and gasps] And Judaism,

[clears throat] it's it's kind of an ethnic thing.

I mean, you do have non-Hebrew Jewish people like, well, Ivanka Trump, for example, or Sammy Davis Jr., I think he was he became Jewish. Elizabeth Taylor, you know, because she married some rich Jewish guy, so she converted.

So, it does it it does happen. It's just not really super

um

yeah I mean there's an ethnic element to Judaism. You know they're God's chosen

people because they were this tribe not because they just chose to follow so much as you know it's like this ethnic tribe that was or 12 tribes I guess that God favored for whatever reasons.

Um, but with regard to Buddhism, yeah, it's really easy. I mean, where does Buddhism fall in the ease of accepting converts? I mean, all you have to do is just take five precepts and and the three refuges and five precepts and you're a Buddhist.

I mean, you could be like a really heretical one if you also accept other beliefs that really are not Buddhist.

But I mean from the Buddhist point of

view, I mean all you have to do is just
sincerely

want to be a Buddhist and take the three
refuges and the five precepts and boom,
you're a Buddhist regardless of all
else.

And even with regard to being ordained,
I mean, the Burmese especially are
notorious for ordaining people that
aren't even Buddhists. Like I met a an
Austrian Catholic priest once wearing
monks robes and he he didn't like stop
being a Catholic. He was still an
ordained Catholic priest, but he's
wearing monks robes. It's like I I mean
I I warned him. He's like really
[laughter]

you shouldn't be doing that. But

[snorts]

I mean they will ordain anybody. People that just shouldn't be ordained. like um

I remember one time when I was a very

junior monk this old Burmese guy was

ordained and I mean these temporary

monks I mean he was just a temporary

monk the Burmese it's called dull laba

or ordination don laba ordination which

means hard to obtain hard to get because

it's such a rare treasure to be able to

be ordained as a biku you know it's it's

harder to be or like a monk an ordained

monk than to just be born as a human

most humans they don't have the

opportunity to do that. So in a way it's considered to be this great blessing from the Buddhist point of view to ordain somebody even just for like three days to be a monk for three days. It's like this great blessing. And so they ordained this old guy who just didn't know any any rules of monastic discipline. He's like dancing around with like his granddaughters and stuff, you know, they come to visit him and support him and everything and just acting like he's not a monk at all. You know, he didn't get it. He was he was relatively very old and so you know he might have been kind of his faculties may have been in decline also.

But I I I heard another story about
there was this friend of mine, an
American monk, who was staying at some
big school monastery,
um, which is kind of on the outskirts of
a big city. And he heard this weird
uproar going on, and he he goes outside
to see what it is. And he sees there's
this monk just wallowing around in this
pond, yelling at the top of his lungs.
And he asked about it later. And it
turned out that this was another one of
these temporary monks who was an
alcoholic and he was going through the
delirium tremens as a monk. You know, it
may be that he was ordained temporarily

as a monk just to help him go cold turkey on on booze or whatever. And so I mean some Burmese monasteries will just ordain damn near anybody. You don't even have to be a Buddhist which is not good. Even at Pandidorama, I was spent two months doing intensive practice at Pandidorama back in the late 90s in in Rangon. And there was this Mahayana Buddhist monk. He comes in wearing gray pajamas and he didn't like that he was treated like a lay person. You know, he had to go behind all the monks at at meal times and stuff. And so he just got himself ordained as a terrau even though he didn't stop being a Mahayana monk which I mean that is really not correct

procedure you know if you're a Mahayana monk you want to be ordained as a terrau you have to stop being Mahayana monk before you can be ordained as a terrau you can't be both at the same time but he was because even in a relatively strictish

monastery like Panda Rama when Pandanda was still alive still they were doing this kind of stuff.

[sighs and gasps] So Buddhism is like the the extreme easiest to enter even like if you're in Burma at some monasteries even to be ordained you don't even have to be a Buddhist it's weird

but to be a Buddhist is a subjective thing. So I mean if you take refuge and keep five precepts and consider yourself to be a Buddhist and you're a Buddhist regardless of the fact that you may have never met any other actual Buddhist in your life.

So [snorts] let's see here. I'm just going to [clears throat] go to Gordon's third question.

And Gordon's third question is what is your answer to the transgressive fourth question below? And the answer is yes. I answered the fourth question below with a yes. But I'm not going to read the fourth question because that would be transgressive. So I'm just going to move

on to the next question. Oh, wait a minute. And I'm just thinking here, huh, I think they might have retracted the question

because I remember seeing a certain question. This next question reminds me of another question that somebody else asked.

Anyways, this question is from somebody named Tinen. I think I don't know how to pronounce this name. I've never known anybody named Tynen before. I think it's Tinen. And Tinen says, "I am wondering what your thoughts are on the Buddhist precepts and whether they can be bent or broken in certain circumstances as I can

think of a few.

For example, no killing. If we saw a child about to be murdered in the moment, should we break the precept and kill to save the child or should we watch the child die to ensure we do not break the precept? A few other examples, but this will make this very long. So, I'll leave the one example here. When I think of this myself, it brings me back to the story when Jesus was speaking with the Pharisees about saving the donkey on the Sabbath day. Okay. Well, this is going back to that question of whether Buddhism makes you inhuman or not.

Um,

see whether rules can be bent or broken
like Buddhist precepts. Um, I mean
technically
no.

So, I mean, technically the moral thing
to do if a child is about to be
murdered, I mean, you can try to stop
the murder from happening, but you you
can't really do that morally by killing
the person who's about to kill the
child, which is one reason why you
become a monk. You renounce society,
which causes you largely, for the most
part, to avoid these situations
entirely. you're off alone in a forest
somewhere where you you're not even

allowed to slap mosquitoes that are biting you.

So, I mean, I've I've discussed this before

where I mean, you you have the right to choose whether or not you are willing to take the hit.

So, I mean, I've broken rules. I've fudged on rules sometimes with what I consider to be good reasons. Like for example, it's against the rules for a monk to give medicine to lay people. I mean, if it's a like one of your parents or like a monastery attendant, then then it's allowable. But just like lay supporters in the village to be practicing medicine by like giving them

medicines is against the rules. You're not supposed to do it. But then I was living in this place that was endemic with falsiferum malaria, which is the worst kind. I would have died several times over if I didn't have good malaria medicine. And one of my main supporters told me that his daughter had had malaria for this god-awful amount of time. You know, it was it was many, many days. It was many weeks even.

And so after kind of questioning him about what her symptoms were because Burmese villagers are not good at diagnosing illnesses, it did seem like she had falsia. year and I was having

chills and fevers on alternate days
which I don't know any other you know
maybe brucyosis or something might have
similar similar symptoms but it's it was
endemic with malaria in that area so I
gave him the pills she got better I
committed an offense but I may have
saved somebody's life and still I mean I
still broke the rule you know there's no
loophole that says if you've got a good
reason you can break the rule no you
still break the rule but I mean Still
sometimes you can judge for yourself
whether you are willing to take the hit.
You know it's you're going to be
committing some sort of unskillful
karma, bad karma by doing something. But

still it may be considered by you to be the lesser of two evils.

Like somebody's going to kidnap a child. You know, you see somebody like pulling a child towards a car and it's obviously not the child's parent. the child is terrified. I mean, you could just body slam that guy, you know? I mean, you still be making some sort of, you know, you might be motivated by anger when you see this happening already bad karma even if you don't do anything because you're you're feeling anger. Then you just, you know, tackle the guy to save the kid and the guy might like scrape the side of his head on the sidewalk as

his head hits the ground. That kind of thing. I mean it you you're still you are doing a certain amount of unskillful or bad karma but I mean you might not be able to live with yourself if you just stood there and watched them like abduct this child.

So that's one reason why monks go off alone into a forest where they're not exposed to this sort of stuff. They're not put into these situations where the lesser of two evils is still evil or just bad karma, anger and violence and that sort of thing.

So

yeah, you have to make your own choices.

But I mean there really are no
loopholes. There are no exceptions to
karma. You know, if you are motivated by
attraction, aversion, or delusion in
your actions,
you're you're committing an unh
wholesome act. Regardless of what the
act is, like I already said, it's like
putting salt and pepper on your mashed
potatoes to make them taste better.
You're wallowing in sensuality. You're
you're acting in a greedy manner.
So, in Buddhism, I mean, it's it's not
just black and white like it is in
Abrahamic religions. Is this it's for
the most part just all shades of gray.

And somebody asked a question that yeah
that I think might have referred to
Tinan here that I think they they
deleted which is just as well.

I think they were making fun of him.

[snorts] Anyways, next question. Joe Doe
says, "Who is Kevin Maynard?" And I have
no idea. No idea whatsoever.

[snorts] Next question is from PSA.

And PSA says, "What do you think about
the World Series between the Dodgers and
the Blue Jays? It'll probably be over
by the time you make your next video,
but I was just wondering if you were
watching it and what your thoughts
were." No, I have not watched a baseball
game in decades at this point. I don't I

mean if the World Series is in fact over as PSA implies here, I don't even know who won. I I could not name a single like professional baseball player at all.

Although I have been told that that baseball is like the last refuge of the three main spectator sports in America, the three main ball games, you know, baseball, football, and basketball is it's the the least contaminated by like political correctness or woke ideology. You know, football is just it's awful. basketball also, you know, it's it's just all this sort of leftist globalist propaganda

stuff thrown into it. Male cheerleaders
is like one of the most recent additions
to to like gay football,
rainbow football.

So, yeah, I have no idea about I have
not watched a a baseball game. I have
not given a a [__] about baseball games
in in many years. I was never really
into baseball even before I was into
football before I became a monk. But
that was about it. I was like basketball
just bunch of tall black guys running
back and forth in squeaky shoes in their
underwear
just it just really didn't do anything
for me. I [clears throat] mean watching
sports in general, I've never really

been super into sports. Pro football back in the old days, like when they'd play on real grass, sometimes in like rain and mud, that kind of thing, freezing temperatures, that kind of thing. I I kind of enjoyed because pro football, American football, not soccer, but American football, at least when I was watching it, it was like a cross between war and chess. You know, there's like strategy involved in this kind of thing that made it more interesting. Basketball is just too fast. just, you know, 100 points a game, that kind of thing. Baseball is too slow.

Golf is way too slow.

I mean, sometimes Olympic sports, gymnastics, that kind of thing. Fencing.

I mean, they almost never show Olympic fencing, but that kind of thing I like.

Don't watch TV much anymore though, except for just like we've got like a a \$3 a month subscription to the Discovery Plus channel. So that's pretty much all we watch is just stuff on Discovery Plus.

No sports there.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ruie.

And Ruie says, "To what extent is recollection of death at the forefront of your mind in daily life?"

um recollection of death. I mean, the main recollection of death in my life lately is with regard to keeping fish tanks because fish die sometimes, shrimp die sometimes, and so you're confronted by death on a regular basis. Just yesterday, we went to the the local fish store, and my sweetie bought two [__] loaches to help kind of keep the baby snail population under control in her beta tank. And one of those loaches when it hit the water, it pretty much just started freaking out. And then like within a matter of just couple hours, it was dead just due to some kind of toxin building up in the water. So, it's just

like that kind of recollection of death. Just because you're confronted with it, you see death, you realize that, you know, like all beings are subject to death. Looking at the little dogs and thinking, "Oh, they're going to get old because dogs don't live as long as people do. You know, they're going to be all gimped up and stuff in matter of several years."

um just working in a potentially kind of dangerous environment at work where sometimes you're moving toxic chemicals or just dealing with heavy machinery.

So, I mean, you you've always got to be kind of cautious, got to be always aware of your surroundings and so forth in

order to avoid, you know, injury or death. So, I mean, that's always sort of in the the background of my mind, not necessarily the forefront.

But, you know, it's it's always kind of a consideration that death is a possibility if you're not careful.

And then just animals, plants and animals, like especially little aquatic animals in fish tanks. Those are like the main recollection of death. I mean, I already mentioned a little earlier that my sweetheart and I would occasionally watch uh shows about, you know, like serial killers and so forth. So, there's that. I mean, you you see

the news, there's lots of death in the news. So, I mean, it's it's never really in the forefront, but it's always there in some form or another. You know, it's the the awareness of death is is always there. Especially as I get older, you know, it's like

when you get older, I mean, it's not like I'm afraid of death, but still, you know, it's it's kind of there. You know, so to what extent is recollection of death at the forefront of my mind in daily life? Not very often, but it's it's always kind of in the background, you know, it's always part of the surroundings, or at least a lot of the time it is.

[snorts] So, I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from

[clears throat]

Omi. It's like capital O hyphen small M
large M small M hyphen small I. I have
no idea what that signifies or how to
pronounce it or anything. And then Omi
asks the strange question in a in a long
strange comment.

Towards the end of the long strange
comment, he just asks this question. Do
you use an air fryer for cooking? And
no, I do not. I've never seen the point
in frying air. What are you going to do
with fried air? It's just silly. So, I'm
just moving on. Next question. This is

from Mr. Pronov. And Mr. Pronov says,
"Do you know of any miracle story of
someone who improved their physical
condition? For example, someone curing
their bad vision. Science says bad
vision like myopia can't be cured." Or
someone got cured from their chronic
illness miraculously. And it was
relatively recently just the previous
Q&A or maybe two or three Q&A ago I've
been talking about um like Mary Baker
Eddie

like the founder of Christian Science
and her book science and health with key
to the scriptures. I mean that's what
the book is about is this kind of
miraculous healing.

And at the end of the book is I think it's 100 pages or 70 pages. It's either 70 or 100 pages of a chapter called fruition which is just testimonies of people who have been cured of all sorts of things and most of the stuff that they're cured of is stuff that has a psychosomatic element like tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis has a psychosomatic element to it. Also asthma, I've read that most cases of asthma are psychosomatic. And then also reading problems and digestive problems are like the main things. But some I mean some of these testimonies, one person had a

broken arm and they just used Christian science to heal their arm just immediately.

Another person had like this 40 lb tumor. That was like the very first testimony cuz it was very dramatic.

40 pound tumor. She just read science and held the key to the scriptures, just was convinced by it, that this is true, that I can't possibly have this tumor and it just faded out. I mean, it didn't disappear just poof immediately like that, but it just went into remission immediately and just disappeared like over a period of just a matter of days.

Also within the realm of terravada

Buddhism, I've told the story recently

of Ubaqin who was the teacher of Senena who apparently had some sort of skin cancer on his face that he started doing intensive meditative practice and it just went into remission and disappeared. Um, Upandida of the Mahasi tradition in his famous book in this very life

uh mentioned the story of some guy who had really bad tuberculosis where I mean he was at the coughing up blood stage and he went for uh an intensive meditation retreat possibly just to set himself right before death you know just he wanted to die as consciously as possible and upandid candidly admits

that, you know, he was kind of worried about contagion and so forth. This person with tuberculosis who has like uncontrollable coughing spasms and so forth, but you know, he he was put into like his own little meditation cabin and started getting into deep meditation partly because of this sue, this feeling of spiritual urgency because he felt, you know, impending doom and it just cleared up. He just got better. And like I said with regard to Christian science, tuberculosis is more controlled by mental states than most illnesses or at least it's most easily controlled by mental states.

That I mean there it's more likely that

just having the right attitude can give you resistance to tuberculosis or help you to clear up cases of tuberculosis.

My father used to be an X-ray technician. He said almost everybody, at least back when he was an X-ray technician, has scars of tuberculosis in their lungs where it starts to kind of get a foothold, but then it's your body just, you know, resists and, you know, your immune system or whatever it is, your attitude just clears it up.

Also, of course, uh some viruses are like more likely to get an outbreak if if you're under like emotional stress or

physical strain, that kind of thing, you know, various various types of things.

But still, that Christian Science book, you know, had broken arms and tumors and that kind of thing in addition to the more likely to be psychosomatic stuff also.

So, let's see.

I guess I'll just uh

move on to the next question. This is from Donna River and this was the last question up until right before I did this video. Somebody else asked two more questions but this was going to be the last question and we're getting close to the end here and it's less than two hours so we're doing pretty good.

>> [clears throat]

>> This is from Dhamma River and Dhamma River says, "A Mahayana Buddhist teacher was giving a dharma talk once and said that there is no suffering in all of samsara greater than a god when he's dying. Even the beings in hell don't suffer as much. The reason for this is because in his entire life, all he's ever known was pleasure and being praised and worshiped. And he thought he was eternal. And all of a sudden he sees himself dying and with his psychic powers he can see where he will be reborn. I was not able to ask the source of this teaching and I wonder if you

knew the suta and if you don't know the suta could you please just share what is your opinion of it? Do you think it's true? Does it sound legitimate?

Okay. Well, I mean I do not recall this seeing this in like a polyuta. It could be a Mahayana sutra rather than a poly suta. Um it could be in in the poly text somewhere. But the main thing that I recall about dying gods

um

I remember reading somewhere somewhere in the text the poly text terab Buddhist texts that when a god is finally reaching a small g god is reaching the end of his lifespan his his

>> [clears throat]

>> illumination he he becomes less glowy
and shiny you know it's like the the
light that emanates from him dims

And then he knows and all of his friends
know he's going to be passing away into
another into another life. And so his
friends will kind of come around and
like make their goodbyes and console him
and then and then he he poofs out of
that realm and gets reborn somewhere
else. But I do not recall anything about
how the suffering is greater than
somebody being tortured in hell.

Yeah, I'm that I'm I'm rather skeptical
about. I mean it could be some sort of
Mahayana thing but um I don't think that

the poly texts except for maybe some
suta that I don't recall at all
um I don't think the poly text would say
that when right before a dava
passes away from from a dva realm that
he is suffering more than the beings
being hacked with with axes by demons in
hell.

I just uh I'm skeptical of that because
partly because a god is going to have
more serenity
and more wisdom and so they're going to
be able to deal with I mean all they're
doing is just kind of fading out anyway.
They're not getting some horrible
illness or anything. They're just kind
of fading out and in all likelihood

they're going to wind up with a fairly good life in their next life anyway. It might be a human life but still it's not going to be a really bad human life. If you were a dava in your previous existence, you get reborn as a human, it's probably going to be a pretty good life. I mean, not as good as living millions of years in some heaven realm, but still, it's it's it's going to be lots better than being hacked with axes by demons in some blazing hot underworld.

So, yeah, I am skeptical of that. I mean, different davas are going to have different attitudes, I suppose. You

know, there could be some dva who knows he's going to wind up in hell. You know, he did something really good and really bad in his life as a human, so he gets the reward first and then he gets the punishment afterwards, maybe. But still, I think the mind of a dava is going to be more serene, more clear, and have more wisdom than somebody in some hell realm who's just all [_] up.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question and this is the last question here and this is from practice meta and practice meta says

five hyphenme

DMT

is an extremely potent short acting

natural or synthetic psychedelic compound known for inducing profound mystical experiences often described as ego dissolution or a sense of oneness with some describing it as an experience of nirvana itself. As a former monk, how do you react to claims that five hyphen meo-en DMT induces an experience of nirvana?

Um, I'm not sure if five hyphen me DMT is just the same as just DMT, like one of the active ingredients in Iawasa, for example.

Um,

I mean, I have I have taken Iawaska and also Yahí, which is just like the

Colombian version of the Peruvian
iawasa, just somewhat different
ingredients.

The Yahi tastes worse than Iawaska.

Um, so I mean I have if if I is DMT, at
least I've taken DMT without the five
hyphen meo hyphen.

Um,

anyways, I mean the main question here
is as a former monk, how do you react to
claims that DMT induces an experience of
nirvana? I don't think it's an
experience of nirvana. I mean it could
be like what could be called temporary
liberation like Janna in the text is
sometimes called temporary liberation
because at least the uh the defilements

are kind of suspended

and that's what DMT would do. I mean if

it's real nirvana then you have

exhausted all greed, hate and delusion.

No more of that. You don't fall back out

of nirvana again. One who has attained

thus does not fall back.

So it could be an approximation like a

temporary artificial approximation of

nirvana but it would not be genuine

nirvana or nibbana. Nibbana is blowing

out and after you blow out you don't

blow back in again after the the

chemical has finished taking effect.

That is just a kind of suppression of

habitual delusion. But then as soon as

the drug wears off, the habitual delusion comes back because the karma has not been exhausted and you know it's still there. It's just kind of attenuated.

So I'm just going to move on to practice meta's second question which is the last question of this particular episode of Q&A.

He says, "Since every experiencer of five hyphen meo-en DMT I've read about has not been a monk, nor a practitioner of meditation for 30 plus years, would you be willing to take five hyphen meo-en DMT to provide your unique perspective?"

And

um [sighs] I mean I like I said I've already taken some kind of DMT whether it was five hyphen MONE DMT or not I don't know but I have taken Iawasa before and I have shared my experiences with that.

Um but would I be willing to take it now? Well I'm I'm getting a little old for that [__] for starters. Also, I got a woman who probably would vehemently put her foot down and insist that I not take five hyphen meen DMT, especially if somebody sends it to me. I mean, we went through this something similar to this before where I

had a supporter send me uh a certain substance called DMXE. It was so newly synthesized. It hadn't been ille it wasn't even illegal yet. You know, it was it was somewhat along the same lines as ketamine. You know, it was belonged to the same kind of general molecular classification as ketamine.

And um I was willing to take it. You know, it's like my my woman and I I'll [clears throat] get to that. But so I I strategized and so I just informed my woman that I had already taken it five minutes before. You know, you take it then you tell her so that she can't insist that you don't take it. And then it was it was fairly intense. You know,

I was kind of lying lying there panting for a while, which had her kind of freaked out. And I mean, she was even more freaked out that I actually took this substance that somebody I'd never met in face to face, you know, sends me through the mail, you know? I mean, it's pretty crazy,

but I mean, I trusted the person, you know, they were they had made generous contributions before. They're obviously in good faith unless they were just like super scops, you know, some kind of spy, you know, really really devious stuff going on, which I just didn't believe.

So, I took it and it was it was very

intense and and uh my woman was she was not pleased.

And so this five hyphen MEO hyphen DMT um yeah it's uh

I under certain circumstances I might be willing to try it but if someone were to send it to me in the mail then yeah that would that would not work. That's uh that that wouldn't happen.

But um I mean in my younger days I was much more experimental, willing to try new things. Not anything like I never took opiate, narcotics, anything stronger than Perkadan.

You know, I wasn't willing to try heroin, anything like that. But, you know, sort of exploring the unexplored

regions of the subconscious mind, that sort of thing. My father was the same way. He mostly used like hypnosis for his experimentations.

But, uh, so [snorts] under certain circumstances I might be willing to try DMT like the five hyphen MEO hyphen version of it if I haven't already but uh yeah it's uh it's really not on my bucket list at all and so I guess we're done.

I guess I answered the questions. I remember somebody asked a question that may have applied to this Tynan person, but then when I was collating, like

making the list of questions, I didn't see it. So maybe they took it back because it was it was kind of a naughty question. Anyway, no offense to Tynan, of course, because who I've never met and do not know. So anyways, I guess we're done. And so like I should always say at the beginning and practically never do. If you have any questions you think I can answer especially with regard to dharma like terravada Buddhism, early Buddhism even like pre-terra Buddhism, meditation, monasticism, Burma, that sort of thing. Uh I know some stuff about biology, have a degree in biology. You know I'm interested in politics. So

that's kind of fair game. Although, you know, we should try to keep a sort of a dharmic theme to these Q&A videos because that's really what that's really what it's mainly intended for. And like and subscribe if you have not done so already.

Be sure to look at the URL links below if you are so inclined.

And uh be happy. And now I got to push this button here.

Alrighty then, take two.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 169. I am your host Po Basa and this is my Muolnir bead.

Strangely, my woman likes this so much she wants me to have this for the rest of my life. Not just the mujolnir bead, but like the the the braided beard and stuff, but I'm not so sure about that.

This is my beverage.

And 169 is not a prime number, but it is a perfect square. It is in fact

[clears throat] $13 * 13$ or if you will 13 to the second power.

And I'm [clears throat] really uh not being risk averse this time because I

don't even have an emergency backup
beverage despite the fact this is going
to be a relatively long one. We've got
about 40 questions. So it's like people
that watch the show have awoken from
their dogmatic slumbers and have started
asking lots of questions again.

>> [snorts]

>> So I suppose

now that the [clears throat] Muolnir
bead has been displayed,

the beverage has been displayed,

[snorts] the [clears throat] number has
been explained, I can just wade right
into answering questions here.

[clears throat]

And the first question is from the

protoseudam who asked this question more than a week ago and for some reason it was just I scrolled right past it when going down the scroll.

didn't see it to answer it last time.

So, it's uh starting the questions this time, which maybe is a little unfortunate because I generally prefer to have an easy question to answer the first time just to kind of get the ball rolling or the wheel of dharma rolling if you prefer.

But there is a certain amount of profundity and nuance to this. I

[clears throat] Okay, I'll just I'll just read the question now. Protoseudo

Monk says, "I've just started reading
The Trickster in the Paranormal.

Following your recommendation, you
mentioned that this book is paradigm
shifting and that it fills the gaps.

Could you please elaborate on that? Why
is this book so significant to you?" And
I suppose I should just get the book.

It's on the bookshelf right back here.

Let's see. Where is it?

There it is.

Okay. [clears throat] So, he is
referring to this book which was sent to
me by my friend Otto,

The Trickster in the Paranormal by
George P. Hansen.

And it is true. It's probably it would

definitely be in the top 20 most important books I've ever read just with regard to filling in gaps in my understanding or my paradigm, my worldview, whatever. Every once in a while, you just come across a book that just has this wealth of information with regard to something that you were kind of interested in but didn't know much about. Like there's another one back there, Strategy, The Indirect Approach by BF Little Hart, I think is his name. And [clears throat] it's a book on military strategy. And probably half of what I know about World War I, for example, comes from that book. So that

was I mean it wasn't as important philosophically, but it was another one that just kind of filled in gaps in my knowledge.

So anyways, you mentioned that this book is paradigm shifting and that it fills the gaps. Would you please elaborate on that? Why is this book so significant to you? Well, I think the main theme of this book is [clears throat] I don't know if George P. Hansen was like a philosophical idealist just believing that this entire universe is like a mental projection but it fits right in with idealism. his his like theory or hypothesis, his thesis in this book. And that [clears throat]

the book indicates that you have to have rules to keep everything orderly, to keep the chaotic at bay, to keep, you know, the unexplicable un like what is it like unforeseeable weird stuff from happening. And people have known about this intuitively since the stone age. You know, that's why there's so many taboss in addition to just, you know, apparent laws of nature. Things fall down instead of up generally, for example. [clears throat] But people just have to have more rules than just laws of nature. And so human societies just invent rules just to keep things more orderly. And it doesn't make

a whole lot of sense from a materialistic point of view. But when you think of the idea that it is perception that is generating our reality which is largely a Buddhist point of view. Even schools of Buddhism like Theravada that accept the ultimate reality of physical matter still they believe that our reality what we are experiencing is deeply conditioned by mental states. that our own mental states can cause physical matter to exist. You know like kama ja rupa for example or physical matter that is born of karma which is a mental state. So anyways, this [clears throat] this

book, *The Trickster in the Paranormal*,
um, and one of the main ideas that he
really pounds away at in this book is
that there has to be order, as much
order as possible to
um, just keep chaos at bay, to keep
things stable in order for any kind of
samsara, any kind of cosmos to exist for
more than just a fraction of a second
that there has to be stability
and humans need more stability for our
own existence than just is found in laws
of nature. So we have to create even
more stability through social norms and
and morals and taboos and that sort of
thing. And it's by [clears throat] how

the paranormal occurs according to to
this book. And this is this is like one
of the like important things that I
picked up from this book is that the
paranormal really is like breaking the
rules that it's it's sort of the
paranormal seeps through like weak spots
between rules to get into our version of
reality. And so that's why a lot of like
witches for example, if they're trying
to perform some paranormal act, you
know, cast a spell for example, they may
literally deliberately violate norms and
taboos

in order to like cause like a tear in
the in the fabric of our samsara, which
allows this primordial chaos to come

through, which can then be harmed.

harnessed. You know, it's like ju guu
that can potentially be harnessed by
people skillfully at people skillful at
harnessing chaotic ju guu that is
seeping into this version of samsara.

So, I'd never really thought about that
before. You know, it's like
parapsychologists and like this the
Soviet Union and and communist China for
decades

[clears throat] were like trying to like
discover laws of the paranormal so that
they could use those in like their
espionage

and you know just scops and just dark

ops this kind of stuff. And

[clears throat]

they had the disadvantage of being

Marxists who and Marxists are

materialists. So they're like, you know,

there's this Soviet woman, Nina

Koolagina, I think was her name, who

could move objects without touching

them. Sort of like Yuri Geller in in

America. And there's old pictures of her

wearing like a helmet where they're

trying to detect any kind of brain waves

or any anything like fields, that kind

of thing, to explain how she's doing

this. and they were going about it all

wrong because they're trying to find

some sort of like scientific laws

governing this when really according to George P. Hansen. It's like [clears throat] it's energy like chaotic energy seeping in, you know, against the bull works of order and stability. You know, there it's kind of getting in through the cracks, so to speak, which then causes things that should be impossible to happen. You know, the miraculous, that sort of thing.

[sighs]

But you don't want too much order. I mean it's there's there's kind of a balance. There has to be a cosmic balance. Too much order is just death, you know? It's just robots.

But I mean, but too [clears throat] much disorder then I mean it's it's scary and weird things can happen. Like in a dream you have less order than in waking consciousness and all kinds of weird stuff can happen. You could be talking to an old high school friend and then the next thing you know the high school friend it has turned into some movie star for example and it wasn't like the friend walked away and the movie star showed up. It's just the friend turned into this movie star or another one that I've mentioned a number of times. I've dreamt this sort of thing before. It's like you're riding a bus in your dream and the next thing you know you're on an

airplane or you're on a ship and it wasn't like you got off the bus and onto the airplane or ship. It was just like, well, you weren't noticing the bus turned into an airplane or a ship. And so without enough order in like a a psychologically generated reality, then that kind of thing runs rampant. I mean, I remember reading a long time ago a kind of

it [clears throat] was a book on like life after death or like continuation of the human psyche after death.

And there was this woman whose friend had died recently. And just a few days after her friend died, she saw like a

full body apparition of her friend in the in the room with her. And he was had like this kind of dazed, confused look on his face and he's complaining to her. It's like where I am now, there's no law and order, you know? It's sort of like being in a dream state where things are just like mutating and transmogrifying because there's not enough stability in the system to keep things normalized and predictable. And so human beings have, you know, since the stone age have kind of intuitively uh understood this so that they're trying to maximize stability within reason just to keep things predictable and relatively safe because if you

violate taboos, you violate norms, you know, then weird things can happen. And weird things can also happen around saints and sages because they're sort of weakening the fabric of samsara just by seeing through it. Kind of they're sort of tearing the veil themselves just through their wisdom.

So that was really interesting to me. It kind of it makes sense to me because I really don't think that physical matter is ultimately real anyway. I do think it's like a manifestation of consciousness of some sort. And so this idea that a version of reality, a samsara,

um being like a uh like an artifact of perception, there has to be a certain order to it that the laws of physics are just sort of like a default setting for for our samsara. But that's that's apparently not enough for us humans because we're getting too complicated. We're getting self-referential and paradoxical and so forth. So that we need even more order than just these [clears throat] laws of physics. And I mean the laws of physics themselves didn't necessarily I mean they weren't necessarily laws until scientists kind of locked them down. You know this is one of the reasons why modern western civilization

not just western civilization like in the west but western civilization has pretty much taken over the entire world. anywhere you go, you know, it's it's western style science, western style political systems, western style style infrastructure, you know, architecture and roads and electricity and all this. You know, the western scientific worldview has pretty much taken over the world because it's so strong it stabilizes reality better.

So, it may be that before, you know, the Michaelelsson Morley experiment and and all that sort of thing, the speed of light wasn't necessarily 186,000 m per

second, but that it just got locked down
into that

or in our version of reality.

[clears throat]

So,

it's times of like upheaval and chaos
that you have all kinds of weird things
happening, some of them good and some of
them bad, you know, like

the the Italian Renaissance, for
example, it was just all sorts of social
chaos going on, but also just like
flowering of genius was going on, too.

And so, it's it's sort of a trade-off.

You know, the more chaos you have, the
more unpredictable and scary and
possibly bad things can be, but also

that's when just the the real genius
comes into this world
or at least a higher incidence of it.
So, that was kind of what what I got out
of the book. That was like one of the
main things that I got out of book out
of the book. You know, it sort of
strengthened my idea that physical
matter isn't ultimately real and that we
need a certain stability
and by [clears throat]
deliberately
like violating that stability or
normality then the supernatural
so-called can come in. Like in the book
he also points out that um a great many

psychics and spirit mediums and so forth
tend to be like sexually anomalous. You
know, there's a lot of bisexuals and
homosexuals and just violators of norms
that supposedly have psychic talent, for
example.

H

so I mean his his theory makes sense and
I'm willing to work with it as as a
working hypothesis
and it just kind of um helped me to
understand a position that I had already
adopted before reading the book which
was physical matter really is not
ultimately real
and I'm just going to move on next
question this is from Maitraa Buddha

and he's asking questions that you would not expect from my Buddha. He says, "What is the difference between the Anglo-Saxon tribe from other Germanic tribes?"

And [clears throat] so he's talking about like the Anglo-Saxon Germanic tribes that invaded the British Isles, you know, in the late Roman Empire and like the the dark ages, the beginning of the dark ages, especially, you know, like fourth, fifth, sixth centuries of the common era, you had these Germanic tribes that colonized Britannia or the British Isles.

>> [snorts]

>> So what is the difference between the Anglo-Saxon tribe from other Germanic tribes? Well, the Anglo-Saxons I mean it wasn't just one tribe. It was mainly three tribes mainly three tribes.

Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. And the Jutes came from Utland, which is modern day Norway. It's like that peninsula sticking up out of Europe that is claimed by Nor claimed by Denmark I should say, not Norway, Denmark.

And then [clears throat] I think the the Angles also came from that general area of of like Denmark. And then the Saxons, it was it possibly was just a loose term that the the Romans applied to pretty much any Germanic tribe that lived on

like the the Baltic coast of what is now
like the Netherlands, you know, that
general area. The ones more inland were
Franks and the ones that lived more on
the coast were were called Saxons.

There's still a Saxony in Germany that
is more inland. So there really was a
tribe apparently that called themselves
Saxons. But then the Germans or not the
Germans, the Romans just use Saxon as
just sort of a catchall for just
Germanic tribes that lived on coasts,
that kind of thing.

At least the north like northwestern
coast of Europe.

So it was just a group of tribes and

there were there were other tribes too
in addition to Anglo-Saxons and jutes.
In fact, there was like Federati or like
um foreign foreign soldiers
[clears throat] that were imported by
the Romans as auxiliaries, foreign
auxiliaries that just settled in England
and then, you know, they kind of went
their own way after uh British or not
after Roman rule pretty much collapsed,
you know, after the the Roman legions
withdrew [clears throat]
in the fifth century.

So what is the difference between the
Anglo-Saxon tribes and other Germanic
tribes? Well, the main difference is
that [clears throat] the Anglo the

Anglo-Saxons, Judes, etc.

migrated to the British Isles there, or at least a lot of them did, and and colonized the British Isles, whereas the other Germanic tribes just stayed where they were, or they migrated south into the collapsing Roman Empire, or the newly collapsed Roman Empire, and conquered different areas like the Franks crossed the Rine, settled in Gaul, and so now it's called France after the Franks, which was a Germanic tribe. And then you like the Burgundians were [clears throat] another Germanic tribe that moved into like central France which is now like the province or

region of Burgundy. And then you had the Goths which were another Germanic tribe like the Visigoths conquered let's see they conquered a lot of Spain and like southern Gaul or France. And then the Ostrogoths eventually conquered Italy and what was then called Irkum. Large parts of Irkum. the Vandals who according to many scholars were Germanic. They wound up conquering North Africa after migrating down through Spain and then crossing the straits of Gibralar.

Um so I mean the main difference between the Anglo-Saxon tribes and other Germanic tribes is the Anglo-Saxon ones just happened to to colonize the British

Isles instead of some other place or just staying where they were. But you know they were all similar. They all spoke Germanic languages. They all had similar like related cultures and so forth.

It was just a just through whatever reasons because they were living mainly on the northwest coast of of of Europe and the British Isles were handy that they just conquered that instead of like migrating south across the Rine or the Danube and conquering other Roman provinces.

So, I guess I'll just move on to my Trayab Buddha second question, which is,

[clears throat] did the Germanic tribes believe in reincarnation or rebirth? And I'm really no authority on ancient Germanic religious beliefs. Um, but I do think they had kind of a belief in like proto Valhalla kind of a thing, which would be like an afterlife. So they did [clears throat] believe in an afterlife, especially if you died in battle, you got, you know, the glorious afterlife of a hero. You know, you were like semideified.

Um, but I really don't know what the Germanic beliefs were with regard to people who die in general, you know, like a woman dies in childbirth, what's going to happen to her spirit? Maybe at

least some of the tribes believed in some kind of rebirth. Um, the Ger I keep saying the Germans, the the Romans, they they believed or knew that like the Dians who came from like what is now Romania

uh that general area right across the Danube from the empire that they believed in reincarnation and that made them uh particularly fearless in battle because they didn't fear death the way somebody who just thinks when you're dead you're dead would fear death. But the Germanic tribes, I'm I'm not the best person to ask with regard to their beliefs in what happens after you die

because I've never really been particularly interested despite the muer bead. Never been particularly interested in what the Germanic religions really believed. Like with regard to paganism, I'm much more interested in like Greco Roman classical paganism than or or like Indian paganism which is now called Hinduism than than [clears throat] like what the Germans believed. So maybe some of them did at least under certain circumstances, but I really can't answer that question with any kind of confidence. And so I'm just going to move on to my Treya Buddha's third question, which is how did Germanic

tribes differ from Vikings? Well, the Vikings were Germanic tribes. They were Germanic. They weren't necessarily German. You know, they didn't really come from what is now Germany, but they were Germanic.

And you know, it's like the Germanic peoples or the Germanic language family. It arose from like the corded wear culture of Northern Europe. And like especially as the Roman Empire was collapsing and freshly collapsed sort of like their their ancestral Indo-Europeans they just sort of did this mass expansion so that um you know northern Europe has

languages more based on Germanic

languages than southern Europe which is still is largely based on Latin.

But even like France, I mean the Franks were Germanic. And so the Vikings were just a group of Germanic tribes that developed a certain culture in

Scandinavia mainly like around like I guess it would be like the 8th or 9th centuries where they they started up and you know they conquered large parts of of the British Isles for example. Uh they conquered like the northwestern coast of France which became Normandy because the Normans were Vikings. They conquered even like the island of Sicily. They conquered large parts of

Italy. Um they were they were like the
the first rulers of the the Russian
Empire or the Russian kingdom, the
Russians or whatever you call it.

So there were just a group of Germanic
tribes that arose or at least their
their particular culture of raiding with
dragon ships, you know, just being just
complete badasses, particularly with
regard to infantry. Hard to get hard to
get horses on those dragon ships.

And I have read that the Vikings may
have originally
been feral adolescents that were still
following this prehistoric Indo-Uropean
tradition called the choros. And it's

just fascinating to me when I first learned about this just a few years ago that the Indo-Uropeans, one reason why the Indo-Uropean speaking peoples spread and just conquered so much of the world as they did in ancient times is they had this tradition called the Corios where adolescent boys, like teenage boys who tend to be troublesome to older men anyway, would just essentially be kicked out. I mean, they were still associated with the tribe sort of, you know, they'd eventually come back in in many cases, but they were just like cut loose and they had to just survive as best they could through hunting and probably more

importantly in many cases just raiding other other tribes, you know, raiding non-indo-european villages, that kind of thing.

And so it may be that the Vikings originally before they became really expansionist colonialist, you know, just a power in and of itself, that the first [clears throat] raids on coastlines and so forth were these feral teenagers just surviving by making raids on peaceful villagers.

But then eventually people started the older men started realizing there was like good money to be made from raiding Irish monasteries, that sort of thing.

And so they really took the ball and ran with it until large parts of Europe were essentially ruled by Vikings. But the Vikings

um they are [clears throat] mainly conquering

nations that where they were a tiny minority and they would just sort of like blend in. You know, it's like they lose their Germanic language, you know, they just adopt to a large degree the culture of the people that they they invaded and took over.

[snorts] So, how did Germanic tribes differ? How were they different from Vikings? I mean, Vikings were Germanic tribes. It was just they were a specific

group of Germanic tribes that you know
based in Scandinavia
that uh at first were just making raids
and then eventually just started like
like in like invading and settling
conquering.

[snorts] So we had a few Viking kings of
England or at least of large parts of
England. Um, the Irish were pretty much
ruled by Vikings for a while back in
like the 10th century, you know, back in
the the dark ages, so-called early
medieval times.

So, let's see here. I'm just going to
move on to the next question, which is
from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "Recently, I've been going down an online rabbit hole and seen a bunch of podcasts and videos which claim that Christianity was concocted by Jews as a form of spiritual mind control first to conquer Rome, then the world by getting non-Jews not to become Jews themselves, but to worship their God, accept their mythology and patriarchs, and to make themselves central to the world view of non-Jews, which essentially maintain change the supremacist notion that Jews are God's chosen people, so on and so forth. I was wondering if you could speculate on whether you think these claims have any validity or not. I really don't think

so. I mean I mean somebody who
[clears throat] sees conspiracies
everywhere, you know, it's like
matrixing, you know. It's like a
paranoid psychotic just kind of
specializes in this where, you know,
they they take bits and pieces of
evidence and they can just form this
narrative. I mean, I had a bad trip on
acid back in my 20s where it was like
this. It's like I'm I know from my own
personality what it's like to be a
paranoid psychotic cuz I was paranoid
psychotic for a number of hours and just
anything you see just can fit into this
narrative of the forces of of evil are

being unleashed upon the earth and it's like the final stand the final battle between good and evil and all this.

Fortunately, in my case, I knew I was on drugs. So, it's like, well, I'm just not going to make any final decisions until tomorrow after I've come down, then I'll like look around and decide.

So, that saved me. But like someone who is just kind of born that way or don't know, you know, they they can't be that objective about it. They just go with it. They just believe in it. they're just immersed in this like fictional narrative. Of course, all of us are immersed in a fictional narrative, but um we're largely immersed

in very similar narratives that can sort of interact. Whereas a person who is insane is immersed in a fictional narrative that really is not entirely compatible with the fictional narrative that the sane people are following.

But I mean if the if the Jews really were doing that, they were playing a very long game because when Christianity

I mean it started off as a Jewish movement. I mean the the earliest Christians were Jews and then St. Paul Paul of Tarsus kind of he I mean he definitely wanted to detach Christianity from from Judaism [clears throat] and

it's largely I mean it was more Paul of Tarsus than Jesus of Nazareth that that did that. [clears throat]

Um

but let's see where do I go with this? I mean the Jews were like

they had a really weird position like throughout the Middle Ages. The

Christians despised them as a general rule. But the Jews had this one thing. I mean the Christians it was a sin to

practice usury. For the for Christianity up until modern times it was a sin to

lend money at interest. And so the money lenders tended to be Jews. you know, the

money lenders and bankers and so forth, which helped them to get rich, but also

it caused like the rank and file of Christians in who were [clears throat] the overwhelming majority in Europe at the time to resent these rich Jews, these money grubbing Jews who made money from usury. And so there were lots of massacres and pilgrims, you know, like the crusades. I think it was the first crusade especially that started off with this rabble of of like peasants sweeping through Eastern Europe to get to like Constantinople, you know, in order to continue on their way to the Holy Land. And they're mainly just praying on Jews. You know, Jews really, I mean, the bubanic plague, you

know, in a lot of places it was just people jumped to the conclusion Jews were poisoning the public wells. You know, it's like Jews were Christ killers. They just there was like this hatred of Jews. And one of the main reasons why the Jews even survived the Middle Ages in Europe was that you had like rich lords and nobles who would have to keep Jews protected. You know, they bring them into the the castle walls when there was massacres and so forth because they were damn convenient for lending money and so forth. But then again, even the the nobles, you know, if if they started owing too much money to troublesome Hebrews, then yeah, they

could participate in the massacres themselves.

So, the Jews were really I mean, up until right after World War II, I mean, the first up until like the the second half of the 20th century, the Jews really were like a repressed people. I mean there were some really rich ones you know Rothschilds and that sort of thing but uh yeah they were living a kind of marginal existence up until recently. So the Jews really were playing the long game by converting the Roman Empire to Christianity.

Of course if if the Roman Empire had remained pagan the Jews probably would

have just faded out. They probably would have just gone the route of the Phoenetians. You know their their DNA would still be there. they would have just lost their culture. Like the Vikings lost their culture when they would conquer some southern prosperous European land like Sicily.

So, let's see here. What am I what am I forgetting to answer here?

Yeah, I think that it was just this weird karmic thing that the Roman Empire was just ripe for what Christianity was pedalling.

Um, it did sort of unify the culture of Europe.

Um,

but yeah, I really don't think that it was a Jewish conspiracy to get Western civilization worshipping Yahweh, anything like that. I mean there might have been a few who were kind of promoting that but in general I think it was just this weird quirk um some weird quirk of history or karmic coincidence that caused western civilization to reject their own indigenous spiritual culture and start worshipping a deified Jewish person which has resulted in large cans of worms being opened ever since.

And I'm [snorts] just going to move on to Romeo's next question. As I say, we do have lots of questions this time. So, Romeo is now for something completely different. I feel like I should be like sitting up to my chest in water at a desk while saying that. And now for something completely different. What do you think of Zoron Manni, a radical communist Muslim, being elected the mayor of New York City? Do you think his becoming mayor of America's biggest and most iconic city will supercharge the two ideologies that he embodies, radical leftism and Islam throughout the country?

H [sighs] golly. Um

Zoron Mdani.

Yeah. I mean, he is kind of like the the stereotypical

like Marxist who has possibly never actually done a lick of work in his life. You know, he had rich parents. His mother was some kind of movie producer or something.

And uh I mean with regard to Marxism, I think it was George Will who I never read his column or anything like that, but he did say something that went viral, you know, a few months ago. He says, "It's probably good that M Donnie is has been elected mayor of New York City because every once in a while the

West or Americans in particular need to be reminded that socialism sucks. It doesn't really work. It sounds good in theory to a lot of people, but when it's actually attempted to put into practice, it just flounders and fails.

And so, it could be a good thing that Mom Donnie got elected just because people are going to take another crash course in socialism sucks. It doesn't work. Of course, it could be that I'm just biased and maybe this time socialism will really work. you know, the the governmentrun grocery stores won't have empty shelves and you know, it's like the rent controls and everything won't drive out all the the

bgeoa and just cause New York City to become like London. I mean that's in a way it could be part of the Mandani's plan or the plan of you know his his coaches and everything to turn New York City into another London where the the British people like the the ethnic English people are just leaving so that you have a majority of non-English people in London that will just keep voting for the free stuff and you know the welfare class just kind of takes over.

Um, in America, I really don't think America is is nearly as castrated culturally as England and Europe. And

so, Americans might have a little more resistance when they see just the third world [__] hole, crimeridden [__] hole that New York City is probably going to become even more of now.

So, there is that. I mean, I think that Mam Donny's smug grin is going to begin fading after he starts trying to implement this stuff. And in some cases, he'll have the the political savvy not to keep his promises, which will then cause the radical leftists to start dogpiling him because, you know, he's just going to to some degree in all likelihood just going to turn into like a mainstream Democrat politician. you know, he got got into office by making

all these promises and then, you know, realizes soon enough that keeping those promises isn't very realistic or or really plausible or practical. And so he's going to start backpedaling and, you know, I mean, if he kept all his promises, he would drive out. I mean, Wall Street might relocate to, who knows, Florida or something, you know? It's just there's already like a mass exodus of mainly of white people out of New York City, which to some degree is what mom Donnie would like, I suppose, just so that you have more leftist voters of brown complexion inhabiting New York City. But I mean, where is he

going to get the money? I mean, so long as Trump is president, I think Trump is really going to be dragging his dragging his feet with regard to subsidizing New York City's socialist policies.

So, we're just going to have to wait and see with regard to this the Marxism aspect of New York City's new mayor.

But, I mean, leftists, it's really it's it's it's just amazing to me how the West or like America has has been largely polarized into two alternative realities

where you've got one alternative reality.

That's See if I can find this. I'm just gonna

let's see here.

See if I can find this. Bear with me here for a second while I try to find something. It's a a quote that I found in the Federalist. Here it is.

[clears throat] This is a quote from the Federalist which is kind of stating the position of like the mainstream

like Democrat [clears throat]

leftist in America now. although of

course it's like a a parody is we have

to vote for Democrats because Donald

Trump turned women into handmaids who

don't have any rights at all and have to

be slaves to the brutal Christian

nationalist patriarchy. Because we need

government grocery stores to make food abundant and affordable. Because Donald Trump ordered health insurance costs to double. Because Virginia's state government is going to put an immediate stop to the deportations. because we have to vote against our dictator king who said we're not allowed to have freedom anymore.

[snorts] And I mean there's just a lot of just hysteria, mass hysteria governing both sides, but especially the left because the left is feminized, culturally castrated, and thus more subject to hysteria, which I mean literally comes from the term for uterus, like a hysterectomy.

When Freud actually suggested that men can be hysterical, there were a lot of psychologists in the day who just scoffed at the very idea.

Anyways, with regard to Islam, again,
[clears throat]

Mam Dani is like America's Saudi con now. And I mean [snorts]

[sighs and gasps] I I do think that Americans are going to have less patience with radical Islam than like the English have. One problem with Europe and Great Britain [clears throat] is that a lot of their illegal migrants that were just invited in by the globalists, feminized globalists were

Muslims. You know, they're coming from like North Africa and the Middle East. Whereas in America, the overwhelming majority of illegal migrants who are invited in by the the castrated feminized Democrats were Hispanics that tend to be um [clears throat] like Roman Catholic and more likely to work for a living, more likely more willing to assimilate into maybe a little bit of a Hispanicized American culture, but still it's American culture.

So radical Islam.

Yeah, I'm not sure how radical of a of a Muslim M Donnie is considering that he just like selected an all female

um like a committee for some something
to do with the government of New York
City, which like a a devout radical
Muslim probably wouldn't do. So, he's
like a a woke kind of secularized Muslim
more than a Sharia law kind of a Muslim,
but he'll probably be trying to pander
to the radical Muslims as much as he
can. [clears throat]

Uh, but we're just going to have to wait
and see. I really don't think that
America is in nearly as much danger of
becoming a caliphate as Europe and
England are now
because you just have this ridiculous
hysterical

feminized globalists

who although feminized and woke are

trying are just inviting in mass

just like like mis a misogynistic

culture.

So that like the assaults on women, for

example, have just skyrocketed

in globalist Europe.

I mean, they've kind of skyrocketed to

some degree in America, but that's for a

different reason. That's because you've

got the the feminist globalist activist

judges who just keep releasing black

felons onto the street over and over and

over and over again.

So [sighs]

yeah, we're just going to have to wait

and see what happens with Islam. But I really don't think Islam is going to prosper in America nearly as well as it is apparently prospering in like London where the number one name for baby boys and also in Birmingham is Muhammad. I don't think that's the case in any place in America except possibly Dearbornne, Michigan or maybe a few other little Muslim enclaves that you can find throughout the country.

And I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question. But in in conclusion, I would just say that Zoran Mani, he's he's going to be kind of a [clears throat] accelerationist whether

he wants to be or not. You know, it's like he's bringing the [__] hitting the fan closer to fruition in America, I think. And also the fact that he is a Marxist and that historically Marxism just doesn't work worth a damn. You know, even the the the Communist Party of China really isn't communist anymore because they realize it doesn't compete. So, I [clears throat] think that might actually be a good thing that, you know, it's just like this reminder socialism doesn't work and he's probably not going to be nearly as popular at the end of his term as he is now.

I'm just going to move on this question.

This is from Fake Tig.

And [clears throat] fake Tig says, "I've read the Daoqing many, many times, and it feels like probably the most truest wisdom I have ever read and probably better than all Buddhist sutas combined. You have once said that Lasu is some kind of version of the Buddha, but how come Daoism feels so much more accurate and distinct?" Well, there is a theory that Lasu was not really a historical Chinese person, that he was a mythological figure that possibly was like a garbled version of the Buddha. That that is a theory. I mean, I really don't know. I don't know enough about ancient China to really like throw my

hat in the ring on that one. But why
fake TIG thinks that um
that the Daeq Ching is the most truest
wisdom probably better than all Buddhist
sutras combined and that it feels so
much more accurate and distinct. It's
probably fake TIG thinks more like a
Chinese person than like an ancient
Indian.

So I mean the daoqing you know it's
written for Chinese people and the
Chinese just don't have the same
analytical
mind as ancient Indian philosophers. The
ancient Indian philosophers were
analytical. They wanted to categorize
and analyze, you know, just they wanted

to like work everything out into an integrated system. Whereas the Chinese were more like intuitive kind of like a more poetic way of of thinking about spirituality. You know, even their language is more intuitive because you got to kind of fill in the gaps by thinking like a Chinese person when you know you're you're understanding the Chinese language. You know, Burmese is like that, too. It's a very kind of abbreviated language, so that you have to fill in more gaps than in a language like English.

So, yeah, I mean, I've read the Dao Ching many times in a number of

different translations. I probably got
at least two translations of it on the
on the bookcase back there, maybe three.
Um, and I mean, there there is wisdom in
there. I wouldn't I mean to say that
it's better than all Buddha sutras
combined I I consider to just be like a
wild a wild stretch.

Um, it's just that pro possibly that the
fake TIG just has more of a intuitive
maybe more emotional kind of
understanding of dharma or Dao
and just likes more of a poetic way of
explaining things than getting into like
sort of the [clears throat] radical
uh apeasis
of really early Buddhism like the the

Atakawaga or just the more technical, you know, philosophification of Buddhism that happens shortly afterwards, that sort of thing. You know, it's it's just a matter of personal taste to some degree. How you want your dharma? I mean, you want it like in in blue wrapping paper or red wrapping paper, that kind of thing.

So, the actual question here, let's see, how come Dowoism feels so much more accurate and distinct? cuz probably fake Tig thinks more like an ancient Chinese person than like an ancient Indian person.

I'll just move on to Fake Tig's second

question

after taking another sip of my lukewarm coffee.

Fake Tig says, "I've been practicing for two and a half years now and recently I realized that Yungian psychology is very very spiritual and closely linked to the stages of insight. and I regularly use active imagination and such to navigate things and can you say something about Yung and Yungian metaphysics in that regard? Well, I'm no scholar with regard to Yungian psychology. I do remember that uh Rahm Doss who was a psychology professor at Harvard before he converted to Hinduism where he got kicked out of Harvard for experimenting with

hallucinogenic drugs and went to India and all that. Um he said that with regard to the chakra system in yoga that Freud was just like centered in second chakra sexual stuff whereas Jung was centered in like third chakra. So Rahm Doss apparently didn't consider Yung to be extremely advanced spiritually that he was just kind of a master of third chakra which is you know the highest mundane chakra you know that that the the average like non-spiritual normie you know their first three chakras are open and then above that is still kind of closed you know the the fourth chakra would be the heart chakra which is

compassion and then you get up in the throat chakra And finally, you've got like the the thousand puddle lotus on the crown of the head. That's like full enlightenment, even higher than the third eye, which is the sixth chakra.

Um, [sighs and gasps]

let's see.

What is the question?

Can you say something about Yung and Yungian metaphysics in that regard?

Yeah. Well, I mean, [snorts] Yungian metaphysics, I'm not that

I mean, I never really studied Yung very much. I've read some of his weird stuff on alchemy. He just went down this rabbit hole with regard to like medieval

alchemy. Just wrote book after book on the subject of medieval alchemy. I read some of that. Um I've read like psyche and symbol although I was like maybe 20 years old at the time and it didn't really sink in much. I just remember that I read the book. But uh aside from just archetypes, you know, the the collective unconscious and so forth, I don't really remember much of that. I read I read his answer to Job which was a fairly good critique of the book of Job in the Old Testament. Um but I mean he was more definitely more spiritual than Freud. you know he was more of a spiritual person but still I think he

was this kind of like locked into
mentality intellectuality you know still
still very much immersed in samsara even
though he did write introductions to
Buddhist like the the the Tibetan book
of the dead he wrote a famous
introduction to that he wrote an
introduction to the Buddhist the Tibetan
book of the the great liberation
also known as the yoga of knowing the
mind and its nakedness

So he did write about Buddhism and he
had this idea that a westerner just
can't really become a Buddhist that our
just our whole way of thinking our our
starting assumptions are so radically
different that we can just kind of

dabble in it you know kind of like as
Buddhists but we can't really become
like a real Buddhist and maybe for a
lot of people that's true a lot of
Westerners they just turn Buddhism into
a bunch of leftist gobblelygook

So I mean to some degree that's true but
I don't think that he was completely
correct. I am sure after all this time I
mean there's a lot more western monks in
now than there were in Jung's time.

There's hardly any in Jung's time. So
yeah not all western monks are just like
turning Buddhism into a bunch of western
gobblygook. Some of them are but a lot
of them are not. And I was a western

monk. I think I was a fairly good

Buddhist. I mean, I was still capable of critical thought, you know. I was still more eclectic and skeptical than like the stereotypical Burmese Buddhist who was just faith oriented like a medieval European Catholic.

But

Jung, yeah, I really have not become like a a follower of Jung. I've just read some of his stuff. I've got some Jung on the bookcase there that I might never read because I don't really read books much anymore.

Um,

yeah, and the metaphysics I do think that he was still a little too locked

into

like perceptual stuff like samsara

that to what extent he was able to

detach from samsaric thinking I'm not
sure.

probably some of the viewers, maybe a

lot of the viewers of these Q&As's would

know the answer to that better than I
can answer it.

So, let's see here.

I think I'm just going to move on to

Fake Tig's third question.

And fake Tig says, "My theory about

ultimate reality is that life is a

recording playing on a high techch alien

computer, but everything in the universe

already happened and is just a recording being played back." Well, this maybe why he thinks that Daqing is more wise than all Buddhist sutras put together and watch. Okay. And watched by some alien. What do you think about that theory and that realizing this truth enables you to alter the recording by acting differently? Well, if you can alter a recording by acting differently, it's not much of a recording, is it?

Also, I mean, ultimate reality, no. And ultimate reality would not be any kind of recording or with any kind of aliens or any kind of beings at all. ultimate reality would just be like at best I mean if you want to reify ultimate

reality which Buddhism discourages but
if you want to reify ultimate reality
then it would just be like infinite
formless consciousness the uncarved
block which the Daoqing mentions
numerous times the nameless uncarved
block is right there in the Dao Ching
several times that's what the Dao is
called in the Dao Ching sometimes the
nameless uncarved block.

So that would be ultimate reality. I
mean ultimate reality isn't things
and no kind of distinctions,
no kind of differentiation or papancha.
None of that. Nepapancha or no
differentiation is one of the synonyms

for nibbana in the poly language.

>> [sighs]

>> So, you want to say that that this world is like a simulation in some alien computer? Yeah, that's fairly common belief nowadays. Although, why even bother with aliens? I mean, it's a simulation regardless. It's just that it's a simulation that is one of the infinite possibilities in the nameless uncarved block that Tiqing keeps talking about.

There's no need to drag aliens by the hair if they have hair into the equation.

So

yeah, I'm I really don't think that I

mean you can say that because ultimate reality is this nameless uncarved block that has infinite I mean every possible statue contained within it then the statue if you if you want to call it that the image of this world being recorded in an alien computer with aliens observing the recording or whatever I mean that's one of the possibilities I don't think it would be like one of the statistically most likely possibilities.

But I mean it's it's there. I mean it's it's in the nameless uncarved block.

All possibilities are there. And that's in a way it's it kind of ties in with

the trickster in the paranormal where there is no one ultimate reality because it's mindmade. You know like the first verse of the dhamapata it's mindmade. mind is chief.

So, you know, even with regard to science,

I mean, I've kind of been working on that lately, like science isn't really explaining reality. It's just kind of locking things down and stabilizing our fictional narrative.

[snorts and sighs] So, let's see. Did I answer the question sufficiently to move on to the next one?

Yeah, I suppose so. I'm just going to move on to the next question which is

from Arpad RP A all capitalized. Do you keep the hanging beard braid around danger Oh, you noticed the hanging beard braid. Did you? It's right here.

Arpad says, "Do you keep the hanging beard braid around dangerous machinery at work or do you tie it in a closer knot to avoid freak accidents?" Well, when I was working at a sheet metal shop, this beard braid would be more problematic. where you know you're actually working machines that have like large moving parts and spinning around and so forth. But right now I'm working for a trucking company driving a forklift.

So really almost the only dangerous machinery at work is this fleet of forklifts driving around. And just a few nights ago, it wasn't my shift, it was a different shift where one guy without looking just backs out of a trailer after loading something and this other guy on the dock just slams right into him and just smashes into the windshield. Fortunately, he had his seat belt on.

Um, so I mean the forklift is really the the only dangerous machinery unless you're moving some big machine out of a trailer or into a trailer that could fall over or something. But of course, it's not plugged in. It's not operating.

You know, nothing is spinning around to catch beard braids and so forth. So, when you're driving a forklift, I mean, you know, it's kind of like driving a car. It's not really getting in the way. Sometimes if I'm carrying something, my my facial hairs can kind of get caught in like the banding or something that then pulls hairs, you know, hurts a little bit. But yeah, there's really no danger of having a beard braid at work. I don't use the bead just mainly because I don't want to lose it. I had I had one bead that I was wearing at work and it just fell off without me noticing. So, I lost the bead

and I don't [snorts] want that to happen with this imported muer bead from Ukraine.

[sighs]

[gasps] So, yeah, I just have a rubber band on it and uh there's there's really been no risk involved in having the beard braid or just a long beard.

There's there's some guys at work that have beards longer than me. There's an old guy who works the like graveyard third shift who has he's got like a Santa Claus beard and uh yeah, he's still alive. He hasn't been sucked into any dangerous machines or anything.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Sedarta

Lohachita.

And Sedarta Lohachita says, "I've heard that Myanmar has a sizable area in the Himalayas. According to Google Maps, it's right next to Tibet. What do you know about it? Well, Burma is surrounded by mountain ranges other than just the the south coast, which is ocean. It's the the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean. But like the northeast and west, it's all mountain ranges. So Burma naturally is just delineated you know but with its its coastline and the mountain ranges which you know forms just natural natural boundaries and Burmese is a Tibetto Burmese

language.

So it's it's related to Tibetans and the the the Bama people who before they lived in Burma, they migrated from kind of the northern

[clears throat] um like close to Tibet.

Anyway,

so yeah, northern and uh northwestern Burma um are essentially foothills of the Himalaya mountains.

And the northern the northernmost province of Burma is Kachin state. I guess it would be Kachin. The northernmost state of Burma is Kachin state which has I mean a really low population density. I think it's something like an average of like two

people per square mile in Kachin state probably more red pandas than than Burmese people there. So I mean that's that's nice. And then um in the [clears throat] northwest is Chinstate which is um well that's kind of more west that's also mountainous and you got Naga land of India bordering on the northwest which is mountainous up until like like well into the second half of the 20th century there were still head hunters living in Naga land.

So

yeah, and then and then in the in the east you've got the Shan plateau where the people are are ethnic Shan

which is has the same etymology as Syiam and Assam. So they're more related to the ties than the Burmese. The Burmese are Tibetto Burmese and I think the ties are more closely related to the Mongolians, the Mongols who then migrated south through China into what is now Thailand.

So, I mean, I'm not exactly sure what else to to say about this. It's just that Burma does have mountain ranges all around. And the northern and northwestern mountain ranges are essentially foothills of the Himalayas. Very low population density there. Um, the people there are mostly Christian rather than Buddhist. Mainly because

during British colonial times, you had English missionaries and some American missionaries going out into the remote areas and converting the head hunters. and so forth, the animists to Christianity. And so a lot of the the Burmese army is like recruited from these ethnic tribes in the in the hills, these hill tribes that are more Christian and less pacifistic and also probably less less like sympathetic to the ethnic Burmese that they may be like, you know, rampaging and shooting and so forth. So yeah, Burma and Tibet are they border on each other and um yeah, northern I

mean just the whole outer

perimeter of of Burma that isn't along

ocean is mountains

[clears throat] and then you of course

you've got the the blazing hot lowlands

of central Burma. It's like a furnace in

the hot season, which in early times,

premodern times, was mainly teak forest,

but there's not a whole lot of teak

forest now. It's just like barren

wasteland and farms.

So, I'm just going to move on to the

next question, which is from practice

meta, who's one of the few people who

asks questions on Rumble. And Practice

Meta says, "You have mentioned before

that if you take care of Dhamma, Dhamma

will take care of you. What is dharma in this context? Well, I mean if you like purify your mind and have like purified karma, then good things are going to happen to you. The mind is I mean the world is is generated by mind. So the purer your mind is, the purer the world you're going to live in. If you've got a good mind, you live in a good world. If you have a bad mind, you live in a bad world. If you have a perfect mind, you live in a perfect world.

So that's that's essentially what it means. You know, by practicing dharma, you purify your mind, which purifies the world that your mind is generating. You

know, it's like you're less likely to have bad dreams if you have a pure mind.

So

yeah, that's mainly what dharma is in this context is just cultivating wholesome mental states, purifying your mind, and because your mind is generating the world you live in, you're going to have fewer horrible shitty things happening to you. Although they can still happen, there's no guarantees.

As I keep saying, Mahame Ogalana, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha, was literally beaten to a pulp by an angry mob of non Buddhists.

So, I suppose I answered that well

enough.

I'm just going to move on to practice Meta's next question, which is, how would you describe that same idea to a Christian who may already believe that if they take care of God, then God will take care of them? Well, I mean, if they already believe that, then why would I have to describe the same idea to them other than I mean, it's it's a common belief in religions in general. If you do what God wants you to do, then God will be nicer to you and have good things happen to you. You'll be rewarded. Of course, it always doesn't work that way. This, for example, the

book of Job, book of Job, you know,
Satan, like proto Satan, Satan 1.0 know
is like smiting Job, afflicting him,
causing his kids to die. He's got
diseases, he loses everything. But then
at the end, because um you know,
[clears throat] his faith took a
beating, but it it kept took a licking
but kept on ticking so to speak, then
God rewarded him by giving him new
wealth and new kids, this kind of thing.
So yeah, I mean just any kind of theist,
I mean you do what God wants you to do
and God will reward you. Whereas in in
Buddhism, there is no God like that who
you know curses and blesses and you know
is determining whether we go to heaven

or hell. You know we determine that ourselves. So it's just more a matter of purifying the mind, doing good, avoiding doing evil, that kind of thing.

And then you have good karma which then comes back to you. You know what goes around comes around. You send good out, good comes back. You send bad out, bad comes back.

[snorts] So, I'm just going to move on to practice meta's next question, which is as follows. I'm inspired to pursue ordination sudden in a legal trust and then put a family member in charge of the trust. So if you're going to ordain, you're going to

renounce the world, then I mean why would you put everything in a legal trust unless you're not sure that you want to stay a monk. So I mean technically, especially with regard to money, then this would be cheating because I mean [clears throat] it's still your money. I mean, if you put some a family member in charge of the trust in their name, then I mean, that's kind of it's better than having it in your own name, having it legally still yours, but still, if you're expecting it back, then you haven't really renounced it. I mean, you haven't let go of it. And I mean, I can relate to this. I I had something similar to

this going on when I first became a monk. I had like

I had like a \$7,000 in the bank and a pickup truck. So, I kind of worked out this deal with the the administration that um if I if I bailed within the six months, I'd get the money and stuff back, which was cheating. Technically, I hadn't really renounced it, but I lasted way longer than 6 months. And so, I just relinquished all of it.

And I don't know what they spent the money on. probably blew it on something dumb.

So yeah, I mean it's good that you are inspired to pursue ordination. I

sincerely say sad sadu sod to that. But to put everything in a legal trust and then put a family member in charge of the trust, I mean technically it's cheating. I mean, if you put the family member in charge of the trust, so long as it's in their name, I think legally or technically, you're doing better. But if you're expecting it back, you know, even potentially, then I mean, if you're doing it in order to be able to get it back, then you haven't renounced it. It's like a fake renunciation.

I mean, you might want to put a time limit on on it like I did. You know, if you're still a monk after a year or

something, then at least at some point you'll stop cheating.

It is understandable though if you're not 100% sure just But but still, I mean, it's kind of an impure renunciation. It's not a real genuine renunciation. if you still got strings attached to your money and so forth.

[snorts] Reminds me of there was this French monk who was a disciple of of Ajan Cha way back in the day. He had been a monk for more than 30 years when I met him and he had rich parents who died and left him this inheritance of I mean he was a rich monk and so he spent quite a lot of time trying to work out

some way of like having a a novice who would handle you know handle finances and so forth but then he realized I mean it's you're not even really a monk if you're doing that so he dropped out and then I heard just maybe a couple years later he dropped back in again I don't know what he did with the the inheritance that he inherited from his rich parents.

But uh really I mean if if you're going to really be a real genuine monk, you have to really genuinely renounce the world. And that's can be tricky. You know, it's it's sort it's always been difficult. I mean, it's not just Buddhists. It's sort of like, you know,

there's that scene in the New Testament where you have this rich Jewish guy goes to the Buddha and or goes to the Buddha. goes to Jesus. Rich Jewish guy goes to Jesus and says, you know, I follow all the commandments and I I donate [clears throat] onetenth of my my wealth to the poor and you know, I try to be a good good Hebrew and all that. Is there anything else I should do? And then Jesus says, well, sell all that you have and give the money to the poor and follow me. And then the the rich Jewish guy walks away grieving because he's [clears throat] still so attached. you know, he's trying to be do everything

right, but then when it comes to actually renouncing these attachments, then no, because he wanted to be a good Jew within the context of what you know, his own comfort zone, which I mean, it's the comfort zone is one of the attachments that you have to get rid of. I suppose you have to relinquish or renounce as best you can. So I mean that's really what going forth from the home life into homelessness entails is just getting rid of all safety nets and you just throw yourself on the mercy of the universe and if you are protecting dharma dharma protects you it holds you up. Now again it's like it reminds me of

what Krishna Murdy says in one of his books Jay Krishna Murdy where you know he says that you've got a like a a gardener he's got a flower garden and one flower is different from all the other ones you know it's sort of like a mutant it's like a different color or something and Christian Miy says the gardener is going to pay special attention to that one he's going to take special care of that unusual one and that's kind of the way it works for spiritual people too It's like a a genuinely spiritual person who just sort of defies his own self-preservation instincts to some degree by just

throwing himself on the mercy of the universe. He's like that mutant flower and then the powers of the universe, not necessarily Jehovah God Almighty, but there's just the powers of the universe are going to protect that person to some degree.

Or maybe the aliens watching the simulation will be particularly interested in that alien. So they make or in that simulated human. So they'll make sure that one doesn't get killed off because that one's like an interesting one.

I think I'm just going to move on. Next question now. This is from Philly's and Phil Ley says, "What's your favorite

wild mammal?" Well, it's not the Sasquatch because I do not consider a Sasquatch to really be a legitimate mammal. I do believe Sasquatches are paranormal. Which reminds me that just the other night I dreamed that I was in tropical Asia wandering down this forest trail and it was like where I lived was you had to turn left and I turned right. It was very faint like a game trail and I wound up in this village where the people thought I was a Sasquatch. In Burma a Sasquatch is called a seay but they weren't afraid of me. They were they kind of honored me as like wow we had a real Sasquatch show up in our

village. So they were like providing me with a place to stay and you know providing me with food and all this you know I was sort of like the some kind of pagan idol.

But my favorite wild mammal let's just get back to the the actual question here. Um, [clears throat] I think my totem animal, like if if I were like a a wild mammal, I wouldn't mind being like a mountain goat, you know, like the the white shaggy mountain goats of America, not necessarily the mountain goats of Europe who are that are different like an Ibeck or something.

The the the American mountain goat is uh it's it's always been one of my favorite

mammals. And my father says it's it's the best the best eating meat he ever had, but that's that's a whole different story, I guess. So, yeah, let's favorite wild mammal. Let's just go with uh the the American mountain goat.

And let's see. So, Phily's second question. What would you choose as your heraldic emblem or coat of arms in the case you were kned? So, that'd be Sir Pobasa.

Um

well I mean with regard to all the technical heraldry stuff I really don't know you know whether I wouldn't have like the bar sinister or anything like

that and um no flur dees I don't want any of those but I mean just the two animals that are kind of you know they're they're rampant you know they're kind of going like this on either side of the shield. I'd want it like a giant squid on one side maybe the mountain goat on the other side. And I mean, we could work out the details of what's on the shield later after I've studied up on heraldry and what would be appropriate in my case. You know, you got to look back into my ancestry and see if there are any heraldich emblems or coats of arms in my family already that I could uh recycle to some degree with, you know, like the the

squid and the analopee or the the mountain goat. Then the American mountain goat is is actually I think it's the genus is antelope capra which is antelope goat. So it's sort of like a uh sort of intermediate between a genuine goat and an analopee.

Well that's that's neither here nor there. But the the goat and the antelope or the the the giant squid possibly an octopus some kind of cephalopod mollusk.

Anyway,

[snorts] and I'm just going to move on to Phily's next question.

says, "I like when you rub your hands at the start of the video before you dig

into the questions, so to speak. Could you do that before every question, before every question?" I I think people would start accusing me of being anti-Semitic, especially if I kind of hunch over and I'm going like this before answering the questions.

So, yeah, in order to avoid accusations of being anti-semitic.

I mean, why do they choose anti-semitic though? I mean like semmites technically an Arab like the Muslim world is largely Semitic too. So it's like the the Hebrews have sort of they've sort of monopolized

Shem [clears throat]

son of Noah

as their ancestor and have pretty much
ignored [clears throat]

the other Semites like Arabs for

example. Phoenicians were Semmites.

Syrians were Semmites. Babylonians were

Semmites. But if you hate Babylonians,

you're not considered to be an

anti-semite, which is kind of odd to me.

[snorts]

[sighs and gasps]

So, let's see. I guess I'm just going to

move on. Next question. This is from I

don't know how to pronounce German

names. I'm probably better at German

names than French ones, though. So,

let's rect

something like that. I think it means right view in German. And he says, "Do you consider Buddhism an atheistic religion?" I don't. Well, that's that's him saying, "I don't." Yet, this is still often claimed by Christians and even sometimes by Buddhists themselves, although for the definition, you only need to look at the Wikipedia article on the subject as though the Wikipedia is like the ultimate authority on such things. When actually, it's it's the dictionary. Let's just look up atheist in the dictionary here. A person who disbelieves or lacks belief in the existence of God or gods. So it's got capital G god or small G gods. And that

definitely would not apply to Terravada Buddhism or Buddhism in general because especially Terravada. Let's just stick with Terravada.

The I mean obviously they believe in small G gods. They don't believe in the capital G god. You know, you've got Brahma Sahampati who is sort of like the the the overlord of this sector of of of the galaxy

and then you've got Mara who's sort of like the overlord of Samsara in general. But even they don't live forever.

They're not capital G gods. They're just small G gods. I mean, even a small G god could live forever. For example, in

classical paganism,

um not necessarily. You can still kill a small G god, you know, like Dian Isis was killed but then got revived for example.

[clears throat]

So I mean if Buddhism does accept the existence of small G gods who are not immortal even though they might live for gajillions of years.

Um but with regard to like a creator capital G god

Terra Buddhism doesn't believe in that.

I mean like some Mahayana Buddhists have essentially turned the Buddha into a capital G god pretty much the way the Christians turned Jesus of Nazareth into

a capital G god but terra Buddhism
doesn't go there. So [clears throat]
um Terra Buddhism is atheistic and
probably the original teachings of the
like historical Gotama Buddha they were
not theistic you know there's no posited
capital G god who is like the creator
and even like the way the theists
talk about God as just ultimate reality
that Buddhism doesn't go there either at
least not early Buddhism

So Buddhism is atheistic in the sense
that it doesn't like
assert the existence of a capital G god,
but it I mean there's there's sutras
where the Buddhist is like making fun of

people who believe in a capital G god,
especially an anthropomorphized one.

Like there's [clears throat]

Buddha says, the Buddha says in one of
the sutas, a person who like worships
capital G God is like a man who's in
love with the most beautiful woman in
the world. And so then you ask him,
well, is this most beautiful woman in
the world? I mean, is she tall? Is she
medium size? Is she short? And the
person who's in love with her says, I
don't know. And then so it's like, well,
what is what's her complexion like? I
mean, is she dark? Is she like medium
tone? Is she like pale? And then again,
the guy's I don't know. And so it's like

how can you be in love with the most beautiful woman in the world if you have no idea what she looks like? You've never met her before. And that he's sort of comparing like a monotheist, you know, a person who believes in some capital G god to this where I mean they have no concept. They don't even know who it is or what it is that they're worshiping or they just have some kind of childlike primitive sort of understanding of what what capital G god is like. Because of course, you're never going to understand what capital G god is like any more than I mean much less than say a hamster is going to

understand what a human is like

or an ant is going to understand what a human is like.

So yeah, Buddhism is atheistic in the sense that it doesn't posit a capital G creator God who is sending us to heaven and hell and all that or even like

Brahman which is like the underlying essence of reality. They don't even

early Buddhism doesn't even go that far.

But it does believe in small G gods that are just beings that are higher than us on the scale. You know, they're they're more powerful than us. They live longer than us. They live in a better world than we do. You know, no old age and sickness and all that. Probably no

crime. Not much anyway. Maybe some white collar crime or something.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on to Rea.

Next question.

He says, "Once I have sent a German flag for the Mutodia Monastery in Franconia, Bavaria, they didn't hang the flag without reply even though it was a gift from me, a supporting member. Despite this, Thai flags or pictures of the Thai king or queen are still frequently displayed at festivals. This bothered me as they should really be spreading Buddhism on European and American soil. Thai or Burmese Buddhism could still

serve as a model. Or am I mistaken?

Well, I really don't have a lot of experience with Thai monasteries. I've spent just a few weeks living at Thai monasteries, but maybe a week at a Thai monastery in America.

And so, um, I I I know a lot more about Burmese monasteries in Burma and also in America. And probably it's not all that different that most Burmese monasteries in America are more cultural centers than monastic centers. The monks there are more

I mean they're not really renouncing the world and striving for enlightenment. I mean to some degree they're trying to be

missionaries but even more than that
that they are just sort of like the
cultural

like secular clergy for the immigrant
communities and so so it's like a
cultural center and like Burmese

Buddhists in California will go to the
local you know rented house in the
suburbs that with the monks living there
and they go there to speak Burmese and
eat Burmese food and do Burmese cultural
rituals and so forth. It just makes them
feel happy and at home. And I don't
know, they might not be opposed to
putting up an American flag, but yeah, I
mean, they don't really go to a

monastery in order to feel American, you know? They they're they're like homesick. They want to feel Burmese. And I don't know what it's what it's like in Germany. It's like just like leftists in America consider the American flag, some leftists in America consider the American flag to be just like a symbol of fascism or some such. And in Germany, it might even be more masochistic and self-hating just due to, you know, the the house painter with a little mustache in relatively recent history and so forth and just the fact that Europe has been more castrated than America has been. So yeah, I [snorts] mean they might

consider the German flag to be controversial or political or something in a way that the Thai flag isn't because the Thai flag is just more of a cultural thing. Something like that.

Let's see.

Yeah. And it's true that that Thai monks and Burmese monks in the west should be trying to spread Buddhism, but Burmese monks in the west generally are not extremely successful because they just bring all this Burmese cultural luggage with them. Their belief system, you know, they they they'll be like I think it was Tom Pulii. I think I've heard that Tom Puliano sometimes would include in

his talks that the earth is flat and so forth, which back in the 1970s was not as acceptable as it is now that you have like the internet and all the conspiracy theory channels and so forth promoting the flat earth.

So yeah, I mean if you accept everything the way a a Burmese Buddhist monk, you know, they're very dogmatic, you know, it's just sort of medieval in their approach to religion, just this faith oriented, accept everything. It's all the sacred word of Lord Buddha. Then, oh, I just noticed that I haven't got the aquarium fully in the shot.

then I mean it's it's just not as successful because a lot of Americans,

you know, they'll listen to a discourse that even I mean it might even just be like in broken English because the monks may not have mastered the English language or even the translator has not mastered the English language and they're just hearing all this stuff that they consider to be like fairy tales that it just doesn't really make a lot of converts except for just really faithoriented people. you know, they've got way more sadda than pa, you know, in the in the among the the five indrias, the five faculties. You should have your faith and your your reason in balance. And the the Burmese have more faith than

reason in many cases. And Americans tend to be more reason than faith in many cases, especially with regard to American Buddhists. And it just doesn't work very well. as a general rule. I mean, every once in a while you'll have some Seattle or Ajan who is Asian, but nevertheless, they can appreciate the western point of view. Like Seattle Usilananda in California was like this. You know, he spoke perfect American English, no detectable accent. And you know, he he was an intellectual and you know, he studied sort of western and eastern approaches to to life in general. So he had quite a few western followers but most like Asian

missionaries who come to the west don't get a lot of followers mainly because they just there's like the culture barrier that gets in the way.

And so it turns out, regardless of the initial intention of founding a monastery, it turns into like an ethnic cultural center where people go to speak their ethnic language, eat their ethnic food, do their ethnic ceremonies, and so forth.

And German flags and American flags really don't fit into that picture very well.

I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Jules.

And Jules says, "Do you have any personal experience of shingles?" and shingles here. He's not referring to the roofing material. He's referring to the herpes

uh outbreak. I think I think the herpes virus is essentially chickenpox. So, what happens is you get chickenpox when you're a kid and then the the the virus remains dormant in your body. I think it's like in your your tailbone or something.

And then later as you get older, it can reappear in the form of shingles, which is a painful inflammation of a nerve that's on your back, I think, in most cases,

and it's extremely painful. So, I'll just get back to Jules's question after explaining what I'm what what he's referring to with regard to shingles. Jules says, "Do you have any personal experience of shingles? One of the common triggers can be physiological or psychological stress causing the dormant virus to reawaken as monkhood seems to be an embrace of this kind of thing. I wonder if it's something you saw frequently among the various SAS you were acquainted with. And then parenthesis he says I currently have shingles and it [_] sucks. Well, I remember when I first was

ordained, I'd been ordained as a monk for just about 6 months and my a the abbot of our monastery, my preceptor, venerable linet, got shingles and it was very painful

from what I was told. And then when I was living in Burma, I don't I don't know if I still have the scar on my back, but I had been in Burma for maybe 15 years at the time, and I apparently got a mild form of shingles. It was it was um like [clears throat] a herpes outbreak on my back and very very painful. It wasn't very big though. It was only a like 3 in long.

So, it wasn't like as big and inflamed as some people's shingles can be. And it

was painful, but I mean it was easily survivable in my case. And I did get get did get the cream or the you know the the medicated cream. It's better than pills. I mean, if you're going to like doctors will try and give you pills, but I mean, you're better off just applying it directly to the to the affected lesions than just taking a pill which dilutes it all through your body.

But yeah, I do think I had a mild case of shingles after I'd been a monk for like 15 years in Burma, something like that.

And uh I don't know if you if you can get the shingles more than once. You can

only get chickenpox once maybe. I mean, with regard to viral diseases, usually there's a good in many cases, you can only get it once. I mean, even the common cold, they say you can only catch the same cold twice. It's just that the cold virus mutates in different strains and then you can get different strains of of the cold.

And speaking of cold, my coffee is now officially cold.

So,

yeah. I mean, you you can experience psychological stress as a monk, although you're you're better equipped to deal with it. You know, in some cases, you're just kind of allowing it to happen and

then you're being practicing
mindfulness. So, you're like denaturing
it as it arises. You know, by just
mindfully observing it from a detached
perspective, then really you're
isolating it. It's not you anymore. It
doesn't have the same power over you as
if you're just a normie immersed in some
saric pseudo reality that stuff just
hits you and you just sort of take it at
face value. Believe it's ultimately
real. Don't don't detach from it. You
know, it's just, oh [__] I got this
sore knee or whatever it is. You know
that you as a monk, you have better
you're better equipped, especially if

you're able to practice dhamma wisely. I mean, if you're just like in the medieval um medieval European saint mode where you're just repressing, you know, you're just being saintly as AF and you're not really being mindful or detaching from stuff as it arises.

You're just kind of trying to repress it all and just keep your thoughts pure and all that, then yeah, you could be a hysterical basket case.

But if you're really practicing mindfulness sati batana correctly or somewhere you know I'm approximation of correctness then really as stuff arises you I mean more stuff may be arising more subtle stuff that you don't usually

wouldn't even notice but still it's just
mindful detachment you're kind of
denaturing it depriving it of its motive
force as it arises and so
psychologically you can way more healthy
as a monk than as a lay person who's
just immersed in this dream state
consensus trance as Charlie Tart used to
call it.

So yeah, I mean if you're trying to be
like abnormally saintly then you can
just be like a hysterical basket case.

But I mean, if you're still like in
harmony with your own nature, your own
personality, but just as stuff is
arising, you're just in the habit of

mindfully noting it, then you're on a lot firmer ground. You're doing a lot better and you're less likely to be a hysterical basket case with lots of psychosomatic

symptoms arising. I certainly had some psychosomatic symptoms arise. The main one was it's called dyspnea. It's like an irregularity in breathing that I looked it up in a medical guide and I was kind of humiliated,

shamed to see that in almost all cases it is a hysterical conversion reaction which is psychosomatic.

It's like I mean it's kind of triggering now just thinking about it where it's like you forget to breathe enough and

then it's like you need to take like
this deep breath like a sigh and it's I
have to feel like a stretching feeling
in my sternum as as my chest expands in
order to like turn off the trigger.

Otherwise, I just have to keep taking
deep breaths. And at at its worst, when
I was a monk living in Burma, like under
the rock ledge, it could wake me up at
night just having to take this deep
breath where you sometimes you'd have to
like twist your body a little bit to be
able to inhale deeply enough to like
turn off the urge again.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> But still, if you're practicing

correctly, you should be psychologically healthier than the average lay person. I mean, that's pretty much the purpose of becoming a monk is to become sane.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Stellar Supreme at all. He is legion. He has many names. He says, "If you had to give a quick answer on the fundamentals of Buddhism to someone who was really serious about being a lay Buddhist, but who was in need of more grounded practical guidance, what would your message to them be?" Well, like very simple would be like the verse in the Dhamapata right here.

Just so happens I happen to have a

bookmark right there and it's uh verse 183 of the dhamapara which is as follows to avoid all evil to cultivate good and to cleanse one's mind. This is the teaching of the Buddhas.

So do good avoid doing evil and purify your mind. I mean that would be just like base basic based Buddhism.

But of course you also bear in mind you know karma or second noble truth I mean just always be aware the second noble truth whenever you are unhappy it is because you desire something just knowing that much just like not just knowing it in an intellectual way but really taking it to heart so that you

know when the [_] is hitting the fan I mean you're still sort of you don't just forget all of your Buddhist philosophy when you're freaking freaking out and also just knowing that regret and remorse, a guilty conscience is always bad karma. Um, you know, have compassion. Don't just be don't indulge in cruelty. You know, don't try to derive pleasure from others suffering, that sort of thing.

catch the spider with the the cup and the the piece of cardboard and let it go outside instead of just squishing it.

So, how quick of an answer does this person need? See, I I have to read the question again. Now, if you had to have

a you had to give a quick answer on the fundamentals of Buddhism to someone who was really serious about being a lay Buddhist, but who was in need of more grounded practical guidance,

what would your message to them be?

Yeah. Well, the purifying your mind, do good, avoid doing evil, purify your mind. And purifying your mind involves mindfulness, awareness of the second noble truth. You know, if you want to practice meditation regularly, so much the better. try to practice mindfulness of everyday activities, mindful walking, mindful driving, mindful drinking of beverages,

that sort of thing. That's fine. I'm not sure how how quick of an answer you need, though. I mean, if it's like an X 128 characters or whatever, then yeah, I think we're already over the limit.

Yeah.

Do good, avoid doing evil. Purify the mind and be aware of the second noble truth and never I mean be aware that this is not ultimately real. I mean that's that's a good one. Be aware that you're in a kind of dream. You're in the matrix.

Just keeping that in mind so that you're not just completely immersed just completely lost in samsara. That that's always kind of like you know something

to bear in mind that kind of helps keep you grounded.

And then the way to get out of the matrix is to wake up, which also is just a matter of detaching and just detachment and mindfulness. Mindful detachment.

So, [snorts and sighs]

I don't know if that was a good answer.

It would depend on the person you're trying to tell this to. I guess people are different. I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Xenithoid. And Xenithoid says, "Is Buddhism compatible with pansychism andor pantheism?" Well, pantheism like

we're already mentioning, I mean, pantheism is like everything is God. And Buddhism does not believe in a capital G god. It does not posit the existence of a capital G god. Partly you could say through um apeasis. It's like anything you say about the absolute is bound to be invalid. So you just don't even go there. It's not it's not necessarily uh like a denial. It's just you don't assert it because any assertion is going to be ultimately or even relatively invalid.

So you just don't even go there. So once you posit pantheism, you are positing capital G god. And that is not what early Buddhism did. Even though later

Buddhism does all kinds of weird things.
So let's just set aside pantheism and go
with pansychism.

And a lot of you may not know what
pansychism is. And I already looked it
up in the dictionary. It's a noun. And
it says pans psychism is the doctrine or
belief that everything material, however
small, has an element of individual
consciousness. So I'm not sure if if
that would mean that everything material
really isn't material, that it's a
manifestation of consciousness, or is it
allowing the possibility that physical
matter really does exist? It's just that
it's all got consciousness, you know,

like a hydrogen atom. It really does exist.

and it's it's conscious.

So, I mean, I'm I'm kind of a pansychist. I think that because the universe is a manifestation of consciousness, everything in the universe, including a hydrogen atom, is like it has a kind of primordial consciousness to it. Like what is called energy in physics, I would equate with consciousness.

that what a physicist calls energy is just an extremely primordial elemental form of what a psychologist calls consciousness. I think that could be like the next capernicon revolution if

if it hasn't already become incorporated into science. I mean obviously the other way around what a psychologist calls consciousness is I mean clearly um just a very complicated form of what a physicist would call energy. So once you just make the equation the other way, just turn it into an equation where consciousness equals energy, then there you go. And empty space, according to some some uh theoretical physicist, empty space contains zero energy and infinite energy depending on how you do the math.

So I think Buddhism, especially like Mahayana Buddhism, would be compatible

with pansychism. I mean like the yoga
chara school, the mind only school. It's
like I mean they're essentially saying
there is no physical matter that it's
all just a the world is just generated
by our karma and everyone's a kind of
Libnitzian monad

although you don't really have to know
what that means which is good because I
don't think I'm really inclined to
explain libnitian monads.

You can you can just look up monodology
and see what it says in whatever source
of info you're looking it up in. But
yeah, I think Buddhism is compatible
with pansychism

so long as you're just using it as a

kind of working hypothesis. If you cling to it, it's I mean it just becomes bad Buddhism right there. Anything that you cling to becomes the problem instead of you know the cure. It becomes the sickness.

And I guess there's going to be a question a question kind of along those lines a little later on but like Ajan [clears throat] Chai used to say even right view becomes wrong view if you cling to it

so if if you just become convinced I mean that becomes something that you are clinging to then that's the problem regardless of whether it could be

considered true or not

but I [snorts] do think that Buddhism is compatible with a kind of loosely held openhand pans psychism but not so much with pantheism because pantheism does assume the existence of a capital G god which is a no no in early Buddhism.

So I'm just going to move on to xenithoid's next question here and make sure we are really recording. Yeah. and I closed all unnecessary tabs on my computer so that we're not lagging as we do in in some some previous Q&As's when I did not close out all the extra tabs and apps and so forth. So anyways, Zenithoid, bless his heart, says, "Would a pansychist understanding of

consciousness provide a good foundation for reincarnation without an overarching self?

Um, [clears throat] just right off the bat, I wouldn't wouldn't see how it would necessarily influence a belief in reincarnation. I mean, yeah, I mean, if if everything is is imbued with consciousness, then I don't know. I mean, certainly pansychism wouldn't necessitate reincarnation or rebirth.

Um,

I mean, what really is the good foundation for rebirth is just the idea of the the psychic momentum of karma

because that's what causes rebirth, the psychic momentum of karma, regardless of whether a hydrogen atom is conscious or not. So, I think pansychism is kind of irrelevant to the idea of rebirth

because you could have rebirth or not have rebirth either way with or without pansychism

seems to me. And so, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Fred.

And Fred apparently

while when I was at work one night sent me some kind of like a video

message or conference call or something

that I couldn't really respond to cuz I was at work and then it turns out I

don't even have the app fully set up on my phone or anything like that. So if Fred is watching this, he probably is at some point then. Hi, Fred. And uh I kind of got the message sort of the message that you had a message, but I I'm not even sure how to like respond to that on my phone because I don't even think I have it completely set up.

Anyways, Fred says, "Why are women such control freaks?"

And I assume what he means by women being control freaks is that they try to control their man or try to just sort of keep everything stable and predictable and so forth. And I assume one reason

for that women are less risk averse than or they're they're more risk averse than men and they're just kind of more um insecure. That that is like one of the fundamental psychological differences between men and women just as a general trend. Men tend to be more confident and be less fearful than women. And that's maybe one way that that nature in the past, like in the stone age, made sure that a woman would gravitate towards a man for security. Women are more security oriented. Men are more freedomoriented. And freedom and security are practically at opposite ends of a spectrum. So women will try to control their man.

And they'll try to keep everything safe and secure and predictable just because they are emotionally less secure, less confident, you know, more timid and fearful

than men are in general. And that includes them trying to control their man. And that's sort of like a perennial kind of source of interpersonal friction between men and women. You know, a man and a woman live together. the woman will be trying to control the man and but and if she succeeds she'll get a certain satisfaction from that but she will lose respect for the man. So that's something

that men have to bear in mind. I mean, if a woman is trying to, you know, guess do this, don't do that, do this, don't do that all the time, then if you go along with that, I mean, sometimes it's just common courtesy. You want to have harmony in your relationship and so forth. But, I mean, if you just become like this beta cuck of a guy, just obedient and docile, then I mean, you might have fewer arguments.

You know, she might be angry at you less of the time, but she's just not going to have the same respect for you as if you stand your ground on what you feel strongly about sometimes.

You know, you still have to be a man

with a backbone. So, and that involves you're going to have the woman you love pissed off at you sometimes or just dissatisfied with you.

But I mean, if a woman gets like feminists, if they got everything they wanted, they still wouldn't be satisfied. They'd probably be even more miserable than they are now.

It's just weird.

And I should uh just move on to the next question here before people start accusing me of being not only an anti-semite, but a misogynist as well.

There are some very attractive Jewish women in this world though, I have to

admit.

See here, Fred's second question. Are Terraata rules just man-made? Well, I mean, who else would make them? Who else would make five precepts, for example? I mean, you could say that the [clears throat] five precepts, they they are they have a grounding in empiricism that, you know, you're more likely to have unskillful mental states and bad karma and get farther from enlightenment by indulging in killing and stealing and lying and and adultery and drunkenness than if you don't. So I mean there is some empirical objectivity involved but still the rules are man-made all every single one of them.

It's man-made.

So [snorts]

that [clears throat] was kind of an easy one. And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ruie.

And we're going to be well over two hours on this one as I kind of tried to warn you but I mean some people just don't listen.

Uh, and if I really I mean I'm running out of cold coffee and if I really do need an emergency backup beverage, I might have to start drinking aquarium water.

So that could be, you know, I could get a few clicks for that one. Anyways, Ruie

says, "As [clears throat] far as you know or can recall, are there any scriptural or canonical basis for the story of God's six years of austerities?" Yeah, it's Yeah, there's some basis. I mean the actual number is six years. I mean it's it's got to be in there somewhere. I do not recall exactly but for example there's the Mahasi Nada Suta. I think it's in the Majimminaya which I mean I don't consider it to be an authentic original teaching the historical Buddha because he is just bragging big time. I mean, he makes he makes Donald Trump look like completely self-abasing and modest in this suta because he's just whatever other

aesthetics did. I did more than that. You know, it's like he'd go for weeks without eating anything or he'd just eat like this tiny seed when he would eat and just all the aesthetic practices that were done like by Ajivacas and James and so forth, he did it at an even higher level, you know. So he is just essentially just bragging in grandiose terms about how aesthetic he was when he was going through his austerity. And I assume there is some I probably I mean the exact number of six years. I mean that could be just sort of a later you know later legend you know just they didn't know exactly how long it was so

they just settled on six years and it just became established in the tradition that it was six years sort of like you know the 6 million number with regard to you know events in the mid 20th century that you know it's just there were various numbers in the earlier books and then somehow people just settled on 6 million and you know it just became sort of established as the as the legend.

But I don't want to be accused of being an anti-semite by saying that. So let's see here. Yeah, I mean definitely in the the sutas including old sutas there are mentions [clears throat] of the Buddha practicing severe austerities and probably even six years but I don't

recall exactly where the number is given but like in the Buddha wamsa which is another late text where it's given just sort of like a bio biographical sketch of previous Buddhas comparing them to our Buddha, our historical Gotama Buddha that most of the early legendary Buddhas there there's austerities lasted maybe just a matter of a few weeks or months that Gotama Buddha partly because he's historical like a real human uh he went through a longer austerity had a much shorter stature of only 27 feet and a much shorter lifespan you know he didn't live 80,000 years like some of the other ones did.

But yeah, I do think that probably in the the actual biography, you know, of God Buddha, you know, the Shakyamuni that he probably did really try to become enlightened through just the traditional means at hand at the time.

And there were two main traditional means. There was like the cultivation of like jhnic states and austerity or just like self- torture really you know like the Jains and the Ajivakas I mean they just looked down their noses on strict Buddhists because they they considered strict Buddhist just be shavenheaded householders you know they got to wear sandals you know they got to use a walking stick when

they got old you know they got they had to own stuff instead of just wandering around naked and begging for food in their cup hands.

So yeah, there's definitely a scriptural canonical basis for the dukaracharia that the you know, it's like the Buddha was going through such severe austerities that the gods didn't know whether he was dark complexioned or golden complexioned or fair complexion. You know, there's mentions of the Buddha, I mean, in the sutta saying that he was so emaciated that if he rubbed his arm like this, the hairs would just break off. And if he if he grasped his

belly, he could feel his spine, that kind of thing. He was just so emaciated. So yeah, definitely it's in the sutas. The exact number of years I assume is in the sutas, too. Although I didn't really do my homework and try to find the exact mention of six years of severe austerities, but the severe austerities are well established in the texts. And it's I would consider it likely that it's based on on what really happened within the context of the virtual reality of Samsara and the uncarved block of marble and all that. And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Jim Lad. And Jimad says, "When meditating in Myanmar

alone in a cave, how did you not lose
your mind in isolation?"

And [laughter]

I'm I'm just sort of a loner by nature.

Like

just last night, my brother called me
from Thailand. And I mean, I just run
out of stuff to talk about, you know? I
just become like monosyic within like
half an hour or so just because I'm just
not a social person. My my woman, which
this is good, she's pretty much the same
way. like we we haven't had company come
to our house in over a year aside from
her mama. We haven't gone visiting to
anybody else's house in well over a year

either. It's just we're not sociable people. You know, we're we're relatively self-contained.

And I was like that even more so as a hermit in Burma.

I mean, I didn't lose my mind in isolation because

when I was in isolation, I'm just observing my mind all the time. So you don't lose it when you're when you're looking at it closely all the time. It's it's right there, right?

But I mean a lot of people like I've read that like in prisons there are hardened criminals who fear solitary confinement much more than they fear any kind of physical punishment because like

a sociable kind of person a person who really maybe doesn't have a strong enough mind or they're just not like accustomed to their mind reinforcing their own existence. you know they need social interaction so that other people's perceptions of them helps to like stabilize them in this world and a lot of people I mean it's like their main self concepts are largely based on the opinions of others you know if other people have a low opinion of them they have a low opinion of themselves because these other people have a low opinion of them and then if they get praised by another person all of a sudden they're

elated you know whereas in my case like
praising and blame. I've always been
largely immune to that. I mean, when
you're a kid and you hear your dad like
bragging about you to his his sister or
something, yeah, you feel good. You want
to hear that. That's nice. But like
people blaming me, I mean, calling me
names or something. It's like I know
myself way better than they do. It's
like in some cases, if they know you
fairly well, they're making an
observation that maybe you don't want to
you don't want to see that about
yourself. That kind of thing. That
happens all the time. Sure. But if
someone on the internet, you know, they

just see it some statement I've made and then, you know, call me like a fake Buddhist or whatever, you know, just a fool, a charlatan, this kind of thing, a Nazi. I mean, it has no effect. And I mean, I'm just self-contained. I know. I create my own reality without requiring the help of other people to keep me going. Unlike the cherry barbs in that tank back there, I was I I have this theory now. I have I've been having sick cherry barbs over the past few months and a few of them have died. And it's one reason I don't think this is the only reason, but one reason is that I can't really tell them apart. They

don't really have a personality like the gouramis do. You can I can tell all the gouramis apart. Each one has their own name, but these cherry barbs, they all look the same. And so I just kind of lost interest in them. I wouldn't be like watching them the way I'd be watching the gouramis and the other the other creatures in there. I've got some really nice ammono shrimp in there now that they they're just kind of undulating, you know, like their pleopods are like going like this all the time. It's really cool. But getting back to the cherry barbs, I just kind of almost had like an aversion for them and then they started getting sick. And it

may be that again it's like the person who doesn't have a mind attuned to being self-sufficient to be an island under themselves. They need this attention to kind of keep them going. Of course, that doesn't explain how wild cherry barbs survive.

But still, I do think there's let's it helps to explain like why children and some dogs like some of our dogs, they're just so greedy for attention, you know? They just crave human attention because it's given them something, you know, it's like reinforcing their existence to some degree. So, I think I I really need to to like bless my my cherry barbs more

and send meta to them. And I really do think that it that it will help them in their their like poor health or whatever it is that's been affecting them lately.

>> [snorts]

>> So I'm just completely wandered miles away from the actual question here at this point. When meditating in Myanmar alone in a cave, how did you not lose your mind in isolation? Well, I mean the easy answer is when I was in the [clears throat] cave in isolation, I was observing my mind. So yeah, you don't lose something while you're you're you're like intently scrutinizing it. And I'm just going to move on to Jimmy

Lad's next question.

Also during this time did you ever feel insecure that you were not living a conventional life and comparing yourself to others like other with careers families etc bgeoa life and not really I mean there were times you know you're just sitting there daydreaming just thinking about stuff you know what would I do you know what if I had taken that that uh that [snorts] scholarship from the the US Navy I was offered like a 90% scholarship from the US Navy on the condition of course that I join the Navy and become a nuclear technician. You know, I train in college as a nuclear

technician. And I just didn't want to go there. I was like a militant pacifist, sort of a a neohippie type when I was in college. And uh really wasn't into that or when I was in high school, too.

Um but still, you know, it's like you think about if I had kids, what would I name them? That kind of thing. Or I mean, Trajan for a guy. I mean, Trajan was one of the greatest Roman emperors. Nobody names their kid T Trajan. I don't I don't get that.

Let's see.

But still, I mean, again, I really do not compare myself to others very much. I'm not a competitive person. If I compete with anybody, it's I compete

with my own personal self. I try to do better than I already am without really giving a [_] what other people are doing so long as it doesn't like interfere with me in any way.

So,

did I ever feel insecure? sure they were I was not living a conventional life comparing myself to others. Now I mean the only thing about feeling insecure that I was not living a conventional life is when you start getting up into your mid4s late 40s 50 you start thinking well there's certain things that if I'm ever going to do them again I'm going to have to do them pretty soon

because before very much longer I'm going to be too old to do that stuff.

So, I mean, there is that kind of feeling, but I never really felt like I was doing the wrong thing by being a monk up to until the end when when it just became clear that my being a monk had pretty much run its natural course and it was time to move on.

But, I mean, it wasn't really other people's opinions along those lines or me wanting to be more like other people. It was just, you know, it's just time to do something else.

>> [sighs]

>> So,

I guess I answered that question. So,

I'm just going to move on to Jimmy Lad's third question, which is kind of the converse of the previous one. Now that you have returned to conventional society lay life, do you ever feel the opposite insecurity that you are wasting your life as a normie and feel as if you are now wallowing in samsara again away from the jewel of dharma? Not really. I mean sometimes I'll catch myself just kind of wallowing in it being unmindful especially when I'm at work you know you just kind of get sucked into this do your job kind of stuff and that becomes like the matrix that becomes samsara and then you know

it's like the red pill kind of wears
thin in cases like that but then you
catch yourself and I mean I regret
always that's one thing I've taken to
heart with regard to dharma regret is
always bad karma just what you have is
the present situation. You deal with the
present situation. You don't think about
how it would have been better if I had
done something different two years ago,
anything like that.

So, no, I'm not I don't feel like I'm
wasting my life as a normie. Um I'm
wallowing in samsara a little more than
I was as a monk, but even monks wallow
in samsara. As long as you're not fully
enlightened, you're wallowing in

samsara.

I mean even fully enlightened beings can have the outward appearance of wallowing in samsara

and the jewel of dharma I mean I'm not that far I mean the jewel of dharma is always here you know ultimate reality is always here so I mean the main danger for anybody a monk or a lay person is just getting sucked into samsara and just totally wallowing it just totally forgetting that this is just the matrix. This is a dream. This is not ultimate reality.

So, so long as you kind of keep that in mind, you're doing pretty good. You're

doing a lot better than even a lot of monks and nuns. So long as the monks and nuns really think that they are in reality. You know, they might have like this philosophical idea that they're thinking about only when they're being philosophical and then the rest of the time they're just lost in samsara.

then yeah, I think I've kind of outgrown that even though I'm not a monk anymore.

So yeah, I I don't have any regrets. I don't regret that I was a monk and I don't regret that I'm not a monk now.

I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from RFS

and RFS says, "Listening to past Q&A episodes, it seems that you have

inspired at least three people on the path of ordination. Do you feel that this is something you have explicitly tried to do or rather that this is a natural reaction to encountering the dharma and explicit explicitly is spelled wrong here. I got to fix this.

Okay. Yeah, the little red line underneath bugs me sometimes.

Okay. So, seems like I've inspired at least three people on the path of ordination or at least kind of reinforced that.

Uh, do I feel this is something that I have explicitly tried to do or rather there is a natural reaction to

encountering the dharma? I I haven't really explicitly tried to persuade anybody to become a monk. That's a decision that each person has to make for themselves.

Although it is true, I mean from the Buddhist point of view, if you really want to practice dharma correctly, if you really want to wake up, best thing you can do is renounce the world.

So, I mean, I have gotten that point across and everyone has to decide for themselves where they're at, what they're ready for. Most people just aren't ready. They're not ripe for renouncing the world. Like a lot of

people, you know, like solitary
confinement thing that I was mentioning
before, you live alone in a cave, a lot
of people just go nuts.
or like people even like some meditate
famous meditation instructors if they
had to sit and sleep under a tree in a
forest with no mosquito net not swatting
the mosquitoes the way monks did in the
Buddhist time I mean how many how many
minutes would they survive that way
they'd be I mean a lot of them not all
of them some of them are very wise
accomplished meditation masters with
real wisdom but some of these people you
know they're just kind of like teaching

meditation from a book from from what
their teacher told them and just sitting
there being bitten by mosquitoes alone
in a forest, you know, that maybe has
like leopards and and so forth prowling
around it, wild boars, bears, that kind
of thing. I mean, they just couldn't do
it.

So, I mean, you have to I mean, it's
good to be provided the the information.
And some some of the stuff that I'm
teaching I mean like the most important
stuff is like first of all this is not
reality not ultimate reality
that whenever you're unhappy it's cuz
you desire something that sort of thing.
I mean that's that's good for anybody to

know or almost anybody I suppose
but I'm just like sharing dharma and
then people can use that information if
they choose as they please.

But it's I do think that it's important
at least to get the ideas out there. And
really I've never had much
never had much in inclination to just
teach the same stuff everybody else
teaches. You know, just dogmatize just
stuff out of a book. Even if you don't
really believe it, then you know, like
Abid Dhama or that kind of thing. You
know, it's like a lot of monks,
um, but not me when I was a monk, but a
a lot it's just kind of taboo to bring

up anything that you personally have doubts about with regard to established tradition. And I just

I mean, you might as well call it out. I mean, it's just like being honest really.

So, I wouldn't probably wouldn't make a very good politician.

But have I answered the question? That is the question.

Now, I really have not explicitly tried to persuade anybody to renounce the world, to go forth into homelessness, because it's just not for everybody.

Everyone, I mean, everyone should decide for themselves, definitely. I'm just providing information that can be of use

to just about anybody.

And so I'm just I mean if if I do
inspire people to want to renounce the
world in a way I mean there is a certain
I feel good about that but at the same
time I mean I'm not I don't have the
same enthusiasm for being a monk as I
did when I was a monk especially like
earlier on. So you know it's it's sort
of like this

almost like a bittersweet kind of a
feeling. It's sort of like when I first
told this Zen Roshi that I was intending
to become a Buddhist monk, he had like
the Zen-like answer is, you know, I'm
happy for you and I'm also sorry for you

because I mean it's all dooka.

Everything in samsara is dooka. Even being a monk. So, I mean, it's not just like you're just entering upon a path of bliss and like giddy giggling and hugging yourself, that kind of stuff.

That you can be damn right miserable.

You can be miserable as a monk. I was miserable as a monk on many occasions, but of course, lay people are miserable on many occasions, too.

>> [snorts]

>> So yeah, I'm just being philosophical.

And [clears throat]

some people think or, you know, they might have the realization that if they really want to follow this philosophy to

the the fullest of their potential,
they've got to get out of town, you
know, go out into a forest and meditate,
which is fine. That's I'm that's fine to
me. That's great.

Okay. So, I'm just going to move on to
this question. Ah, and we've been going
at it for more than two hours.

Okay, this is from I really don't know
how to pronounce this. Capital O hyphen
small M capital M small M hyphen I O
something like that. He says on the
dhamma path say verse 193 or 1964
depending on how you count there are
plenty of stumbling stones. It's easy to
trip over them or fall right through. Do

you know that feeling too? Well, with regard to the verse, it could be he's just picking numbers at random. 193 or 1964. I mean, it sounds like it could be the Samuda Nikaya. [clears throat] I mean, that that's how the Samuda Nikaya number system works, but he didn't really say what Nikaya or what Suta or anything. So, I mean, it could just be rhetorical. But he says there are plenty of stumbling stones and it's easy to trip over them or fall right through. Do you know that feeling too? Yeah, definitely. Because it's all stumbling stones. Anything that you are attached to, anything that you believe is real when it's not real is a

stumbling stone. I mean, just be addicted to thinking is a stumbling stone. Even clinging to dharma is a stumbling stone. Anything that you just take at face value and assume is real when ultimately it's a kind of illusion, it's a stumbling stone. Any desires you have, any preferences you have, it's all stumbling stones. That's that's all samsara is to someone who is striving for enlightenment is just an assemblage of stumbling stones. It's all stumbling stones.

So yeah, I I know that feeling.

I think I'm just going to move on to this question here. This is from Tynen.

I assume that's how to to pronounce the name. Tinen Tinen says, "How and where does justice come into play in life?"

And then he says, "Justice is said to be one of the four virtues of the Iching in the cultivation of virtue. But how can justice be practiced without breaking precepts? And if it cannot be, then does justice truly have a place within virtue?" Well, maybe if you're a virtuous king, a virtuous ruler, definitely a virtuous judge, then yeah, you should be as concerned with justice. But I'm reminded of probably my favorite novel, Dostki's the Idiot. And the protagonist of the idiot is Prince Mishkin, who is Christlike. He's he's

sort of representing he's symbolic of of Christ.

And there's this young woman who is symbolic of an angel who says to him that I mean he's just not just because forgiving your enemies is not just. Forgiving someone who does wrong is not just. I mean justice is they get what they deserve.

And from the Buddhist point of view, karma is just. So it's like there is a cosmic balance. Justice is built into the system automatically by default. So there is that. So you don't have to necessarily, you know, somebody rips you off, you don't have to get revenge. I

mean, that's bad karma. You know, it's just their own karma is going to [_] them up sooner or later anyway.

So I think in Chinese, you know, [clears throat] Chinese philosophy is more concerned with this kind of justice, you know, because like the the daqing is always referring to the the king, you know, the the sage king, the just king, the wise king, the king does this, the king does that. The Iching also is talking about the king does this, the king does that. And so justice from a social point of view and Chinese philosophy is really more socially oriented like Confucianism and all that then justice really is more of a

priority than for Buddhism where you've got somebody just renouncing the world and going off and living under a tree in a wilderness.

And like Christianity, I mean, if you're a Christian king or a Christian judge, then yeah, you should be concerned with justice. But it's not just to just forgive wrongdoers. That's not justice. But that is more virtuous from a Christian and from a Buddhist point of view, I think.

So let's see here. How can justice be practiced without breaking precepts? If it cannot be, then does justice truly have a place within virtue? Um, yeah. I

really don't think that that seeking justice,

I mean, from a person striving for enlightenment who isn't a judge or a king or something like that, then yeah, you just let justice take care of itself because it's built into the system. It's automatic.

I mean, if you don't punish the wrongdoer, then some it's just going to happen anyway.

So justice really is is not emphasized as a virtue in early Buddhism.

Oh, what is that? Oh, I see. Yeah, it looked like my the aquarium back there was flickering, but it's um it's not. If you look at it this way,

it's not flickering. So, that's an optical illusion there.

So, let's see here. Yeah, I guess I answered that question.

So I'm just going to move into move on to the next question and this is from Nermi and Nermi says was Buddha a tough man and yeah [clears throat] he was he was tough I mean um first of all he was tough in the sense of being tougher than a dollar stake you know tough as wood because ancient Indian aesthetics had to be tough and even if he was grossly exaggerating in the largely mythologized Mahasi Nadada Suta of the Majinikaya Yeah, that but still I

mean he was doing stuff that the average person just could not do. Like I was just saying like living alone is something the average person cannot do or just sitting sitting under a tree being bitten by mosquitoes and gad flies and not even slapping them is something that most people really couldn't do without just like being at wit's end and cracking up.

But in addition to that, he was according to tradition and possibly according to history a member of the warrior cast who was probably taught to be a warrior in his youth. So that would probably cultivate some toughness also in addition to just being able to endure

hardship at a virtually superhuman level.

[snorts] But to be a monk like they are described in the sutas, especially the older sutas, I mean you had to be tough as wood,

not necessarily kicking ass, but I mean you had to be really just really an aesthetic.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Austin and he says the difference between wana and cheetah. And I think I've discussed this before. I mean in

In like Abidama philosophy, they are synonyms that cheetah is vinyana.

They're just the same thing. Although in other context like more in the sutas, less in abidama that cheetah can just mean mind.

So you know it's like nama and rupa which sometimes is translated as mind and matter. Cheetah can also just mean mind. But more technically cheetah means consciousness in the same sense as wana in pi means consciousness. In Mahayana Buddhism, the Sanskrit vijana or vigana is it has come to mean something more perceptual and isn't just like basic undifferentiated consciousness but in in poly for whatever reasons even though I mean just the etymology we means kind of separate or apart and jana means

knowing. So I mean really the Mahayana
Buddhists have more of a literal
understanding of vyana which just means
like distinguishing
whereas in Theravada Buddhism vyana the
vit might just be like a intensifier
and it's just like true knowing
something like that and it's just
consciousness
and cheetah like I said sometimes it can
mean the same where it's just
consciousness whereas like in in abhidhamma
You've got cha cheetah and chetika.
Cheetah is consciousness and chetika is
mental states and the cheetah is sort of
like the the canvas upon which the

mental states are painted so to speak.

So yeah it can they can be synonyms like when you're being technical and and abidamic

or vinana still just means consciousness whereas cheetah can just mean mentality in general. It means mind.

So I'm just going to move on to Austin's next question. Do you believe in the 31 planes of existence? Well, the 31 planes of existence are taxonomy

where um it's it's it's largely

arbitrary. For example, the heaven

realms are all separated out as their

own individual plains of existence,

whereas the hell realms are just lumped

together as hell, as Niah. Whereas they

could have been divided out into different hell realms, too. in which case humans wouldn't be sixth from the bottom. We'd be kind of in the middle of the the planes of existence which would be way more than 31. But I do think that a lot of the planes of existence are mythology that were just made up. Like the perceptionless Brahas are just a complete redundancy. I mean it I don't see how it's even possible to have the realm of perceptionless Brahas where it's Brahas that they're they're mindless. They're just like statues. So I mean their their karma wouldn't even have an opportunity to exhaust itself. I

mean there'd be nothing going on.

So the 30 the the realm of perceptionist
Brahmas I'm skeptical of just a lot of
the details of various realms I think
are just like mythol ancient Indian
mythology that were just absorbed into
Buddhism just because it was just part
of the culture. Um the higher realms
like higher than the Brahma realm. I
mean to the to the Hindus Brahma I mean
that's he's the personification of
ultimate reality. So I do think there's
a little political spiritual political
propaganda going on where the Buddhists
just start positing these
realm after realm after realm higher
than the realm of Maha Brahma.

So yeah, I think I really don't think that the 31 planes of existence are like accurate empirical objective truth.

Although I do think that there are various realms of existence, you know, obviously there's animal realm, but but even the animal realm, it's just bad taxonomy where you've got humans here in their own realm and then you've got chimpanzees and mosquitoes just lumped together. Whereas the chimpanzee comes much closer to a human physically and psychologically than it does to a mosquito.

[snorts]

And then like the Assura realm, I mean,

that's just like a a relic. Uh it's, you know, it's like it's just like this artifact of very ancient Indo-Uropean religious beliefs cuz the Greeks had the same the same idea of gods and titans.

It was like two rival pantheons that had a war in ancient times and then the gods defeated the titans or the Assuras and then chain them up under a mountain and you know for the Greeks it was Olympus I assume and then for [clears throat]

the the Indians it was Mount Meu Sumemeru.

So, I mean, it was this ancient legend probably based on some social reality of just like two cults competing over who was going to be like the state religion.

You know, you can worship the the the gods or the Assuras.

And the Persians apparently went with the Assuras, which is strange. Seems like almost all the other Indo-Uropean peoples went with the gods defeating the Assuras. But you had Ahura Mazda and uh Persian like uses H instead of S. So I mean it's Assura. He was he was an Assura apparently based [snorts] on my limited knowledge of ancient Persian religion.

So yeah, I think it's arbitrary and there's a lot of mythology thrown in. I mean there are various planes of existence, I am sure. And it depends how

how you're going to classify them. What kind of a taxonomist you are. Are you a lumpener or a splitter? If you're a splitter, you can have more planes of existence. Like you might want to divide up the realms, hell realms. If you're a lumpener, you could just take, you know, the the Brahma realms and just call them just one realm if you want to. Or if you're more of a western kind of skeptical type, you might just completely do away with some of these realms that just seem kind of fantastical, made up, like perceptionless Brahmas or some of the the higher realms that arguably could just be a kind of religious propaganda

just to to show that, you know, the the
Vedic Brahmans, you know, they think the
highest reality is just this mediocre
Brahma realm when really the Buddhists
can get into these higher Brah Brahma
realms that are way higher than than
anything that the brahas can get into
supposedly.

So I do believe that there are different
realms, you know, an infinite number
ultimately, but I do not think that the
classical in Buddhist 31 plains of
existence really is like objective
empirical reality.

And so I'm just going to move on to
Austin's third question.

Does base awareness, awareness itself,
underlying personal tendencies and
emotions, does that awareness ever
change?

Um,

it depends on who you talk to, I guess.

Like in Abid Dhama, there's just one
consciousness. There's one cheetah.

There's what is it? I can't remember 52
chasikas. 52 different kinds of mental
states, one consciousness. But then the
Abidama text will talk about different
kinds of this one consciousness which is
sort of dividing it up while at the same
time

giving lip service to the idea that
there's only one consciousness.

So

um let's say you've got
the ceramic coffee cup.

>> [snorts]

>> Um, I mean, you could take this ceramic
or the clay that it's made out of and
you could form it into different things.
You could form it into bowls or cups or
vases, vases if if you're if you're
classy. Um, and I mean, is the clay
different? I mean, it's the same clay
just in different forms. So, that's kind
of the way consciousness works. I mean,
it's it's the same consciousness. The
consciousness remains the same even
though it may assume different forms

because of different mental states.

Terra Buddhism really has a they're hard
put to explain consciousness very well
because [snorts]

[clears throat] really it seems to me
that consciousness is just the the
essence of mental states. You know like
water and waves. Consciousness would be
like the water and mental states would
be like the waves in the water that are
made up of water. But Terabata Buddhism,
they really couldn't bring themselves
[clears throat] to think. I mean, the
early Abidama scholars anyway, they
couldn't think at two different levels
of reality like that. The ancient Greeks
had similar problems with dealing with

two different levels of reality,
although they eventually kind of work
things out better. And uh the Abidama
scholars really, they just try to get
everything at the same level. You know,
it's like their description of reality
is two-dimensional because even Nibbana
is on the same list of ultimate
realities as like tongue sensitivity and
femininity and wrong view and all this
kind of stuff. Water water element and
all that. You know, nibbana is just one
on the list of these ultimate realities.
And yeah, I just that's one thing I'
I've never been able to buy at all. I
was never into Abidama philosophy. I

could never take it very seriously. Most western Buddhists really don't partly because of reasons like this. You know, it was like an ancient ancient attempt at a systematic description of reality before like really rigorous logic got into Indian culture that it's just kind of sloppy thinking. If you look for the sloppiness, you find it.

So let's see. Awareness itself, underlying personal tendencies and emotion, does that awareness ever change? The outward form of it changes, but the essence of it, what it is, doesn't change. That would be my my answer. But when you start talking about

consciousness as consciousness, it's like you're reifying the absolute and it doesn't work very well. It's just everything becomes invalid that you say about it.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. And we are getting close to the bottom here. Is this is not an endless Q&A.

This question is from Trezasiz.

And Troasiz says,

I'm just make sure I'm not skipping anything here.

Okay. Trezas says, [clears throat] "A lot of Buddhist monks and lay Buddhists say that if they were not Buddhists,

they would be Dowists and they like the Dao de Ching." Any idea why that is?

Well, I mean, it's

you can't really say that Buddhism and Daoism really closely resemble each other because like a lot of the the cultural assumptions are different.

Dowoism is Chinese. Buddhism was originally Indian. And like I was saying earlier, the Chinese and the Indians just have a different kind of attitude. You know, they think differently.

[clears throat] So I mean it could be that Dowoism started off as a kind of garbled Chinese version of Buddhism. I mean that's that's a theory that's out there. I really can't say for sure.

But still there are certain similarities between Buddhism and Dowoism which allow Chinese Buddhism to just absorb lots of Dowoism like Chinese Zen or Chan Buddhism. Zen Buddhism in general has a lot of Dowoism absorbed into it culturally.

[sighs]

So I mean Daoism [clears throat] and Buddhism both are essentially atheistic. Neither one of them really has a creator god. I mean the dowist might come closer because at least they reify the absolute to some degree and it's dao. It's the nameless uncarved block which is sometimes how I reify the absolute while

at the same time being very cautious because you don't want to take it too seriously.

So yeah both of them are kind of they're not devotionalistic worshipping kind of spiritual systems.

Both of them are philosophical and detached and in a way they're they're kind of passive systems. They're not so much active as you know virtue in Buddhism is completely negative. You know it's like passive. It's don't do this, don't do that. That there's few positive virtues in Buddhism aside from maybe like generosity.

So there's a similarity in that in that they're both kind of mystical and

metaphysical and they're not like
emphasizing gods.

Certainly they're not emphasizing a
capital G god even though Dao is kind of
an approximation kind of like Brahman in
vanta towards a capital G god

but I mean it's it's similar in that
it's it's not insisting upon you have to
believe this narrative which the
Abrahamic religions do big time. I mean,
how can you be a Christian if you don't
believe the narrative that Jesus was the
only begotten son of God Almighty who
died for our sins and so on so forth.

So yeah, I mean they're like abstract
more or less intellectual yet at the

same time mystical systems that appeal to people that are attracted to abstract philosophical and at the same time mystical systems.

Although personally I think I might prefer videnta because dowoism it has become very corrupted at least um in traditionally dowist cultures you know it's turned into a lot of like sorcery and trying to find the philosopher stone and immortality and so forth which one Chinese person said that dowoism has tried has dedicated itself to what is not dao you know they're they're going for immortality by being in harmony with the way whereas I mean being in harmony with the way is that

and things just don't last forever.

So I would assume that I mean there's certain aspects of Buddhism and Daoism that are compatible and harmonious which has allowed them to sort of merge into a fusion with regard to Chinese Zen.

um you know they they both are really not insisting upon narratives even though there's lots of narratives in Buddhism. I mean you can just dismiss all the narratives and it doesn't matter because that's not the point of the system and it's kind of intellectual abstract

kind of heading towards mysticism without really a lot of mystical woowoo

stuff thrown in.

So, you know, kind of searching for harmony, although Dowoism is much more emphatic with regard to harmony than Buddhism is.

But anyways, I'm just going to move on to Chas is his next question. Are you aware of any procedure of commemoration of deceased captain on a ship? And the reason why he brings this up is because Trzask is is Polish. I used to work on a a Polish ship, the Sagitta, with uh Bogumil

Cloma as the captain. And uh Troas is posted on the Discord server his obituary.

And so the the con the idea of deceased

ship captains has entered entered the
the chat.

So am I aware of any procedure for
commemoration of a deceased captain on a
ship? I mean, not other than just like
modern Christianity, like you know, like
back in the old days on sailing ships
when they had burials at sea, you know,
you'd have probably the captain, any
kind of officer, you know, they might
get wrapped in a flag of their nation,
slid off a board into the ocean while
some clergyman is reciting verses from
the Bible or doing a funeral service.
And that would that would be it, I
guess.

burial at sea with some minister or ship's chaplain, I guess, standing there in in toning, in solemn tones, some sort of funeral service.

Okay,

I guess I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is the last question. This is from Dhamma River and Dama River says, "Where is the silver lining between obsession with moral purity and progress on the path? I recently watched an old interview of yours on a competitor platform, probably Bitshoot, and I was left with this question just for you. You don't have to read this part. It's just for context. I'm reading it anyway. Uh, moral

obsession is important, but it leads to
No, moral obsession is important, but it
leads to suppression of feelings. So
what should we do? At which point do we
stop following Cila? It seems like
morality is important but clinging to
morality can lead to problems as well.
So where is the right spot to move
forward and move evolve spiritually?
These are questions just for context. Um
moral obsession any kind of obsession is
not good. I mean, it could be like
skillful means like when you're like at
a beginning stage where you're just like
obsessed with practicing correctly and
then it becomes just a matter of habit

and then you don't have to be preoccupied with thinking about it all the time. It just becomes second nature. You know, like following Vineia rules was like that for me as a young monk where you're just thinking about rules all the time because you don't want to break any and then gradually as the years go by it just you don't have to think about it much anymore because it's just automatic. It's become habit.

So there is that.

But let's get up to the actual question here. Where is the silver lining between obsession with moral purity and progress on the path? Well, like I just said, I mean, sometimes a little bit of

obsession

um can be skillful means at the beginning as a kind of preliminary step to establishing good habits, but then you have to let it go. I mean, you just automatically can let it go because I mean, it just becomes second nature.

It's just habitual.

But with regard to being saintly, like I was mentioning earlier, if you're excessively saintly more so than is natural for you, then you could become a hysterical basket case. And like for medieval Christian monks, Catholic monks or or just saints, medieval Catholic saints, early modern Catholic saints

like St. John of the cross. Um, they were so repressed. They were saints. I mean, it worked to make them saints, but at the same time, they were a little bit nutty like hearing voices and seeing visions and having like psychosomatic illnesses and so forth that kind of messed with them. And that's a kind of tradeoff. I mean, if you really want to be a genuine saint, not just a sage, not like a rascally sage, but like a genuine saint with pure morals, then in all likelihood, you're going to be living a very unnatural kind of life. You're going to be under a lot of strain. You may be a neurotic basket case, but if that really is your priority to be a

saint, then you would consider that to be an equitable trade. Okay, I'm going to be a nutty hysterical saint who hears voices and sees visions and so forth, maybe dies of some psychosomatic illness, but still when you want to be just morally pure

for whatever reason, then that would be a fair trade-off. I mean, anything that gets you there would be acceptable if that really is your highest priority.

But

a saint and a sage are not necessarily the same person. And you can be enlightened in my opinion without being an absolute saint. Even though orthodox

theravada says you have to have pure
sila before you can have pure samadhi
before you can have pure wisdom.

But personally I am skeptical of that.

So

let's see. So I mean like the the sage
path of following dharma is I mean
you're as moral as you can manage
but let's say sometimes you just it's
just too much of a strain for you not to
have any sexual urges or not to have
preferences or not to like this person
but dislike that person or not to get
frustrated and angry sometimes
that I mean the The sage more domestic path
is this stuff just arises and you don't
repress it. You don't fight against it.

You just observe it mindfully and let it go. Observe it mindfully and let it go. And it might stay because it might be a strong urge. But I mean you just keep noting, noting noting, you know, observing, observing, observing. And I mean that might be too much of a strain for a complete normie. But still, it's not so much that you're repressing like unh wholesome urges and so forth. You let them come to the surface and then you just are mindful of them. And it could be that you're even acting out some of these urges. You know, you might actually be yelling in anger, but still it's like you have the second chance of

at least being mindful of yelling in anger. I've done that a few times as a monk. It's like one time there was this wood cutter that just would not stop cutting down trees in my where I was staying out in the woods and I I yelled at him to clear out. Partly just because he was a distance off, you know, you had to yell just for him to be to hear me. And he wouldn't go. And then finally, I just started yelling at him to just get out. And my hand just swings up. And it's like I'm pointing with my finger like this while I'm yelling at him to get out. And at the same time as I'm yelling, there's a certain part of my mind that's like, "Huh, I wasn't

planning on like waving my finger like that. That's weird." You know, it's just sort of like this reflex kind of a thing that happened.

So, there was still like this mindful detachment involved even when I was apparently losing my [__] and like bellowing at somebody. And that that it can happen. I mean I [clears throat] I remember telling a certain Burmese monk who was actually a mahasi Arya or he was declared an Arya by Upandida and then later on realized he probably wasn't really a soda pana although it was pretty obvious to people that knew him because he was very crusty but I tried

to tell him that I mean I have just been like enraged before and mindful at the same time you know it's like I've one time just because of the heat you know it's just the heat in central Burma is just like It's like an oven and there's no escape. There's no electricity, no air conditioning, no electric fans, anything like that. It's just you just sweat and just can't be comfortable at all ever. Sometimes even when you take a bath, the well water is warm. You don't stop sweating even when you're taking a bath. And so I just kind of lost my [__] one time. Just kind of snapped a little bit and was just yelling and cussing and slamming

things. And there was like this detachment that occurred where part of my mind is just observing the other part throwing a throwing a conion. You know, is it like I was an actor playing the role of somebody throwing a conception when I mean the the conion was just nature taking its course. I mean it was really happening. I mean relatively speaking. But there was still this other part of my mind just watching.

And I've told the story before of my father when he was um going cold turkey on like 40 years of alcoholism and and he was just this macho guy who with the bull in a china shop approach

to life. So he's sitting there going cold turkey on alcohol and going through the the DTS and he's got like two escape routes on the table in front of him.

He's alone in the house. He's got a bottle of booze and a loaded pistol just in case it becomes unbearable. You know, either one of those is a way out. And he's just raging. You know, he's hallucinating. He's tearing at his hair. He's peeing his pants just going through the DTS of a of like a hardcore alcoholic. And he starts hallucinating this this eye on the wall. And I've always imagined it as like the eye on top of the pyramid on the back of a \$1 bill. just this this observing

emotionless eye just observing
everything just observing him freaking
out and he knew that that was just like
an aspect of his own personality that
was like his his higher self or
something you know and in a way it was
similar to me having a mindful
connection where there's still this this
one aspect of your mind that's just
observing all the time and everyone has
that all the time that's one of the
realizations you have when you have a
moment like that it's always there. It's
just that most people, they're so
identified with their ego that it's
they're just kind of closed off to other

aspects of their consciousness that lie beyond the the boundaries of like the conscious ego.

So that's kind of a kind of a digression I suppose but yeah I mean obsession with moral purity at best it's just like an elementary stage in dharma practice and eventually you just have to make peace with who you are like most of us are just not saints by nature changing your personality is a hell of a lot easier easier to say than to actually do.

I mean, reprogramming your own personality is a virtual impossibility. Some people can manage it and it usually takes some

kind of crisis to really accomplish it because otherwise you're just setting your ways. You're you're governed by habit and so forth. So that you can try to change the way you go about things and it just doesn't work. where you can make a little bit of headway at first and then eventually you get to bedrock and then you just stop making progress. So for most people like most westerners just become like the morally pure saint is not the most realistic option. Yeah, I mean it's it's more realistic to strive for being an occasionally rascally sage than to be the morally pure saint. In which case you use

mindfulness as the panacea. You know, it just denatures your defilements as they arise at least to some degree. At least you're detaching from them and you're not like reinforcing them so much.

And that's the real progress on the path. It's not so much repressing like unh wholesome, unskillful urges. It's allowing them to come to the surface without just getting lost in them.

Which for some strange reason reminds me of an old saying of of uh Jordan

Peterson back when he was still popular, which is you should be able to be a monster and then not be one. So it's it's like from the orthodox terraata Buddhist point of view like an arant

can't be a monster. I mean it's just he can't. It's just this law of nature that a fully enlightened being just cannot do bad things. But it seems to me that [clears throat] I mean the possibility is always there. And in some cases, a fully enlightened being can do things that other people disapprove of that they might see as immoral or whatever. But I mean, the the enlightened mind just isn't going there. I mean, it just doesn't deal in these dichotoies of good and bad anymore anyway.

>> [sighs]

>> So obsession with moral purity.

I mean if you if you really think that

moral purity is really your top priority
then I guess you can just you would
assume that all the hysteria and and
nuttiness and so forth that it goes
along with it in many cases is
worthwhile. But personally, I do not
think that absolute saintliness is
necessary in the cultivation of wisdom.
And you just have to be in harmony with
who you are. I mean, it's it's good to
know thyself.

And I guess we're done. Might as well be
done. What the hell? We've been going at
it for the better part of three hours
anyway.

So,

as I uh almost never say at the

beginning, I always say it at the end.

If you have any questions you think I can answer, especially with regard to dharma, like early Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, meditation, you know, aesthetic practice, that kind of thing, feel free to ask. If you have other questions you think I can answer, biology, politics, or you just want my opinion, because that's the best you're going to get out of me in with regard to some things, then feel free to ask. And no more than three questions per person, please. And like and subscribe if you have not done so already. And be happy.

And by golly, I just noticed there's

like a pause button here. I could like
pause and then just continue recording.
And I just noticed that. But [snorts] uh
be happy anyway.

Okay then I guess we are functioning here. We appear to be recording which is good.

Hello and welcome to question and answer number

170. I am your host Po Basa and this is my beverage

and I've gotten up really early to do this. It's like I've [clears throat] gotten into this

routine now of doing Q&As's like after I get up on Sunday and then uploading them on Sunday instead of up uh recording them on Saturday and uploading them early in the morning like 11:15 on Sunday. And so I got up because we we

have to go somewhere at 3:30. So I got to be done before 3:30 in the afternoon. So, I just got up at this god awful time. This is the earliest I have gotten up in a long time. It was actually morning when I got up. It wasn't even noon yet. It was still practically the middle of the night because I work nights now. It's like I come home from work like 2:00 in the morning and then usually we stay up until after 4. You know, you get up afternoon, sometimes just a little afternoon, but still. Ah, my sweetie is not even up yet, which is why the beard remains unbraided. So, I got to answer these questions here. I got up just for you guys.

Let's see if I can do this.

I used to amaze my friends when I was a kid by making farting sounds when I rubbed my hands together.

So, let's see. I suppose I should just dive right into this. Oh, I forgot to say though that 170 obviously is not a prime number. It is, let's see, $2 * 5 * 17$.

That's a pretty easy one.

So, I suppose I should just commence to answering questions here.

And [clears throat] the first question is from Tynen. And Tynen says in reference to the self that does not exist. Is this referring to the I self

that narrates in our minds that

identifies as and with this and that?

Well, not necessarily. I mean that would

be included I suppose. But the eye self

that narrates in our minds I mean just

the narration itself the terravada

Buddhists I mean [snorts]

depends on how you look at it if they

would include that as the self I mean in

terra Buddhism orthodox terravada like

abidama philosophy the commentarial

tradition and so forth

um mental states are real it's just that

to have that there's this individual

person

that is generating these mental states

is the self that does not exist. The

mental states really do arise in all
that due to causes
but

um that itself is not the self. Just
mental states themselves or
consciousness itself
is not the self that is denied.

But the self that is denied is is like
an an ultimately real separated
individuality.

Um that is like a conscious being
from the point of view of terra Buddhism
that would be the self. Although in some
schools of Mahayana Buddhism and I'm
inclined to go along with these schools
of Mahayana Buddhism with regard to this

that the self would be any kind of
separate individual entity
conscious or not subject or object that
there's just nothing that is inherently
separate and distinct from the rest of
the universe.

So let's see here. I I just woke up a
little while ago, so you got to bear
with me at least the first couple
questions when I'm I'm like getting some
momentum going.

So yeah, I mean from the terra Buddhist
point of view, it's it's sort of like a
subjective self, but it's not
necessarily

um [clears throat] just mental states
arising. It would be like this the

conceit I am.

So you know be like the ego although
again from the [clears throat] like the
Mahayana point of view even this cup
would be a non-existent self because
it's just not like ultimately distinct
from the rest of the universe.

[snorts]

[cough]

Almost tried to inhale the coffee
instead of drinking it which is not
advisable.

So, let's see here.

Did I answer that question? It seems
like I answered it too concisely.

You know, it's

if I answer a question too quickly,
there's a certain feeling of insecurity,
like being the first person to hand in a
test. Let's see.

I don't Yeah, I guess I answered that
question. So, I'm just going to move on
to Tinan's next question. And he says,
"Would you say Mara is the
personification of the ego?"

And I don't think that was the intention
that to some degree, I mean, Mara is
like egotistical, you know, he's got a
big ego and all that, but I don't think
that he is [clears throat] the
personification of the ego. I mean,
Mara,
um, Mara literally means like killer.

that mara just going with you know
Indo-European languages that m a r in
mara is essentially the same as the m o
r in mortal or the mur in murder it's
just means death you know he is he is
death he's sort of like the the guy on
the beach that the knight is contending
with in inmar bergman's movie the
seventh seal that that would be mara
essentially his death But he's also just
the god. He's he's like the the overlord
of samsara.

So he's he's like the personification of
samsara more than the personification of
the ego. Although of course the ego is
generated

or you know ego and samsara
you know [clears throat] in a way
they're sort of mutually dependent upon
each other. You know it's all part of
the same package deal of
unenlightenment.

So you could say indirectly indirectly
he's kind of a personification of the
ego, but that's really that really
wasn't the original idea that he was
just sort of the overlord of Samsara
that's trying to keep people from
becoming enlightened. [clears throat]
And if he can't get you to be bad, he'll
get you to be good because even the
heaven realms are within his realm of
samsara.

All 31 planes of existence with Nibbana
not being on that list
are [clears throat] Samsara and at least
to some degree you could say they are
Mara's realm even though Mara lives in
the highest realm of the sensuous
sphere. You know it's the heaven realm
of the the deities who delight in the
creations of others
if I remember correctly.

So, I think I'm just going to move on to
the next question. And this is from
Fred. And and Fred is a peculiar guy
sometimes. And his first question is
kind of peculiar, also a little
probingly personal. He says, "Do you

have a tattoo on your willie?" And I don't have any tattoos at all. It's just I just never like the idea. I'm kind of a minimalist. And when you it's sort of like when I was young [clears throat] or younger just the idea that to make your mind up with regard to what you want to be when you grow up it just immediately cancels out all other possibilities. So it's like when you've committed yourself to getting a tattoo of like the anchor or the heart that says mom on it on your on your bicep or whatever then I mean that's it. I mean is that's you can't you know that has like you have collapsed the state vector of all the possibilities

and it's just kind of limiting or whatever and so I just never really like the idea of getting a tattoo. My brother has several tattoos. My father had one on his arm lest I forget.

And my sweetheart, she's she has occasionally brought up the issue of us getting tattoos, you know, sort of matching tattoos, but I really not I mean, I'm kind of open-minded on the subject, but yeah, I mean, my f I I won't even talk tell you about the joke my father had about Willie [clears throat] tattoos, but he had he had this tattoo joke about [clears throat] Fred's question here,

but

I won't go into details, But it has
something to do with a dime
metamorphosing into a silver dollar.

So, no, I don't have any tattoos at all.
And that's fine.

My sweetheart, being of a a younger era,
slightly younger era than me, came from
a time when pretty much everybody got
tattoos. Even like virgins got tattoos.

But

yeah, and then I lived in Burma for many
years where even, you know, village
damsels can have some dainty little
Buddhist protection symbol tattooed on
their wrist or some such thing. So I'm
just going to move on to Fred's second

question, which is a little more Dharma oriented.

He says, "If Nibbana is blowing out and oblivion, is [clears throat] it worth pursuing and can it be achieved?" Well, Nibbana is blowing out

um

like like a fire blows out. And the ancient Indians had different concepts of fire than like modern westerners have like [clears throat] in in ancient India fire was a god. It was ugy. And agny a g n i is has the same etymology of like [clears throat] uh English words like ignite or ignous like an ignous rock. So um it wasn't really oblivion. I mean

fire was a god. God fire ugnney was like the messenger between like humans and the gods. You know you you you'd send your offerings to the gods through the fire sacrifice

and ugnney was the fire. And when a fire went out, it didn't just disappear or it it didn't cease to exist so much as it just went into like an unmanifest state.

You know, the fire was always kind of latent. And [clears throat] like medieval alchemy,

um, medieval protoysics had this idea like [clears throat] combustible materials

would contain this substance called fleistin that was like fire. the

potential of fire contained within wood
and coal and all that. And the Indians
had kind of a similar idea that fire
just becomes like unmanifest and and
kind of latent or potential when it
wasn't actually burning as a flame.
And it's so you could call it oblivion
just from a samsuric point of view, but
it doesn't mean that it ceases to exist.
It's just kind of becomes unmanifest.
So Nibana is metaphorically blowing out
and from a samsaric perspective you
could call it oblivion even though from
the ultimate perspective it is not. Um
then is it worth [clears throat]
pursuing and can it be achieved? Yeah,

it'd still be

yeah it's it's obviously worth pursuing.

It's like the whole goal of Buddhism at least nibbana is regardless of exactly how you define it. any definition you give is going to be inadequate anyway.

H and somebody just uh came to our front door and I'm ignoring them because [snorts] we got to do this. This I'm doing this for you guys.

So um is Nibbana worth pursuing and can it be achieved? Um it's obviously worth pursuing. Can it be achieved? That's kind of a trick question.

Um I mean from the from the Buddhist point of view the question the answer

obviously is yes nibana can be achieved
there have been enlightened beings but
to call it like something that is got
you know that kind of thing it's it's
just an inadequate any kind of language
about nibbana or nirvana is going to be
inadequate and just kind of in logically
invalid

because it's just beyond language and
[clears throat] you try and capture it
with words and it just doesn't work that
way.

So, [sighs] I think I'm just going to
move on to Fred's third question,
which is, is the oblivion of deep sleep
equivalent to nibbana without the

reemergence to consciousness? And

[snorts]

I remember when I was staying at Pandita Rama back when venerable Mahasi Pantita was still alive, he actually declared that nibana is like deep sleep. And his teacher Mahasi Seattle used to say this also. So um [clears throat]

it's not really a tenet of orthodox terravada but it seems to be a tenate of the mahasi tradition at least back in the 1990s when I was at Pandarama that uh deep sleep is about as close to nibbana as you can get and there are some upanachads that talk about like the three levels of consciousness

waking consciousness dreaming
consciousness and deep sleep and then
there's at least One upanishad refers to
the fourth which would be like the
enlightened mind.

But I'm just kind of digressing here.

The oblivion is the oblivion of deep
sleep equivalent to nibbana. I mean
[clears throat] nibbana is awakening.

You know the Buddha literally Buddha
literally means awakened.

So, how is it that

like enlightenment or awakening would
resemble deep sleep more than even
resembles awaken consciousness? And I
was thinking that at the time that when

Upidita [clears throat] was saying, you know, that nibbana is like deep sleep, it's like no, it's really not. I mean, how is awakening equivalent to deep sleep?

Also, if you're in a deep sleep, you can still get woken up. So, it's not total oblivion. If you're in a deep sleep, somebody can still wake you up because you're still I mean, you're still conscious. That's something a lot of people don't realize. They think that when they're asleep, they're just unconscious. But even when you're sleeping, you still have this awareness. If you didn't have the awareness, you'd be in a coma and nobody would be able to

wake you up. You know, they could just throw cold water on you. you wouldn't feel it cuz you'd be in this oblivion. But enlightenment, no, it's not it's not um [snorts] it's not similar to deep sleep in my opinion.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Romeo. [snorts]

And Romeo says, "Are there any Terravada Buddhist temples near where you live in South Carolina?" And actually it is my understanding that there is a Terra Buddhist temple right here in town.

Um

but

it's it's Bikunis. It's the new bikunis

and it's apparently they're somehow

um

the the the the place there is somehow

under the patronage of some Sri Lankan

monk who I don't think lives there. I

think it's sort of like this little

house convent place with a few of these

new bunnies living there. So that's the

only terra Buddhist place I know of.

There is a like a a Vietnamese Mahayana

temple somewhere in this area that I've

heard about, but again um I've just

heard about them. So [clears throat]

I've never been to these places.

So Romeo's second question is if so with

regard to are there any Terra Buddhist

temples near where I live? If so, do you

sometimes stop by and pay them a visit for meditation and or dhamma talk? And no, I've never been to um any Buddhist temples in South Carolina.

And the main reason why I don't well I mean

my my experience with like temples terra Buddhist temples in the west has not been entirely positive. You know they tend to be kind of degenerate in certain ways. I mean, even even like temples in in Burma, Buddhist temples in Burma, like monasteries, they're also pretty degenerate in certain ways. So, my Buddhist practice, my following of Dhamma generally avoided monasteries. I

mean, I'd live at a monastery, but like I'd be living on the outskirts of a monastery or I'd be like the only person, the only monk at the monastery. Like the the one monastery I lived at longer than any other place. For most of the time I was living there, I was living in a cave up on the hill and there was one old monk living down by the river in a hut. And then he got bitten by a by a cobra and died. And then I was the only monk there for a while. And then finally there was like young Burmese monks that kind of heard about me and wanted to practice with me or wanted to learn from me or something. They started moving in and then I

eventually moved out. [snorts]

So yeah, I mean I've never really been
monastery centric in my Buddhism

[clears throat] other than just kind of
the the necessity of a monk living at
monastery in certain certain

circumstances. Like when I first came
back to America, I was like in 2011, I
was really trying to be a monk in

America that wasn't living in a

monastery. Just sort of like house, what
do you call it? couch surfing, that kind
of thing. And I mean, it worked while it
was working, but it just wasn't really
sustainable. It just didn't work out in
the long run.

So, and and then I just if I were to visit these bikunis, it would have to be, you know, it would it would slip out at some point or another that I really don't consider them to be genuine bikunis. You know, they're lay women wearing robes with shaved heads. In my opinion, I do not think that Bikuni ordination in Terravada really is legit. And so, yeah, I mean, just going there [clears throat] would be already kind of getting into the danger zone for me.

[laughter]

And the the Sri Lankan monk, I'm not even sure where he lives. I don't think he's living there with the bikunis. So he probably it may be that he started

the place and then got like a different place and moved on and then the Bukunis eventually because it's politically correct and everything to support bikunis um you know they got maybe a better place and just the Sri Lankan monk is kind of like a distant patron or something.

So yeah, I do not sometimes stop by.

I've never I've never been to any Buddhist temple or monastery in South Carolina since I've lived here. So, I'm just going to move on to Romeo's third question, which is if not, then how do you maintain a connection with your Buddhist spirituality? Well, I mean,

it's internal for the most part. I mean, that's kind of the way I maintain a connection with my Buddhist spirituality as a monk living in in a forest in Burma. You know, it's just it's internal.

Um, it's I really have not been like socially oriented, [clears throat] you know, I don't really try to reinforce my Buddhism through like dharma groups, that kind of thing. I mean there there are certain advantages like if you go to a dhama hall to meditate you know there's like a 1 hour meditation then you're much more likely to sit for the full hour without getting distracted and getting up and you know going off and

doing something else just because you know you've got sort of this group kind of reinforcing your behavior.

But my connection with Buddhist spirituality, I mean, doing these Q&A videos is is like a major one. And just having the sort of a more or less Dharma oriented Discord server. I mean, that's that's kind of my another connection with like a um Western Buddhists or just I mean, not all of them are Western even.

[clears throat] Um, and just I mean, it's just been internalized. You know, I was a monk for 30 years, so I'm still carrying around a

lot of a lot of dharmic ideas and attitudes and so forth regardless of my external environment.

Uh, so I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from SG.

And SG, let's see. This is a question.

I'm pretty sure I think there's a question mark in here.

Let's see.

This is kind of weird. I don't remember this. The theists have ultimate reality as being a person while Buddhists say it is not. Is it then correct? Okay, so there's a question here. Is it then correct to say that nibbana is dead or passive like a rock? Or can we say it is consciousness or mind that is

undifferentiated and began beyond
categorization

in which case we could say it has its
own kind of singular life. This would be
quite platonic and seems to allow for
the idea that it can act as a vertical
cause and influence on everything
without changing or involving itself
like rays of the sun don't diminish it.
So the actual question here is it
correct to say that nibana is dead or
passive like a rock or can we say it is
consciousness or mind that is
undifferentiated beyond categorization such
there. So yeah, it is kind of
interesting how he starts this question.

The theists have ultimate reality as a being, as being a person, which is kind of strange if you think about it. the highest truth is some sort of sort of superhum superhuman being which is kind of a peculiar idea and it's sort of like an anthropological phenomenon I think where we humans try to imagine the highest truth as just like sort of like a human except be [clears throat] better than mere human you know sort of a god

>> [sighs]

>> But no, it's not correct to say that Nibbana is dead or passive like a rock. Um, you can say, I mean, you'd come closer to the truth. I suppose it'd be

less of an egregious heresy to say that nibana is consciousness or mind that is undifferentiated and began beyond categories. And apparently there were a few attempts early on to define nibbana this way. And Brahman and the upanachads is defined this way as just infinite formless consciousness.

But once you reify it, you've kind of dragged it into samsara and it's not really nirvana or nibbana anymore.

>> [clears throat]

>> So the Buddhists very wisely in my opinion have had a policy of reifying nibbana or nirvana as little as possible. Reifying the capital a

absolute

as little as possible because reifying
it just like perverts it you know it it
just contaminates and and kind of ruins
it. It turns it into something that
isn't nirvana. I mean the word nirvana
is not the same as actual nirvana
[snorts] just like the word god isn't
the same as

actual god capital g god I mean just
both of them representing the absolute
the absolute really cannot be put into
words do not stick to it [snorts]
so it would be a little more correct to
say that It's consciousness or mind that
is undifferentiated. Like I've I've
continually brought up the the fact that

at least in two places in the sutas,
once in the deana kaya, once in the
majjhima, there's an old fragment of a
verse saying essentially implying that
[clears throat] nirvana or enlightenment
is infinite consciousness. You know,
it's unmanifest luminous all around.

>> [sighs]

>> So [snorts] I mean they have gone there.

Early Buddhist philosophers have gone
there and I think the Mahayana Buddhists
have gone there way more than the
Theravada Buddhists did or the the like
the proto theravada theravada Buddhist
before that whole idea just got
dismissed got rejected.

So yeah, I mean [clears throat] you can say that I mean anything [snorts] you say about is going to be invalid, but I mean you could plausibly kind of say that Nirvana is infinite formless consciousness, luminous all around.

So then SG lower down here says this would be quite platonic and seems to allow for the idea that it can act as a vertical cause and influence on every well it's not really a cause. I mean it's it's no more of a cause than saying that ceramic is the cause of this cup or this mug if you will.

It's like the essence or substance if you reify it. You know, if you start calling it an it, you know, it's the

formless. It's it's the the uncarved block of marble that contains within it all possible statues.

So that marble, it doesn't really cause the statues, but it is like the essence or substance of the these virtual potential conditional statues.

Yeah. So it's not really a cause but it is um like the essence

in a way in like a metaphysical sense that that really is heresy from ter the

point of view of terabara Buddhism but

later Mahayana schools embraced the idea

um understandably so.

So let's see did I adequately answer

this question I think I did.

Okay.

Okay. I'm just [snorts] going to move on. Next question. This is from is met and Ismmet asks kind of a long question here.

Okay. He says, "Being [clears throat] too curious and encouraged by people online. I decided to experiment with psychedelic mushrooms. For a while, it was okay. Nothing crazy happened other than colorful visuals and mild improvement to my mood. The last time was different. I have I was halfway through consuming the juice and it was evidently not the same as my previous experiments. My mind was instantly filled with this cosmic and chaotic

energy. I used to be skeptical about these kind of antodesses. I guess I guess he means anecdotes and thought they were probably blowing it out of proportion until what I could describe as my encounter with an interdimensional demon.

First my memory was gone, then time and space. I was dead, just nothingness.

Then I was resurrected, and at that point I believed everything I'd been skeptical of previously. That was followed by many hours of delirium. I was pretty sure I'd lost my mind and there's no coming back. I was coming in and out of this dimension. Time and

space were not consistent and only partly manifest. That broke my trust in this reality pretty much. I realized I trust it this much because it's been consistent for so long. But it didn't have to be. It could disappear in an instant. I could not really trust anything. And I was full of paranoia and fear. My hypothesis then was I strayed away from God and he punished me in this way. I prayed to God to save me from this demon and I'd do anything. I was desperate. I only realized the value of my sanity after I put it at risk. 3 days later, I'm still trying to adapt back to this reality and fear for my sanity as if I could lose it at any moment. Any

suggestions?

Well, I think what kind of elicited this long question or request from ISMET is my answer to the the first question in the previous Q&A talking about the trickster in the paranormal

u by George P. Hansen. And you know, he talks about how like [clears throat] in order for anything to exist, there has to be stability. And so this version of samsara has built-in stability just by default laws of nature and so forth.

Plus humans have to create more of this order and stability to because our minds are a little too chaotic. I suppose you know we're not like an animal that just

follows these instincts and and
reflexes, you know, more than
religiously. that we we we've been
liberated a little bit by being able to
think outside the box to some degree.
And so we need greater order to keep
things in line because the laws of
physics, the laws of nature and all this
are I mean you can break the law.
They're there to keep things orderly so
that this version of reality can can
persist for more than a trillionth of a
second.
And that there's infinite number of
other possible realities contained in
that uncarved block of stone, that
infinite formless consciousness.

So

let's see here. [clears throat]

There was there's one part here that I I
would kind of mention something.

[clears throat]

Let's see.

Let's see. First my memory was gone.

Then time and space I was dead. Just
just nothingness. Well,

I mean, this is just kind of like a
niggle, you know, just sort of a trivial
thing, I suppose.

But if there was just nothingness, you
wouldn't experience it. You know, it's
like if you were dead with just
nothingness, you would not be aware of

that at all because there would be no awareness. If there's just nothingness, there's no awareness of the nothingness. that at [clears throat] the very least there was a kind of concept of nothingness like when you get into like the formless realms you know the arupas in terra Buddhism you know there's the realm of infinite nothingness or just nothingness and the reason that you can be aware of that is because it is an idea of nothingness that your whole your whole universe has just shrunk down to this idea of nothingness but if it really was pure nothingness that would be it it there'd be nothing there. I mean, you

wouldn't be experiencing anything.

So,

um I suppose I could mention that the the last time I took LSD before I became a monk, I took it under the wrong circumstances. I took it in like this grungy trailer park with this person that I had known since I was a teenager. But I mean, he was kind of, you know, not really a wholesome person. And then he there was like this other stranger that came over when I was there. And I just eventually I [clears throat] just kind of broke down into a kind of psychotic episode. The only thing that really saved me was the awareness. Okay,

I'm on LSD right now. I'm not going to make any like final decisions until tomorrow after I've come down. But I was fairly persuaded that it was like Armageddon was unleashed upon the earth and it was the final battle between good and evil and that these two people, my old friend and this stranger, were trying to drug me so that they could sacrifice me to Satan because they were on the other side. And I was determined that I'm I'm on the side of good, you know, and it was sort of like the standard paranoid psychotic sort of like narrative that was going on in my mind. And like I say, the the thing that really protected me was the awareness.

Okay, I'm on drugs. I'm just going to wait till tomorrow.

>> [snorts]

>> So, um,

essentially what happened was that, you know, going with the the thesis of George P. as in the the trickster in the paranormal that you broke down the order and all this chaotic ju guu was coming in and it just kind of like disrupted the usual patterns of that maintain the stability of this version of Samsara for is met. And so yeah, it was it if you have like a bad acid trip or in this case a bad mushroom trip

[clears throat] we can call it bad even though I mean it has its good points you know it's it it kind of can strengthen you give you insights apparently it gave is met insights into the way samsara works that kind of thing but I mean you I was like [clears throat] emotionally bruised for like six months afterwards you know it was like it took a while to fully recover from this just in my case [clears throat] it was just like a paranoid psychotic episode that was drug induced and even though it was drug induced I mean still it has like this harrowing effect on you know it's like you you escape from a concentration camp or a torture chamber or something then

even though you're out I mean still it's going to take a while I mean some people they can be processing that stuff for the rest of their life especially if they're female

females are it's like they

[clears throat] specialize in just processing traumas that they had decades previously.

So, let's see here. [clears throat]

Um,

yeah, I mean, one thing you got to bear in mind is that it's mind-made. Of course, the world we're living in is mind-made also. So, let's see here. I'm just it's kind of a long question so I'm

just kind of like skimming through it
seeing if there's anything I should
particularly mention.

Uh followed by many hours of delirium.

Yeah, that's that's drug induced still.

So there's that. And then once I mean
once the like like most people and
pretty much all non-human animals that
have a mind just assume that this is
reality. It's common sense realism or
naive realism. You know, you just take
everything at face value that that
bookcase back there really is a bookcase
back there with books that have pages
with with like print on them. Even if
nobody's opening the book and looking,
you know, it's still in there and people

just assume that that's reality. You know, scientific realism is largely based on this kind of thinking. And [clears throat]

um when you all of a sudden, you know, that idea sort of gets kicked in the head, you know, it can just cause a great deal of instability and just chaotic energy and so forth.

[snorts]

Um I think all in all, this experience that is met is probably more positive than negative. I mean it was harrowing at the time because his you know his ideas of what are what is real were I mean they [clears throat] were like

profoundly shaken and weakened

but I mean it's like old habits you know

all of your your past karma or most of

it you know is reinforcing

our existence in a like a stable pattern

sort of samsara

that is somewhat predictable and

consistent. I mean, you got to have uh

like a minimum amount of stability and

consistency and predictability.

Otherwise, it's just so chaotic that I

mean, you stop being you kind of, you

know, it's like in a dream state where

your dreams you can just it could just

shift from one thing to another. Nothing

necessarily stays the same.

So, it's [clears throat]

you know that kind of that kind of
existence is way less stable. You know,
it's not as sustainable
as living in the kind of empirical sort
of objective universe that we're living
in now, which still is mind-made.

Let's see.

It could disappear. And my hypothesis
then was I strayed away from God. Well,
I mean, you didn't really stray away
from God. you just kind of got behind
the curtain and were exposed to more of
God just in the fact that just infinite
potential, infinite possibilities. You
know, it's like this stable little
cross-section of God that we're used to.

I mean, you strayed beyond that into
like the scariness of just the I mean,
you didn't get into the totality of God,
but still you got into some of the like
the alternative realities that are all
equally contained in God, so to speak.

And yeah, I mean, that can be really
scary, especially the first time you
experience something like that.

So, [sighs]

let's see. I only realize the value of
my sanity after I put it at risk. 3 days
later, you're still trying to Well, I
hope I hope it doesn't take 6 months for
you to fully recover like it did in my
case. Um, but yeah, I mean, it's the
uncarved block of marble. I mean, that

would be God. Capital G God. And just put air quotes on there just because I mean, words really can't do it justice. I mean, it's just infinite possibilities, including all sorts of weird, chaotic, scary stuff.

And so human beings who have gotten a mind big enough and flexible enough that just the laws of physics aren't quite enough. We have to have taboos and like social norms and all this kind of stuff to to further stabilize things to keep us locked in to this samsara that is more or less stable and predictable because if you get too wild, you

get too liinal and I mean you could
really can just like go off the track
away from this kind of samsara into
something that maybe [clears throat] you
can't come back from. So, I mean there
is that and like I've said like in like
it mentions in the book the trickster in
the paranormal that a lot of like
witches for example or psychics
um in order to break the laws of physics
by doing their magic or whatever it is
they will deliberately
like flout or violate
like taboo [clears throat]
social norms and that kind of thing just
as a way of increasing the the liinal
juju

that's getting into this system and taking strong psychedelics can do the same kind of thing.

So I do hope that uh

I do hope that is met is doing better now and just realize I mean it's just beyond this version of reality is an infinite number of other versions of reality and some of them are just completely chaotic. Most of them are, you know, most of them. I mean, when you've got infinite possibilities, most of the possibilities aren't going to be like safe, stable systems.

They're just going to be all over the place, just wild with just no no rules.

[sighs] So, I mean, you have to prepare yourself for that. like meditation masters, you can kind of get into [clears throat] um or or sort of just take a safer route, a less risky kind of route in in like cultivating this infinite formless consciousness or at least some human approximation of that.

[sighs]

So I guess I pretty much answered that and again I do have to be done within a certain time limit. I think I think we got plenty of time though. But still, we got to go and get some an antique piece

of furniture from somebody at 3:30 in the afternoon today. So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Stellar Supreme, etc., etc., because he has more than one name. He says in the sealoasuta

uh no he says the sealoasuta states two of the marital responsibilities of a husband to his wife are one hand over household authority and give her control over managing the home affairs and two provide adornments supply her with clothes jewelry and items to maintain her beauty and then stellar supreme etc etc stellar supreme at Paul says, "Do you adhere to these with airrain?" And

airrain is the the name that my
[clears throat] woman takes on the
Discord server.

[snorts]

[sighs and clears throat]

So, with regard to handing over
household authority and giving her
control over managing the home affairs,
she has more interest in that than me
anyway. She's very aesthetically
oriented. So, she's the one that is like
making most of the decisions with regard
to like furniture and curtains, that
kind of thing. I've really never had
much interest in that sort of thing. I'm
I'm a minimalist. If I were here by
myself, there'd be the fish tank and a

bookcase and that probably be it. You know, a desk and a chair in this room.

And

so I mean she does just sort of

I mean she has just taken that

responsibility with my blessings. But I

do have the power of veto. For example,

one time she bought this reproduction of

a painting and put it on the wall in our

bedroom and I just thought it was an

ugly painting. I mean she will talk

about how oh that painting is too muddy.

This painting looked like it was painted

with mud. I mean, it was just you could

hardly even tell what it was supposed to

be, you know? It was supposed to be like

some oceanscape with waves or something,
but it was so like uh what's the word?

Like it was like a a big painting
movement. Uh like in the late 1800s
expression. [clears throat]

Gosh,

it's weird that I have these mental
blocks sometimes.

impressionistic, but I mean it just
wasn't realistic and it just looked like
it was painted with mud and you could
hardly even tell what it was supposed to
be. I just did not like that. So finally
I just put my foot down and insisted
that the painting come off the wall. So
I do have a certain power of veto. I
still have some authority. I haven't

just completely surrendered all authority with regard to the running running this house, managing its affairs and so forth. But she mostly takes care of that stuff. So that's fine. And then providing adornments, supplying her with clothes, jewelry, and items to maintain her beauty. Well, again, she pretty much takes care of most of that herself. Most of that herself. She has access to the bank account.

So yeah, I'm doing that largely passively. I mean, like buying her gifts, you know, like Christmas is coming, you know,

Valentine's Day, her birthday, our anniversary. I that that's when I'll I'll give her stuff like that other than just flowers. You know, I'll come home and give her flowers sometimes.

But um with regard to clothes and jewelry and stuff, it's it's hit or miss. I've got like maybe a 50/50 record in getting something that she really likes. You know, other other times, you know, she'll thank me for it sweetly and all and then it goes on the shelf and she never wears it or whatever. But um yeah,

I adhere to these pretty much and it just kind of happens spontaneously organically anyway.

So yeah, [snorts] I do follow the seal wada sut with regard to those two marital responsibilities of a husband to his wife. [snorts] How well she follows her responsibilities as stated in the sigala watasuta is another question.

So, I'm just going to move on to Stellar Supreme at all's next question here. How necessary do you consider it to extend meta to all beings when sending it to particular beings who need it if you don't have negative intentions towards beings more broadly?

I understand this is the hardest part for some people, but what about when it isn't? Two question marks, but the same

question. And I'm not, this is kind of a
a strange question here that I don't
fully comprehend. For whatever reason,
my mind is not wrapping around it very
well. How necessary do you consider it
to extend meta to all beings? Well, if
you just stop there, it wouldn't be
necessary at all. I mean, it's you don't
have to send meta to all beings. So, he
says, see, how necessary do you consider
it to extend meta to all beings when
sending it to particular beings who need
it? Well, still I mean if there's one
being who needs meta, you can send meta
to that one person. It's not necessary
to send it to all beings in the universe
and an infinite number of them and

they're not ultimately real anyway. See
who if you don't have negative
intentions

towards beings more broadly, then that
part is the part that confuses me.

If you don't have negative intentions
towards beings more broadly, that part
is the part that confuses me somewhat.

So, let's just ignore that part.

So, how necessary do I consider it to
extend magic to all beings when sending
it to particular beings who need it? I
mean, it's there's no necessity at all.

It's not like a commandment in Buddhism.

Thou thou shalt send meta to all beings,
you know? It's I mean it's optional and

it may be beneficial. I mean it's clearly beneficial. It's good karma to send meta to one being or two beings or 10 beings or 10 zillion beings or all beings.

You know that's that is wholesome behavior if you're if you're doing it like sincerely.

you know, not just, you know, it's time to do meta meditation, so I'll just follow the cookbook and the cookbook instructions on doing meta meditation and just kind of pretending that you're sending meta to all beings.

I mean, even that probably has some good karma mixed in with it. Even though a lot of people who do meta meditation

really are just kind of fooling
themselves,

you know, they just get kind of like
this warm glowy feeling in their chest
and think that, you know, that's that's
just the result of them sending meta to
all beings when really it's they're
generating the warm glowy feeling in
themselves while, you know, kind of
pretending to to love the universe.

So, let's see here.

I understand this is the hardest part
for some people. What about when it
isn't? Yeah. Well, yeah. Again, that
that one phrase or clause in there has
confused me. So, I do not fully follow

the the question that stellar supreme,
etc., etc. Um, he has like this abstract
way of thinking sometimes that is hard
to follow.

So, let's see.

Um,

the hardest part for some people, I
mean, sending meta to people that you
don't like, sending meta to people that
that hate you and are causing problems
for you, that is generally the hard part
for for most people that are that are
sending meta. Um, but it's still, I
mean, if you can succeed at that, it
really does work and it can actually
change the attitude or at least help to
inspire a change in the attitude in the

other person who's causing problems for you.

But I mean nowhere in the sutas is it mandatory to send meta to anybody. Um I mean to have [clears throat] there is there is some suta. It's kind of an anomalous suta where the Buddha is saying it's better to swallow a red dot iron ball than for a monk to be accepting alms from the people without without meta in his heart. That kind of thing. It's kind of an anomalous suta, but still as a general rule, it is not necessary to send meta because like ethics in Buddhism are neutral. It's it's they're they're largely negative.

It's don't do this, don't do that. The
only positive [clears throat] virtue
um or the main positive
like

ethical action is generosity in
Buddhism.

So,

how I'm still trying to wrap my head
around this though. How necessary do you
consider it to extend meta to all beings
when sending it to particular beings who
need it if you don't have negative
intentions towards beings more broadly?

Um, yeah, I mean it's not necessary at
all.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is also from Stellar

Supreme at all. He says, "With regard to that acquaintance with the monk who feared he would be attacked by the government if he came back to the west, do you feel he had anything psychological compromising going on?"

And um I think Stellar Supreme here misremembered

that I have mentioned

that there was uh a trumpet player like a jazz musician in Bali that I knew who was African-American.

He came from St. Louis St. Louis, Missouri. and he was afraid to come back to America because he thought that he'd just be like like beaten up by like like

airport security as soon as he comes back to the comes back to America, you know, just like America is just like completely racist against black people. So that he was afraid to come back to America just because, you know, just black people are just persecuted and practically enslaved again. that kind of thing. And I mean, I didn't see it at all. I mean, obviously, you see plenty of black people walking around airports and so forth that aren't being like beaten up by airport security.

I've never seen a black person beaten up by airport security. I mean, I did see a black person in a like the Tokyo or what

Narita, I guess, the Narita airport in Japan where um he was we we went into like this holding room and there's this black guy lying across some some seats there who looked like he'd been there for a week. He just had a really disgusted look on his face. It looked like it had been there for for days.

But in America, yeah, I was I this person I mean he was kind of eccentric. I mean just kind of artists in general eccentricity often goes well with being an artist and he really did have sort of a conspiracy mindset where you know he was fairly obsessed with like the

Rothschilds and so forth.

So yeah, I think that he was just kind of being eccentric in his fear of coming back to America. Maybe it was something else, you know, he was just sort of giving that reason when deeper down there were other reasons why he didn't want to come back to America.

So yeah, it wasn't a monk, though. I've never met a monk who was afraid to come back to America. In fact, Burmese monks are just like salivating over the idea of possibly coming to America.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Xenithoid.

And Xenithoid says, "In right-wing circles, I'm starting to see the

sentiment that the USA Constitution is too old and slow for the rapidly accelerating world and that it may be time for a new one with more autocratic elements. Has the Constitution outlived its usefulness? I've heard that the founding fathers conceived the constitution as a kind of nonhuman monarch, but like everything else, all monarchies are impermanent. So, I guess the question here is, has the constitution outlived its usefulness? And no, I don't think so at all. that really like for example the Trump administration, the second Trump administration, people like on the left

are calling him a dictator, an autocrat and so forth when really he's still well within the limits of the constitution.

It's just that what has happened is that the president has like

forfeited most of his his authority in

the late, you know, the the late

American

experiment, you know, the USA that um

the the founding fathers had the

president really as the chief executive

who had a lot more authority than most

presidents are willing to exercise

partly because just bureaucracies have

formed that are are kind of extra

constitutional. You know, they're not

they're not against the Constitution,

but they're not specifically mentioned in the Constitution and that has pretty much just kind of taken over the government. you know, the the so-called deep state in all this, whereas really if you I mean, you can have a very authoritative like like Andrew Jackson kind of president or Theodore Roosevelt who really are a take charge kind of president. And of course, the leftists all be yelling about how he's a dictator, but really he's still within the the limits of the Constitution.

Donald Trump. I mean, he's he's more constitutional than than like his his immediate predecessors like Biden and

Obama. They were continually trying to do stuff that was unconstitutional.

Farm subsidies only for black farmers, that kind of thing.

So, I mean, if you do it right, you know, a president like Trump who is just sort of like maximizing his his rights and and authority within the limits of the Constitution, then you can really have a president who really does do a lot of stuff that most people think is unconstitutional or wrong or whatever, but it's still within the limits of the Constitution.

So yeah, I think to redo the constitution, not through amendments, you know, constitutionally,

but just to abolish the US Constitution and replace it with a new constitution. I think that would just be just idiotic. That would be insanely idiotic because most people nowadays just do not have the wisdom or the political acumen as the founding fathers.

I mean, it really was. I mean, it seems to me that the American government was like an improvement on constitutional monarchy. You know, it's like it was like an improvement on the English government. The English government, you've got Parliament, which is the House of Lords and the House of Commons, which have been replaced in America by

the Senate and the House of
Representatives. And then you had the
king who was replaced by the president.
So we've got like a king, a
constitutional monarch, but um you know
he gets like there's an election every
four years. So he's not just king for
life and it's not just his son who
becomes the next one. Although that has
happened a couple times. Well, I guess
not the next one, but at least you know
like W. George W. Bush, he was the son
of a of a president. I guess John Quincy
Adams was the son of John Adams if I'm
not mistaken,
but they weren't like they didn't just
come right after their father.

So yeah, I really don't see a problem with the US Constitution. I just see a problem with just sort of like the degeneracy of American politics in general, especially on the left, but I mean it's on both sides. the neocons, for example. I mean, I was I didn't really start voting Republican until Trump came along because I mean, when I was younger, it's just I mean, [clears throat] it things are different now, but when I was younger, it was like conservative Republicans. I mean, they were just kind of, you know, greedy people who wanted money and including the Christians,

which is ironic. You know, conservative Christians are just out for money like like uh Dr. Turley on YouTube. I mean, he is like a prime example of why I really didn't have much use for conservatism or Christianity because, you know, it's just like make money, make money, make money, but I'm [clears throat] kind of just rambling at this point. So, I don't think the Constitution has outlived its usefulness. I think just the the the populace has become too degenerate and in certain ways immature to live up to the ideals of the constitution and so changing the constitution like corrupting it coming up with something

you're more like you're likely to come
up with something worse
that really you can be an authoritative
kind of a president
um within the scope of the constitution
and I'm just going to move on to
xenoid's next

And I forgot to really think about an
answer to this, so I'm going to have to
do it off the cuff here. Is there any
issue you think both sides of the
political aisle are not paying enough
attention to? As in something that
doesn't get brought up enough?

Well,

gosh, I'm going to have to think about

this. Is there any issue you think both sides of the political aisle are not paying enough attention to? Well, some of the like the taboo stuff, you know, like human biodiversity, at least the right is thinking about it more now, but I mean like back when the neocons were in power, I mean it was just taboo human biodiversity. You just I mean it was just outside the Overton window. But I mean that is something to consider.

um just sort of like

um in certain ways

just western civilization is better for western people than like multiculturalism that kind of thing.

Um let's see.

Gosh, I mean really

they're not paying enough attention to I

mean there are certain things like

um population collapse in in developed

countries that kind of thing that I mean

just have to have the human population

decrease just that in itself would

probably be a good thing. You know you

get down to a a manageable one or two

billion people that would be fine. But

when you've got a welfare state

where

the older people are being supported in

their pensions and social security and

so forth by a decreasing number of young

people, that's just not sustainable.

But I do think the right does pay some attention to that kind of thing. And the left, of course, is just, well, we just solved the problem by importing tens of millions of brownskinners foreigners.

>> [sighs]

>> So yeah, I really can't think of anything that really stands out other than maybe human biodiversity, which is still largely a taboo subject.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from PSA.

PSA says, "What are your thoughts on the announcement of the British government to implement a digital ID system across the UK, which will be mandatory for anyone wishing to work there? Do you

think it will lead to a digital currency and then it will slowly spread to other castrated countries such as the US and Canada? Well, first of all, I do not think the US is fully castrated. I mean, may have lost one ball, but it still has the other ball, so to speak.

So, but I mean if if like the globalist hysterical left does succeed in getting back into power, then there's a good chance that America will finally once and for all be fully castrated.

Um, but let's getting back to what are my thoughts on the the British government implementing a digital ID

system across the UK. I mean that's that's going to be getting it's another step towards like what the communist Chinese have or the fascist Chinese because they're not really communists anymore. And it's like what is it where you post something on X or Facebook that goes against the government that gets put on your record and then suddenly you can't you can't buy airplane tickets anymore. That kind of thing then yeah I mean that's just that's another step towards totalitarianism.

So, I do think that the digital ID system across the UK, which is mandatory, yeah, that's that's a step towards the brave new world. Really?

Um, do I think I'll lead to a digital currency? A good chance of it. And then it will slowly spread to other castrated countries. Yeah, like Canada, Europe, that kind of thing. US is more of a hold out than than other countries. Like USA, we still got guns. There's as many guns as people in the USA. Um, and for some reason, America is uh resisting castration much more than Europe and Canada and Australia and New Zealand for that matter.

Um, but yeah, it does seem to be there's like this gradual move towards like digital currency where there's no real money anymore. You just have like your

ID card. You know, it's like you've got an ID card that serves as, you know, maybe your driver's license to your maybe not voter registration because they don't want that. At least the left doesn't.

Um, and then I mean you just pay for anything. You just use the card like a credit card and it just automatically takes money out of your account which is just virtual. You know, it's just like blips on a in a computer.

That's possible. I mean, that's does seem to be the direction we are heading. But I'm not a prophet really, so I'm not going to be prophesying here about what the future is going to be like. So, I'm

just going to move on to PSA's next question. What do you think of Nick Fuentes's recent meteoric ascendancy to popularity? And I really have never watched a Nick Fuentes um video. I mean, I've heard maybe like a sentence or two coming out of his mouth just like in little short clips. Um my understanding is Nick Fuentes is uh let's see, he's anti-Israel. you know, he he does not support I mean, he's not like completely anti-Israel, but I do think that he doesn't like American support of Israel at the level it's at. And he's I don't know, kind of

like alt-right that has has gone as close to mainstream as any alt-riter has gone. I mean, it used to be called the alt-right like 10 years ago, eight years ago, something like that.

Um, yeah, he's just kind of like an edgy [_] lord. I mean, like Candace Owens and uh Tucker Carlson are kind of, you know, they're they're saying stuff that that right-wingers, at least mainstream right-wingers, aren't supposed to say.

And really, I think part of his meteoric ascendancy was sort of like the the vacuum caused after Charlie Kirk gets assassinated. You know, it's like, who's going to be the next Charlie Kirk? you know, they're kind of looking around and

a lot of people are latching on to Nick Fuentes as sort of a a spokesman for conservative youth, that kind of thing. But really, as I said at the beginning, I really am not familiar with Nick Fuentes. I'm not particularly interested in Nick Fuentes. And so, I really can't really say much about Nick Fuentes.

Um, I might agree with a lot of what he says. I don't know.

So, I'm just moving on to the next question. This is from Traskas.

And Traskas says, "How often did you practice death meditation as Buddha often recommended? I never turned death meditation into something where you just

sit there cross-legged with your eyes closed for an hour thinking about death or the inevitability of death. The closest I came with regard to that is like I had a skeleton. somebody donated to me. They bought it from like the the Mandandalay Medical College or something. I had it sitting in like the lotus posture outside my cave. Part of the reason for that was just to discourage visitors, but a lot of visitors would come just to look at it. And uh you know, I went to see autopsies a few times when I was living near Mandalay, go to the Mandandalay City Morgans, watch autopsies. Um when I went to India, I made a

special point of going to the burning
gats in in Baronasi.

Um but I didn't really do this formal
sitting practice of contemplating the
inevitability of death. You know, it's
just sometimes you look at the skeleton
or the skull and just think, you know,
as that is, so will I be. As I am, so is
that. That kind of thing. So, it's just
like a an occasional reminder more than
any kind of formal sitting practice.

And I'm just going to move on to

Chasiz's next question, which is, "I've
never heard of karma comma expiration.

How does it work according to Terra?"

Yeah, this this is a subject that came

up on on the Discord server

[clears throat] about um how some comma
or karma expires. Let's say you have you
[clears throat] do something that has a
certain karmic um consequence, you know,
of something that is likely to happen
back to you, but you just for whatever
reason just kind of avoid the
circumstances in which it would be able
to come back to you. And so,
um you know, it's like

let's just say you abuse a horse. You
know, you you're like hund 100 years ago
in a previous life, you whipped the
horse to death or something. And so you
have this karma with regard to a horse
maybe like kicking you and messing you

up. Like you messed up that horse in a previous life, but then for whatever reasons in several lives, you just don't go around horses, you know? It's like there [clears throat] not as many horses nowadays. And so that karma and some of some karma according to terra Buddhist philosophy if you go a sufficient period of time without the opportunity you know without putting yourself in a position where the karma can happen you know [clears throat] the fruition of that karma can arise just due to you know just lack of opportunity that some kinds of karma can just like expire you know they just kind of fade out

not all karma

And I don't know if Abidama even attempts to explain which kinds of karma can expire and which kinds don't. I really don't remember seeing that at all.

But [snorts]

according to Terraata Buddhism, some karma I mean if you go a long enough period of time without there being an opportunity for that karma to reach fruition fruition then it can just fade out due to impermanence.

So yeah, you might want to look that up on the internet or something. It's getting AI is getting to the point where you can just ask a question of like

Grock on X and you get fairly good
fairly good answers sometimes.

So let's see here.

I guess I answered that question. I'm
moving on to the next one. This is from
Newman. And Newman says, "What were the
politics of other Western monks you
knew?" And I mean I really didn't know a
whole lot of other western monks because
I was mostly living in a Burmese
environment. So occasionally I'd meet
western monks and for the most part we
just did not discuss politics. I wasn't
really interested in politics for most
of the time that I was a monk when I was
living in Burma. It was only around 2015

2016

when I started realizing that the left has just gone completely insane and started taking an interest in in politics. just like when Donald Trump became president. And so I was a Trump supporter then. I still am partly because I mean he was and he was [clears throat] like the the voice of common sense this standing up to this just mass hysteria that was taking over the West. Well, the only western monk that I that I can even recall discussing politics with me um like back in the day when I was living in Burma was a certain Australian monk who was a socialist. I

mean this this monk I mean he he eventually dropped out and became one of my supporters. He was still living in Burma because he married a Burmese woman. And I mean he was like complete lefty

and um I mean he discussed we discussed it a few times like he said you know I um when he was still a monk you know it's like um you know I'm a socialist by nature but I realize that you know socialism generally doesn't work the way it's supposed to in theory something like that. But I mean definitely he endorsed a kind of communistic sort of lifestyle. And then after he dropped out

of the monkhood and still living in
Burma and one of my supporters in Burma,
I mean he was just completely
anti-Trump. You know, he'd be sending me
these kind of childish texts or emails,
you know, they've the walls are closing
in for Trump now. Trump's going to
prison. Haha. This kind of stuff. and he
might still be doing that for all I
know. You know, it's like the walls are
perpetually closing in on Donald Trump.
Um, but with regard to that, aside from
that kind of real like extreme leftist
Australian monk who dropped out of the
monkhood, um, yeah, I think there are
quite a few other Western monks that I
that I knew that were kind of along my

lines. But for the most part, when Western monks in Asia, at least when I was a monk, most of the time that I was a monk, they just really were not interested in politics. You know, there's like I wasn't even interested in Burmese politics all that much. I was living in Burma a lot of the time. I wouldn't even know what the name of the the president or the dictator was. You I really didn't know all that much about it. I was just out in the forest. You know, you're not like hooked up to the internet or at least not until like the last few years. But most of the time I was in Burma, it's like you're not

you're not even hearing the news. You don't even know what the political situation is really. I mean, you hear through, you know, just through osmosis, you just pick up somewhere or other that Obama is the president now and like Tony Blair is the prime minister of of the UK and so forth.

But, and that was about as far as it went. I really was not much interested in politics as a general rule up until around 2015 when I finally realized that the left is just going to start [snorts] raving mad.

And they still are.

And enough enough people actually are are like conformist enough that they're

just conformed to it.

So yeah, the only Western monk that I really knew for sure what his politics were was this

like a a complete socialist type who was fortunately Australian rather than American.

So I'm just moving on to Newman's next question. Were political views seen as a samsaric distraction at anything but the practice itself?

Um yeah, I guess I've already kind of answered this political views. I mean there were Burmese monks that I would hear their political views because I mean lots and lots of Burmese monks will

confide to somebody like me that you know they disapprove of the Burmese government. The Burmese military dictatorship is not a good government. You know, this I', you know, you hear that kind of stuff from Burmese lay people and Burmese monks. It's it's sort of a universal phenomenon in Burma that most people just don't like the government there more so than in America. They think America is great. That's one reason why so many Burmese monks want to go to America because you you don't have the government just snatching citizens off the street and sending them to torture

chambers that kind of thing or just shooting them.

So political I haven't answered the question though were political views seen as a samsaric distraction anything about the practice well it is considered to be animal talk you know like again and again in the sutas you know there's this list of animal talk where um you know talking about kings and prime ministers or kings and ministers of state and wars and that kind of thing. It's all animal talk. It's all inappropriate for a monk. Monks aren't supposed to be talking about politics much anyway.

So yeah, I mean it was sort of like monks talking about girls, you know, it's just it happens sometimes on for various reasons, but still I mean it just would as a monk in Burma. I just did not talk about politics much towards the end. then I'd be like writing about politics more than talking about it because I mean I'm just mainly dealing with Burmese people that when I was living at the the monastery in uh California shortly before I stopped being a monk that um I mean I you you do hear a little bit of politics but I mean most people just don't talk about politics much at monasteries but you hear like people you know that

they vote Democrat because they want it easier for their relatives to come to America. I mean, that's one of the main reasons why foreign immigrants are Democrats. Even if they work for a living, you know, if they don't work for a living, then of course they're getting handouts. But even if they do work for a living, like they're doctors or something, still they want it to be as easy as possible for their relatives to come over and and move to America. And so they'll vote Democrat for that reason. But then even some of the Burmese supporters like Trump, they were Trump supporters just because of, you

know, sort of like seeing the bigger picture.

So yeah, political views are seen as a samsaric distraction. Yeah, definitely.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from practice meta.

Practice meta says in the Brahma Jalo Suta does the Buddha explicitly reject the view that a singular infinite consciousness is the ultimate nature of reality.

Um

the Brahma Jala Suta it seems the purpose of the brahalosuta is to shoot down all possibilities.

So

you know eternalism view and like

annihilationist view and all that it's
it's all shot down. And so in the brahma
jala suta it doesn't I mean I don't
recall a specific mention of like the
upanesic understanding of brahman
infinite formless consciousness. And as
I've said before even in this video
there are at least two sutas
in in the suta u in the sutas that u
[clears throat] do imply that nibbana
itself or nirvana is infinite formless
consciousness. But I have seen one
explicit like rejection of that idea in
the text. I I don't think it was the
Brahma Jalasuta. I mean the Brahma
Jalasuta like I said it tries to shoot

down all views and it may be that this
upanasic view wasn't popular enough even
to I mean it kind of was under the radar
at the time of the composition of the
brahagal suta. But the brahma jalis suta
I mean it practically starts like some
of the first wrong views that it shoots
down are the eternalist view where it's
like you know uh reality or like the
highest truth is just like
infinite and eternal and unchanging
which I mean you could say that this
singular infinite consciousness could
fit under that
to say that you know the absolute is
you know infinite eternal unchanging I
mean that [clears throat] would be good

enough I suppose I think that uh the
upanosic view would fit under that but
there is one suta at least one suta I
have seen I don't think it was the
brahagalis suta though that specifically
shoots down the upanesic view of
infinite formless consciousness and I
mean it's kind of an anomaly in that
suta even with regard to the context of
the suta it seems like it was just kind
inserted there as a kind of afterthought
after the upupanotic view of reality
became more well known that you know
some early Buddhist philosopher or
philosophers felt that that should be
addressed and so this denunciation of it

just gets inserted into a suta but I
think at the time of the brahma jala
suta that just to shoot down an eternal
like infinite or
anything eternal
anything unchanging that is like a
highest truth that I mean that's already
taken care of that's almost immediately
one it's like one of the first wrong
views in the brahma jalisa like
eternalist view comes before
annihilationist view so definitely the
singular infinite consciousness would be
a kind of eternalist view
I suppose it would seem like
so I'm Just going to move on to practice
meta's next question and I'm being a

little more tur in this in the kind of
starting late and everything on a
[snorts] Sunday and we got to go
somewhere.

So anyways, practice meta says when some
claim that in deep psychedelic states
duality such as subject object life
collapses into a non-dual self-aware
eternal unity.

Is this the same as the eternalist view
sasatawada that the Buddha critiqued?

Um, well, anything eternal is going to
fit into the eternalist view. Let's see.
Let's see. What is it? Duality collapses
into a non-dual self-aware eternal
unity. Yeah. Is this the same as the

eternalist? Well, it's one kind of eternalist view. There's a number of different kinds of eternalist views.

Like even Christianity has an eternalist view and that you have an immortal soul.

The soul can change but still it's that soul itself is eternal. So that's a kind of eternalist view. If something doesn't change then that's a different kind of eternalist view. You know it's the the same thing changes which is kind already kind of paradoxical

is one eternalist view. The same thing just is doesn't change at all forever and ever. That's a different kind of eternalist view. And so yeah it's it's a kind of eternalist view. It's not the

only eternalist view, but there it's it is one kind of eternalist view. Um, deep psychedelic states, duality, subject object life collapses into a non-dual self-aware eternal unity. Yeah, that would be a kind of eternalist view. If you're saying that it's eternal, obviously anything that becomes eternal would fit under eternalist view.

And again in Buddhism, the Buddhists wisely avoided reifying the absolute.

You just don't talk about it. Words just cannot do it justice. Words can't touch it. Anything you say about it is just perverting it.

You know, you're just turning it into an

idea in your head which is not eternal.

So you can have an idea of etern

eternity in your head, but that idea is not going to be eternal and it's just a kind of delusion.

So [sighs]

yeah, I think I answered that question.

I'm going to move on to the next one.

This is also from Practice Meta, one of the only people who ask questions on Rumble, incidentally.

[snorts]

And he says, "After a psychedelic session, many feel overwhelming love and ethical urgency. The sutas say morality or sila is the foundation. Can a drug induced ethical resolve ever replace the

gradual training and precepts? Or is it like borrowed virtue? Well, I wouldn't say that it's either. I mean, [clears throat] a drug induced ethical resolve.

Um, to some degree, it can replace a certain amount of gradual training and precepts. I mean, it can just jolt you into a kind of mental state that it might take years for a meditator to get into. That's one thing that as a monk that I always considered like LSD is I mean it can just like jolt you into a state pretty reliably that I mean meditation is much less reliable. I mean you just a second. Hey you guys quit it.

The dogs are roughhousing like like
this dog for example.

Okay, you go back down here. And this
one, these two just keep going at it,
you guys. I just riled them up even more
by picking them up and paying attention
to them.

Okay, let's get back to the question,
though. You guys, come on. Stop it.

Stop it.

Stop it.

They're all riled up. Even more so now
after I told them to stop being riled
up.

Just a second. Come on, you guys. Quit
it. No.

Okay.

Okay. So, I mean, main question is, can any insights that are spontaneously arisen through psychedelic drugs, for example, can they be sort of on a par with gradual insights that arise through meditation and so forth? And I used to like semile lament as a monk that meditation is so much less reliable than just taking a tab of acid because you take the tab of acid, you know, there's going to be some fairly radical results. Whereas in meditation, I mean, you can be struggling and floundering for literally like two or three years before you get into anything remotely resembling the kind of like profundity

of what you can experience with an acid trip. So I think one Buddhist explanation of this is that if you're having these insights through psychedelics, which can be legitimate insights that might take years just through sitting cross-legged and striving away the old-fashioned way, then what probably happened is you did some striving in previous lives and so forth, and this is the fruition of that. So it's really not cheating so long as it's really like a genuine profound insight.

And I used to have almost every time I would take LSD when I was a young man,

you know, starting as a teenager, it would almost always be religious experience, like mystical experiences.

So, let's see here.

Can a drug induced ethical resolve ever replace the gradual training and precepts? Well, I mean, in a way, it's the fruition of previous gradual training and precepts from previous lives. I mean, that would be one Buddhist explanation of it.

U so it's not really borrowed virtue.

Anything that you experience I mean it's it's you you earned it in a way.

Anything that you experience is the fruition of karma if not in this life

than in a previous life. And so I mean there's there's no cheating in that regard.

Um there are some people who think that they're becoming enlightened or something from taking psychedelic drugs that really aren't. So you have to be careful about just being deceived especially by yourself.

But um I mean insights that can arise through psychedelics are just like insights that can arise through just about anything else. And so in many cases they are legit.

Uh I don't think it it should completely replace the gradual training and precepts

but still it's it definitely augments
it. It it can anyway for some people.

Other people they might be like is met
they take psychedelics once and it just
kind of blows their mind and kind of
shatters their psyche for a while and
you know it may cause more harm than
good. for I mean some people you know
they have like latent like
susceptibilities

to mental illness or some such and but
they're holding it together fairly well
and then they they drop some you know
some powerful drug which then just sends
them over the edge that can happen too
but yeah and the main point that I'm

trying to make though is that anything that hap anything that you experience is the fruition of your karma So apparently you did some practice in a previous life where you have some kind of latent subconscious striving going on that doesn't really reach the ego consciousness that finally is coming to the surface. So it's it's not cheating really unless it's unless it's just like illegitimate experience. You just think it's profound when it really isn't. That can happen too.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Indiana Dharma.

In Indiana Dama says, "In some Catholic monasteries, non-mongs can become lay affiliates who make certain vows or promises and have an official connection to a local monastery. For example, Benedicting monasteries often have oblates. It allows the leoty a limited participation in the life of the monastery and to observe some monastic practices under the guidance of the monks. These le oblates otherwise remain householders. Is there a terraodin equivalent? Well, there's not an exact equivalent to this. Um, you know, there's first you've got the fully ordained biku

who fully ordained. Below that you've got the sana or the novice who technically is not fully ordained but I mean he's still not a lay person. Below that you've got [clears throat] in Asian cultures in Thailand it's a paca in in Burma it's a pthido I think uh let's see I think they're called anagarakas who they might they might wear white robes they still shave their head so I mean they're really not a layman either as a general well I mean they're a layman but they're not really living the household life below that you've got like like a monastery attendant or a capia car that I mean they're a lay person. They

wear lay clothes usually, but still they're not living the household or life because they're a monastery attendant. At least the ones that are living at the monastery. But for example, when I lived at WBO wildlife for wildlife refuge monastery in northwestern Burma, there was I [clears throat] think he was the nephew of the old monk who lived down by the river who [clears throat] he lived in the village. I'm pretty sure he was married, probably had kids, but every day he'd just come to the monastery and, you know, he'd be pulling weeds, doing stuff that monks aren't supposed to do, and just, you know, he'd sweep up leaves

that fell from the trees or rake them up or whatever, and, you know, make sure the monks were doing okay and he'd go back home again. So, there's that kind of a thing. Also you can be an upasa or a female would be an upasika who might take eight precepts and you know they sort of formally dedicate themselves to Buddha dharma and so in a way that the average you know the average lay person doesn't they might take like nine precepts that kind of thing um a lot of women in Burma they wear yogi yarn it's called which is like meditator colors which is for a woman is brown you know they have their hair pulled back they have their hair up and they wear like

brown clothing with a brown saron and usually they have what is called a Tibet which is just a kind of scarf thing which is also brown over one shoulder and they've dedicated their lives to the dhamma they don't necessarily shave their head so there's that kind of thing and it's largely just like whatever the lay person you how far they want to go, they can go there. I mean, it's it's not like you're prevented by taboos or anything from being too dama oriented as a lay person, that sort of thing. So, it's it's not as standardized, I guess, as in Roman Catholicism, but there's like a whole spectrum of

just worldly minded lay person and like fully renunciant monk and just all these different options in between.

>> [snorts]

>> So, I think I answered that question. I'm pretty sure. So, I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Fake Tig. And wow, Fake Tig is our last question here. So, we're we're almost done already. That's that's that's all right. I can live with that.

So [snorts] fake TIG says my meditation has become quite good now uh nowadays and am very happy and am less depressed and I was wondering what comes next where do I go from here? Just keep doing it. Well, I mean I assume you have not

like completely perfected your meditation. So you can just keep meditating and uh yeah, I mean it wouldn't hurt to just keep doing it.

Where do you go from here? Um yeah, until you're fully enlightened, I mean you haven't really reached the end.

[snorts] So

happy and less depressed. That's good.

Wondering what comes next. Yeah. Well, I mean you you don't often consciously choose what comes next. It just kind of happens.

It may be that if if you're getting in a stage in your meditation where you're not making progress anymore, then you

might have to switch to a different kind of meditation. You know, it's like St. John of the Cross in one or more of his books is talking about how to know when to switch over from meditation to contemplation. like in in Roman Catholicism, they have a similar kind of meditation regime at least in the uh contemplative orders of Roman Catholicism to Buddhism where they have what is called meditation which has an like an object you know you're you're visualizing scenes from the life of Jesus or you're doing like a mantra you know dear God please have mercy upon me a sinner or you know a Maria or the Peter Nester that kind of thing and then

above that is contemplation in which you are not thinking anything or at least you're not supposed to be thinking anything. Sometimes a stray thought will arise in which case like in Buddhism you just kind of note it and let it go. You dismiss it.

So I mean if you get to a point in your meditation where you're just kind of stagnating or getting bored with it, getting restless, feeling like there should be something more, then you have to go to a more advanced meditation uh technique.

But so long as you haven't perfected it yet and you're still making progress, I

mean, you're still improving, there's no need to change anything. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. But if you stop making progress, then it's time to to make some kind of a change probably.

Especially if you you've stopped making progress for a considerable amount of time.

So I'm just going to move on to fake Tig's next question.

>> [clears throat]

>> What are your thoughts on Roomie, the Sufi Muslim who is very close to Buddhist ideas? Have you heard about him? Yeah, I've heard about him and I've read some some of Roomie's poetry in translation of course. But the thing is

there were a number of people like Roomie these sort of eccentric poets in like northern India or that general area of the world like Kabir also is another one. And I really couldn't tell Kabir from Roomie. Like if I were to see one of their poems, I wouldn't know if it was Roomie or Kabir or somebody else because there was more than two.

So for me, it's just kind of a generary of of like religious poetry coming from like medieval northwestern India or some such. I assume there were some South Indian ones, some that were, you know, out of what is what is India that were all composing similar sorts of like

devotional philosophical kind of poetry.

So yeah, I mean it's fine. I mean, I've never really been really drawn to that sort of thing. I think I preferred Kabir to Roomie if I remember correctly.

But uh let's see. What are my thoughts on him? Yeah, interesting. I'm sure a lot of it really resonates with a lot of people or just that sort of poetry resonates with a lot of people, which is fine. I mean, if it helps you to have a more dharmic mood and attitude and helps to uplift you, then that's that's fine with me.

So, I'm just going to move on to Fake Tig's third and last question and the last question of this Q&A.

By golly, have you had thoughts on how Hollywood wants the public to fall in love with women who are sure of themselves and know what they want and where they are going while making the male characters more submissive and uncertain about almost everything.

Nowadays, when I go for dates, I keep looking for women that are sure of themselves. But this is never the case as women need men for certainty and reliability

cause women are unstable in some ways.

Thoughts on this?

Well, I think for the viewers, you should uh bear in mind that fake TIG is

Ethiopian.

And uh so it may be that uh some of his experiences are kind of more what you would expect in Ethiopia than uh in Hollywood.

But let's see. Have you had thoughts on how Hollywood wants the public to fall in love with women who are sure of themselves and know what they want, where they go? Um I'm not sure. like Hollywood movies. It's It's been a thing since maybe the 1970s.

I think maybe the first Alien movie with Sigourney Weaver was I mean even before that I mean you had like the Avengers, Emma Peele of of the Avengers, that kind of thing. Like the tough like beautiful

yet at the same time able to beat up
rooms full of hardened criminal males.

um

that it's it hasn't been I don't think
Hollywood is doing that in order for the
public to fall in love with these women
so much as just try to like get the idea
that women can be just as tough as men
and and so it it sort of masculinizes
them while at the same time having them
still be pretty. Like one of my favorite
movies is oh don't don't tell me I don't
even remember the name of something
tomorrow
it's got
oh man [clears throat]

stuff I do to myself Tom Cruz is in it
and it's um a movie about these this
this kind of alien it's a really badass
really good kind of alien it's not just
like they look like people speak English
that kind of stuff It's like completely
non-human aliens are taking over the
world. And the toughest, bravest,
asskickinest person in the entire movie
is this beautiful young woman who just I
mean, she's got a mind like like a Navy
Seal on steroids. Just just completely
fearless. Just completely
I mean just it's it's just amazing. And
it's I'm it's unfortunate that because I
just called it one of my favorite
movies, one of my favorite science

fiction movies that I don't even recall the name of it. Something for tomorrow. And it's like there's lots and lots of this in Hollywood where they're trying to port I mean [clears throat] they're trying to instill into the the the mindset of the world that women are just as strong just as brave as men are which is [_] on a g in a general on a general rule like like Kill Bill where you've got um what whatever the bride I don't think she even had a name who was like killing an entire room of hardened criminals single-handedly.

I mean, it's it just doesn't work that way. I mean, there have been tough

women, but still, I don't think there have been ever been women tough enough that they can take on 50 men in in like hand-to-hand combat and defeat all of them.

I mean, I've written blog posts about this back in the day when it was kind of more [clears throat] more of a burning issue for me. So, I don't think the public is supposed to really fall in love with these women. I just admire and respect them and acknowledge that, wow, that woman is tougher than most men.

Um, and it makes them Yeah. It's they're so completely confident and fearless that I mean really it's like a fairy tale.

So let's see here. While making the male characters more submissive and uncertain about almost everything. Well, that's not necessarily the case because like the villains generally tend to tend to be white men like in action movies and so forth. The bad guy is still usually a man who is very certain about everything. you know, he's he's tough and bad and mean and you know, he doesn't he's not like insecure and stuff. Maybe a little bit maybe sexually insecure or something, but still he's got to be tough just so that the the the woman can defeat him and be even tougher than him.

So

yeah, I think it's it's like propag.

It's feminist propaganda essentially.

So nowadays when I go for dates I keep

looking for women that are sure of

themselves but this is never the case as

women need men for certainty and

reliability

because women are unstable in some ways.

Well women just going with statistics as

general trend they tend to be more

insecure than men. Men tend to have more

self-confidence than women.

And so

that's one way that nature

has tried to ensure that men and women

will hook up. I mean, men just desire

the body of the woman. Women desire the strength and stability of the man.

They're attracted to that. Men or women are attracted to strong, stable men who are good providers.

Even though they might have their own career and all that, make more money than the guy, still instinctively going, I mean, from back in the stone age, they're just attracted to strong, stable men who will protect them and their children, and no amount of Hollywood propaganda is going to change that.

So yeah, I mean, and you shouldn't be deliberately seeking out a woman who

really is stable and and self-confident
and so forth, unless maybe as a man you
lack that and you need her to kind of
fill in the gaps. But still, um, you're
better off just accepting women as they
are and [clears throat] just sort of
just going with that.

Gosh.

giving advice on on women. See, let's
see this here. I'm just right now I'm
kind of reviewing the question to make
sure that I've done some semblance of
justice to it. Have you had thoughts on
how Hollywood wants the public to fall
in love with women who are sure of
themselves and know what they want and
where they are going? Yeah, I'm not so

sure that I mean they want you to admire and respect them without necessarily falling in love with them because like in Hollywood to fall in love with a woman is kind of objectifying her. You know, you're just turning into like a sex object or something. So, I think they might not even want you to fall in love with them. They just want you to like be in awe of how beautiful yet tough and fearless this woman is and just get it into your head that all women can be this way when of course they can't.

Let's see. Making the male characters more submissive and uncertain about

almost everything. That's more like TV commercials, maybe sitcoms where the men are just kind of befuddled and the women are taking charge and the women know more than the man does and so forth. I mean, that's that's more of a a TV commercial thing than like an action movie thing. I mean, it's true in what Edge of Tomorrow or whatever the movie was with Tom Cruz. Tom Cruz starts off as like this weasly coward and it's the woman who I mean he falls in love with her and then she just kind of helps him to become also tough and fearless. So, I mean, that does happen, but yeah, it's mainly just feminist

propaganda and it it really does not fit in with reality very well. And so, you're better off just ignoring Hollywood propaganda. Hollywood is tanking now anyway. Hollywood is in severe decline.

Um and there's a certain amount of backlash coming back the other way where um you know the the the female super superhero

just fearless tougher than men kind of kind of movie is really getting a lot of backlash from the public and they tend not to sell well and so they're actually creating more politically incorrect kind of movies that are like the oldfashioned

kind that uh are are making more money
and that's essentially what it all boils
down to in in in most cases. I mean
there are certain
companies, corporations or like donors
to these companies and corporations that
are willing to lose money for the sake
of getting the propaganda out there. But
yeah, it's it's uh there's been
sufficient backlash against this this
blatant propagandizing, which nowadays
it's it's like queer propaganda even
more than than like the the absolutely
tough, fearless, asskicking, beautiful
female with the perfect hair and the
makeup and the fingernails and
everything. who still with the perfect

hair and the makeup and the fingernails
is still beating up rooms full of 50
male hardened criminals or aliens or
whatever.

So, thoughts on this? Yeah, just I mean
thoughts on this? Just I mean if you're
looking for a woman just uh look for
women until you find one that that
resonates with you and there you go. I
mean,

it's true. I mean, women aren't as in
general

aren't as self-confident and so forth.

They're more more fearful, you know,
that kind of thing. So, you mean you
have to take that into consideration.

You don't want just some butch
doineering female anyway necessarily,
unless some guys just go for that
because their mother was like that or
something.

And I guess I'm done. I mean, I don't
know. I guess I'm done answering
questions for today. It's less than two
hours. That's that's that's reasonable.
Less than two hours. I didn't even
bother to count how many questions were
how many questions there were.

who for all I know it may have been a
prime number of questions but as I
should always say at the beginning but
also generally say at the end if you
have any questions you think I can

answer especially something regarding
dharma you know Buddhism early Buddhism
terraata Buddhism especially
meditation that kind of thing then feel
free to ask and no more than three
questions per person please like and
subscribe if you have not done so
already check out the URL links,
including the books that I have for sale
on Amazon. And be happy.

Okay then.

[cough and clears throat]

Hello and welcome to question and answer number 171. I [clears throat] am your host Pony Bosa and I just took a break from participating in a Hemingway novel and I got my

beverage. Oh, this is the first time this has ever happened on camera. The the little paper umbrella actually fell into the beverage.

Ah, [clears throat] so I'll put that over there.

take a sip of said beverage.

And uh [clears throat] due to all the excitement of the paper umbrella falling

into the beverage, I don't recall now if
I said that I am your host Paneobasa.
And question and answer 171 is not a
prime number because 171 is in fact $3 * 3 * 19$.

[snorts]

I'm starting a little bit late today.
just a little bit

[clears throat and cough]

cuz I didn't get up until after 2:00 in
the afternoon after having like these
weird work dreams. It's like I have
these semi nightmares associated with
work just because work is just kind of
like this hectic aggravating kind of a
job sometimes. And so I have these
hectic aggravating kind of dreams

sometimes.

[snorts] I was [clears throat] having to load this trailer [cough] with my forklift, of course, and there was like there [clears throat] was like no pro codes any anything.

No pro codes. Those of you who don't know what pro codes are, you're probably better off that way. So, I won't bother to explain it. [snorts]

And we've got sort of like the average number of questions, middle path of questions. So, I suppose I should just wade right into this and start answering questions because that's why we're here, isn't it?

First question is from Joe Doe. And he asks like the perennial kind of question, are we all one?

And I mean, in a way [clears throat] to say, are we all one? That's like a self-contradictory question because we is plural. So, is is a plural singular?

See? So I mean in a way it's I mean it would have to be no just if you're being like a stickler for like technical grammatical correctness and everything but

you can say that

there is sort of like an underlying unity of which we are all sort of um illusory

parts. You know, I keep giving the same

example over and over and over again.

It's like the uncarved block of marble, right? You've got this uncarved block of stone. This we might as well be sizeless. There's nothing around it to compare it with. So, let's just say it's like this sizeless block of stone. And contained within that block of stone is every possible statue. In fact, there's an infinite number of impossible statues in there.

So we are the we are statues. We are like virtual conditional potential statues contained in that block of marble that you can't really

even talk about in order for it to be valid.

So [sighs]

yeah, I mean you can say that if ultimate reality is infinite formless consciousness, which once something becomes infinite and formless, then I mean nothing sticks to it where you can't really explain it anymore. You can't describe it anymore. So it becomes invalid. But just as kind of a gimmick like a game of grammar or something we say okay there is this absolute that exists or transcends the duality of existence and non-existence which I mean even that there is you've kind of gone off the

scale

and we are all like little virtual particles of that that are like superimposed on each other because when you say that [clears throat] the uncarved block of stone contains infinite statues, every possible statue and also lots of impossible ones. It's not like they each have their own individual place. I mean, they're all just superimposed on each other.

So, in that sense, you could say we are all one because we we all share the same consciousness. It's just that the the mental states are different and we're all just aspects of this

indivisible [snorts]

absolute or like in the sin Ming

attributed to one of the Chinese

patriarchs of of Zen Buddhism, he says

all we can say is not two.

So to assert one would be kind of

invalid. To assert zero would be

invalid.

So all we can say is not two.

So are we all one? Well, the farthest

you can go is you can say we are not

two.

We are not a multiplicity.

And I'm probably just going to keep

explaining this over and over again

because it's really like

counterintuitive or something. It's like

it requires like a certain avenue of thought that is like closed off with like crime crime scene tape and those orange cones and stuff for [snorts] some people.

So, let's see here. I'm just going to move on to Jodo's next question.

Is a baby pure awareness or pure consciousness? And um [clears throat] this is an issue that is mentioned in at least one poly suton like is a baby enlightened because it hasn't developed all these attachments and preferences and so on and so forth yet. Although even babies do have preferences they prefer not to be lying there in shitty

diapers and they'll start crying or if they're hungry or they want their mama for whatever reason they start screaming and yowling.

As Charles Darwin pointed out, it's like for [clears throat] an infant, I mean, almost their only means of communication is screaming, and they do it for just about any reason.

So, is a baby pure awareness? Not really. I mean, you look at babies, they sleep most of the time. And if you're sleeping most of the time, that's not pure awareness.

So they're at kind of a rudimentary level of perception because their their nervous system hasn't even been fully

hooked up yet. Just going with like a materialistic kind of like scientific sort of explanation.

So they're just at a very kind of crude level of unenlightenment.

Sort of like uh a cow or a frog. I mean human beings are more delusional than cows and frogs are. It's like the bigger your mind gets, the more complicated it is capable of being, then the more delusion you can fit in there. So something with a very simple elemental kind of a mind, [clears throat] they're not going to be fully enlightened, but they can't fit as much delusion into their mind as we can.

So [snorts] I mean, it's it's like this duality. Wisdom and foolishness come together in a sense. So that a human has way more potential for wisdom and also way more potential for foolishness than a cow or like a newborn baby or whatever.

So a baby would be pure awareness in the same sense that like a frog is pure awareness. And some people like ecartah would say frogs are fully enlightened.

But the very fact that babies kind of fall out of that state indicates that they weren't really enlightened to begin with because you don't fall from enlightenment to

unenlightenment. Or at least that's what the poly texts say. He who has attained thus does not fall back.

[snorts] So let's see here. Anything else? There was something else I was going to say.

Is a baby pure awareness or pure consciousness? [clears throat] No, not really. It's just a very kind of crude elementary form of delusion that blossoms into massive delusion as as the baby gets older, especially in some babies.

Let's see here. I might as well just move on to the next question. This is from Romeo. And Romeo says, "I recently

purchased your excellent book, Buddhist Ethics, Buddhist Practice." This is a good this is a good plug here for for the book. I'll start over. Romeo says, "I recently purchased your excellent book, Buddhist Ethics, Buddhist Practice, and read your essay, Who is Right and Who is wrong?" That's one of the chapters in the book. In the essay, unless I totally misread it, you posit that there is no such thing as objective reality and that everything is subjective. As I was reading it, I found that you were making a lot of convincing points. Then I thought, wait a minute, these are the same arguments that the woke left uses. Can you clarify your

subjectivity over objectivity argument
as well as summarize the point of your
essay overall? Well, [clears throat] the
point of the essay overall, I'll I'll
get to that first, I guess.

I mean, it wasn't um I mean, it really
was not trying to assert the same things
that like postmodern leftists assert
that that truth is just a cultural
construct.

And in a way, it kind of is, but I mean,
the whole point is different that I was
making and that like postmodern left is
making. the postmodern left is since
truth is ultimately subjective and to a
large degree a cultural construct then

the left can just decide what's going to be true and enforce that on society and what I was doing was more of an appeal to skepticism like classical skepticism in fact I would not be at all surprised if shortly before writing this essay I read Sextus Empiricus who was our main source of what ancient skepticism was like. It's Sextus Empiricus wrote this. It's like a textbook on skepticism. And you know, he points out that even our own eyes and ears are not fully reliable. Like food that you usually taste good, if you're feeling sick, it can taste bad. You know, if you're just in a certain kind of mood, what usually looks beautiful

isn't going to look beautiful anymore.

So it's it's subjective in that sense so that you can't really nail down some objective hard truth. That was one of the arguments Sexist Empiricus was making. In fact, he made it several times.

So [sighs and gasps]

yeah, I was mainly appealing to skepticism that nothing is really certain at least nothing out there that [clears throat]

western philosophers ear relatively early on like Spinoza and David Hume both asserted. I mean they considered it be something worth emphasizing that

anything that is at least partly outside of your own mind you know dealing with matters of fact in some presumed external world you can never be entirely sure of that that [clears throat] your own perceptual filters are going to be filtering out certain things and distorting certain things and just making up things. So yeah, I mean, you can't really rely on your [clears throat] sensory system and your perceptions to accurately describe what's going on outside of yourself.

So what what the postmodern left is doing, like I pretty much already said, is they're saying truth is just a

cultural construct. But even the statement truth is just a cultural construct would itself just be a cultural construct. And so you can't really make any kind of assertions. I mean the same way with with skepticism. I mean they still make the assertions. You can't really know anything for sure which itself is just another assertion. So I mean one of my favorite sutas in the Majinikaya is the Da Nakasuta which is the discourse that caused venerable Sarah to become enlightened because he was listening to the Buddha talking to this aesthetic named Dan Naka which means long fingernails

and [clears throat] the this non
Buddhist aesthetic Dana Naka says
nothing is acceptable to me
[clears throat] which is like you know
no idea no belief is acceptable to me.
And the Buddha says, well, even that
that idea that nothing is acceptable to
you seems to be acceptable to you. So
he's pointing out that you know even
just [clears throat]
like a denial of the certainty of stuff
is itself an assertion of one certainty
that is that you can't be certain of
stuff. So the Buddha was saying, well,
you still believe that one idea, so
which means that you still have one
belief too many.

[sighs and gasps]

And I mean, I might as well get into the idea that even though

I mean, all of the truths we are working with in society are just like

conventional truth. You know, in

Buddhism, you've got two different

levels of truth, at least two different

levels. You got conventional truth,

simuti satcha, and ultimate truth,

paramonta satcha. And conventional truth

is what we're dealing with. You know,

it's like grass is green and the sky is

up and two and two is four. Carson City

is the capital in Nevada. All that kind

of stuff. That's just conventional truth

and it's not ultimately real. It's just stuff we're working with. But [clears throat] still, because we're all human, we all share the same kind of perceptual system. So that there's going to be like regularities that found universally throughout the human race except for humans that are just so psychotic that they can't function in society.

So where was I going with that? Oh yeah, it just empiricism has a certain amount of regularity to it. And so when you've got like a post-modern leftist trying to just reject science and say, "Well, our truth is more like politically expedient than what science is saying. Therefore,

we're going to reject science and go along with this and just enforce this on an entire culture then.

Yeah. I mean, still because we all have the same kind of sensory systems approximately, you know, in as a general rule, we're all going to be experiencing the same sorts of things. You know, two and two is four, for example. Carson City is the capital of Nevada and all that.

So [snorts]

um mainly what I was discussing in the essay well I mean maybe not even that but I mean mainly the essay was just an appeal to skepticism but still I mean

there's

even though and a statement isn't

ultimately true still I mean it's some

statements are going to be more useful

and empirical and reliable than others

and when you cut loose from empirical

objectivity,

then um I mean you're just going to be

creating this fantasy world that isn't

going to apply to reality very well. And

that's one reason why leftism tends to

fail is that in a lot of cases they

prefer their own ideology to empirical

data.

And that's I mean when you start doing

that, when you start cutting loose from

like what is vulgarly known as objective

reality, then you're just going to start failing. You're going to start making these huge mistakes. You know, it's sort of like the person the stereotypical person in the scare stories from the just say no to drugs era of the person who takes LSD, thinks he can fly, jumps out a window, and just plummets like a rock.

That kind of thing can happen in politics also and it it is happening in politics especially on the left although the right is not like entirely exempt especially because the right is more inclined to embrace like Christianity

and I mean

to some degree there are some people that have the authority in this world to just make up stuff that is not empirical objectivity.

and have an entire civilization believing it. Like Christianity has a lot of leaps of faith in it. It's it's I mean obviously Christianity is not based on pure empiricism.

And so if you get somebody like in power who is say, "Okay, we're all going to believe this from now on and then can enforce that or gets enough people going along that it builds this momentum." And there's a certain amount of intolerant hysteria persecuting people that are

sensible and skeptical about it all
which is what happened in Western
civilization like the beginning of the
medieval era you know when when the
Roman Empire converts to Christianity
you know it's like the people that
didn't believe in Christianity aside
from some Jews that were valuable
because they could lend money at
interest you know they just got
persecuted into extinction
but that didn't make it necessarily
True. I mean it made it conventional
truth. Jesus died for our sins. His mama
was a virgin and all that. I mean that
that became like conventional truth for

Western civilization for over a thousand years. And a lot of people many millions and millions of people still believe it that this [clears throat] Jewish man who lived in the the early Roman Empire died for our sins. His mama was a virgin. you know, he was the son, only begotten son of God Almighty who happened have his origins in like Jewish or like Hebrew tribal beliefs and so forth.

the combination of L and Yahweh with getting some like Egyptian ideas and and Babylonian ideas and con Greek ideas and combining it into this God Almighty Jesus is an only beg begotten son and all that.

I mean, there [clears throat] is some of

that, but [gasps]

I don't think that it's quite the same as you've got postmodern leftists who are just saying, "Okay, from now on there's, you know, 157 different genders and that men and women are the same. You know, there is no sexual dimorphism in humans, which obviously is untrue.

>> [snorts]

>> So you deviate too far from empiricism and you start deviating from [snorts] what's going to really reliably work out in the long run.

Even though empiricism is not ultimately true, still it's like some of the default rules for this level of delusion

that we happen to be inhabiting.

But getting back to that, getting back to that essay, it was like an appeal to skepticism, not to, you know, we can just decide what the truth is and enforce it on society.

So, let's see here.

[sighs and gasps]

I guess I pretty much answered that question. And so, I'm just going to move on to Romeo's second question here, which is kind of a followup on his first question. Does your position that everything is subjective include the woke left's contention that male female sex differences are not based in objective reality and science but rather

are on a subjective gender spectrum that includes an everexpanding slew of categories like non-binary.

So I think I pretty much already answered this part that uh let's see see does your position that everything is subjective.

Yeah. Include the woke left's contention that male well I mean for an individual person to believe that then that would be their subjective experience. You know, there's a lot of people out there whose subjective experience is that the male female

um

binary or dichotomy or duality is just

fake and then they want to replace it with something that's even more fake.

So yeah, I think I pretty much already answered this question while answering the first one is let's see

everything is subjective. The the woke left's contention that male female sex differences are not based in objective reality. Um

in a way it is based in a kind of objective reality

although objective reality is also subjective. It's just that ob what we call objective. It's like a subjectivity that is shared amongst you know most other humans just because our perceptual systems are similar. You know we belong

to the same species. So there's going to be a certain like universal phenomena in the human species. you know, just barring outliers that are like really psychotic or something that I mean there is irregularity that cannot really be denied or you deny it at your peril.

So the very fact that we belong to the same species, the human species, means that there's going to be certain regularities in our perceived objective reality. And some of what the postmodern woke left is doing is just trying to just get away from empiricism and and what objectivity humans are capable of

managing

and just coming up with whatever serves their agenda.

And part of their agenda is just a kind of moral degeneracy.

Decadence. Decadence used to be a big thing. I mean, you'd read about like decadent civilizations of the past in history books up until like the latter part of the 20th century when all of a sudden everyone just gets real quiet about that because we're smack in the middle of it now. So, people don't want to be reminded of that that we're living in a degenerate civilization at present.

[snorts]

[sighs] So, let's see.

Yeah. And and like in Gibbons decline fall of the Roman Empire, he points out as just a kind of truism for historians at the time that one sign of a civilization in decline is Unix rising to social prominence in a society.

Unix which used to be of course it was like castrated slaves, castrated male slaves and then some of them would get freed and they'd become like like bureaucrats and so forth. In few famous cases in the the like the early

Byzantine East Roman Empire, you even had some like really good generals.

Narcisses who defeated the Ostrogoths in Italy was was a unic that kind of thing.

But still it is a sign of a civilization
in decline according to you know common
consensus

of historians back in the day and now

it's it's trans people

and that that is a sign of a

civilization is decline. It's like just

the the nuclear family and just

well-defined like roles for people in

society and all that. It's just kind of

breaking down and for some reason I've

got horizontal lines of light shining on

me. Especially if I lean back like this.

It looks kind of surreal, doesn't it? So

I'm going to have to

close this.

See? No, it doesn't. It's coming

[snorts] from the other side.

It's not even funny. Ah, that's a little better. Especially if I get close like this. It's just that time of day.

So, [gasps]

yeah, I think I answered that question.

I think I might as well just move on to the next question. This is from Jimmy Lad. And Jimmy Lad says, "In a Cartesian style skepticism situation, I don't not sure what cart." Oh, yeah. Okay. See, I'll start over. In a cartesian style skeptical situation, how does an enlightened being truly know he is enlightened and is not deceived by spiritual pride or delusion? Well,

probably most people who consider themselves to be enlightened. Possibly even all of them really may be just deceived by spiritual pride or delusion, just an overestimation of oneself.

Um, but I mean that's not real knowledge. That's just belief.

So I mean the truly enlightened being has transcended mere belief. He no longer confuses belief with knowledge.

And there's really nobody there to really believe anything anymore anyway other than just sort of vestigial nature taking its course maybe.

So I mean you can't really say how.

There is no how. Just like there is no how with regard to like miraculous

events occurring around an enlightened being. I think enlightened beings have pretty much transcended how.

Let's see here. Cartesian style skepticism. Yeah, I guess Descartes was he he tried to start off by doubting everything that could be doubted and didn't go quite far enough because still he wound up um like latching on to Christianity as a way of describing everything that that he could doubt or something. So let's see here.

[clears throat]

Yeah, I mean if you're fully enlightened, you're not going to be thinking I am enlightened. I mean you're

just going to transcend that. you're
just gonna see through all that samsaric
stuff like perception
and I mean at the samsaric level it's
just kind of a mystery I guess
but like I I have said many times before
[clears throat]
what was I [laughter]
get distracted by by seeing the light in
my face like this
let's see what was I going to say now.
Oh yeah, I just completely lost the
thread. I lost where I was going with
that just right in mid-sentence, which
does happen sometimes.
Let's see. How does an enlightened being
truly know he is enlightened? Well, I

mean that all true knowledge is ultimate truth. It's ultimate I mean real knowledge, not just belief.

So, oh yeah, I was going to say that like in a samsaric context, isn't I mean, it's problematic that there are any enlightened beings at all. I mean, it may be that within a samsaric context, an enlightened being really just can't exist. That like in samsara, which is based on delusion and ignorance, ignorance of ultimate reality, that there's going to be beings that are considered to be enlightened. But I mean calling even calling them beings is delusional.

So yes, it's like there was that logical school of Buddhism. I think sometimes it's called the the dignaga school or a few it used to be called like the the yoga logicians even though they may not have been yoga that they had like the classic example of a problematic premise is that being X you know such and such being is enlightened. You can't prove it at all.

an enlightened being, they would know it in a way, but you can't really explain that in samsaric terms. How you transcend belief and just go straight into ultimate absolute knowledge, just knowledge of the highest truth.

So, it's it's just going to be kind of

like a a mystery or paradox from a
samsaric point of view.

And I mean like many texts even like the
the diamond cutter sutra of the Mahayana
Buddhist say that if you become an Arya
you're not going to be thinking I'm an
Arya.

I mean that's just like one of the ex
like a symptom of like a fake Arya is
they believe that they're an Arya
because your self view is already gone
at that stage. So, you're not going to
be believing I am this or I am not that.

Okay. So, I kind of
waited and wandered around that that
question for a little while. And so, I'm

going to move on to Jimmy Lad's next question, which is a follow-up on his first question. He says, "For instance, what's to stop monks from going around self-proclaiming enlightenment? Is there a taboo for monks in self-announcing it? Well, in like in the poly texts, there's like the lion's roar, the sihanada, which means [clears throat] that when you've got a disciple becomes enlightened, he goes and tells his teacher like usually the Buddha and then the Buddha would know if he's really enlightened or not or just like deceiving himself. So you go and sort of explain what happened and then the Buddha can say, "Yeah, that's that's

good. Go in peace." Or he can say, "No, you're mistaken. You think you're enlightened when you're really not." So if anybody in the world can tell if somebody is enlightened, there's going to be another enlightened person. So you can proclaim your enlightenment to your enlightened teacher and then maybe they can say, "All right, that's that's good. I'm not going to argue against that." or they can say, "No, you're making a mistake. You you're you're overlooking things. You're you're overestimating your attainments."

Um, but going around self-proclaiming enlightenment to lay people, that's I

mean, no monk or none, fully ordained
nun of the past who they think that
they're enlightened. They I mean, even
then, they can't tell lay people. They
can tell other monastics, you know, in
private, maybe just, you know, for
feedback or whatever. But it is a pitia
offense even to to admit to a lay person
that [clears throat] you have psychic
powers. You know, any kind of superhuman
mental state, any udri manusa dama is
that that would include like psychic
powers. It would include the attainment
of Janna from the the early Buddhist
description of Janna and it would
include enlightenment or
semi-enlightenment. You know, you become

a sodapana or something. You're not allowed to say that to a lay person even if it's true because that's a paid offense

an offense requiring confession.

But if it's false, if you're just deliberately lying, you know, you're just claiming that you can remember your past lives when you can't just in order to get famous or get a reputation for being enlightened or whatever, then that's parajika. You're excommunicated for life. That's like the worst thing a monastic can do. I mean, going with the text, it's even worse than murder.

So, what's to stop monks from going

around self-proclaiming enlightenment?

Well, if they're going around

self-proclaiming it uh falsely to lay

people, then they're excommunicated. Or

I mean, if they're falsely knowingly

falsely proclaiming it even to other

monks, they're excommunicated.

But there is like the little loophole of

if you're just overestimating your

attainments. If you sincerely believe

you're enlightened when you're not, then

you wouldn't be excommunicated. But it

would still be if you're telling lay

people about it, it would be a Pacidia

offense requiring expeation.

>> [clears throat]

>> But I mean you can self-proclaim

like even becoming a sodapana like
venerable Nyana Vera famously and
notoriously did this. He he believed
himself to have become a sodapana back
in the 1960s when he was living in son
and so he just sent out letters. I mean
first he was going to try and keep it a
secret till after his death but he was
he just was didn't have it in him to
keep it a secret. So he just kind of
blurted it out, you know, he just kind
of released the letters be or just maybe
it was just one letter just announcing
that he had become a sodapon and then of
course it started this controversy of
people saying no he isn't or yes he is.

Um

yeah, I mean it's just considered to be almost taboo for a monk to go around proclaiming that he is a sodapana or he is you know he has Janna. I mean some some monks hint at it like Mahasi upandit would hint that he was an Arya and he considered himself apparently to be higher than a sodapana. I would assume he considered himself to be a sakodagami,

but he couldn't just blurt it out in his dhamma talks to lay people because even if it was true, it would still be against the rules of monastic discipline. So he would just kind of hint at it. [snorts]

[sighs] And then there are monks that that do more than just hint at like you know there was one monk he was he was in Burma Odamasara or Odmathara I can't remember which Odmasara or Odmathara um spelled with a C or an S. I mean he would in his books which I think were like transcripts of domattox that he would say you know he saw this this animal and then he realized that it was like his mother from a previous life or something and that kind of thing. I mean you're essentially admitting to having psychic powers if you can see this kind of stuff you know look into the spirit of this animal and see you know remember

its past lives that kind of thing. So there are monks that do this kind of stuff even though it's it's considered to be [snorts] like against the rules. I mean like grounds for excommunication at worst and just kind of like bad manners, bad etiquette at best.

You know in a way it's bragging and usually if a monk is bragging it's because you know he wants to endorse his own fame that kind of thing.

Okay so I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Sedarta Lohachita.

And I'm I'm kind of like getting like a faster pace going to my question answering lately. So, this probably be

less than two hours when I'm done.

[snorts]

[clears throat]

Should have blown my nose before I did
this video, but
oh well.

So this next question is from Sedarta
Lohachita

who in my opinion spells his own name
wrong and I generally fix it because he
doesn't he's got like TA instead of T ha
ending Sedarta

but he can spell his own name however he
pleases. I'm not going to get on his
case over it any more than I just did.

So Sedarta lohachita

[clears throat] which is like what is
it? Attainments accomplished
with
red mind.

I think loa means red. Lohita is blood
or it could be copper because copper is
red. Yeah. Okay. So, Sedarta Lohachita
says, "Who was the most radical Buddhist
you have ever met?" And I'm not exactly
sure what Sedarta lohachida has in mind
with regard to the most radical
Buddhist, but the person that
immediately comes to mind would be
venerableiza

who was like a Buddhist Rambo. He was
like when I was a junior monk, he was
ordained in the Tonulu tradition, same

as me and he was always held up as like this role model to be emulated because he was absolutely completely strict in Vineia for example.

Um

there was uh there was a number of stories about him with regard to his strictness in viney I've told most of these stories like um he came to America he was ordained in in Burma I'm pretty sure he came to America for a visit when Tom Pulu came to America and he wouldn't stay indoors even though this was like Northern California in cold weather and I mean he would be literally blue he would be so cold but he would refuse to

stay indoors. he would just stay on this hillside under a tree outside. And one of his friends

um who was like a monastery attendant at this same monastery was explaining to me that you know most people like most Buddhists you know you've got the middle path between self self-indulgence and self- torture.

Most people, the overwhelming majority of people, including the overwhelming majority of monks, stray off the middle path towards self-indulgence.

But Uriza,

he would he would go the opposite way.

He would veer off into self- torture. In fact, he his practice was so intense,

you know, he's trying to do all of the dutongas, the optional aesthetic practices at the highest level that he had like a breakdown at one point and had to disrobe, go back to America. And then as soon as he was recovered and got better, he just came right back again and reordained. And when I first met him, he was living in a big hall. No, wait. When I first met him, he was living in a cave in Thailand.

And he thought it was paradise, this cave, you know, and I I I looked inside, but all I saw was just pitch blackness. I looked inside this his his cave in Thail in rural area of Thailand. And he

he had to sleep on a hammock and he couldn't keep anything. He couldn't keep soap. He couldn't keep books because the rats would just chew it all up. And he thought this was just excellent cave.

Had to sleep in a hammock just to keep him up above the rats.

And then after that he came back to Burma and [clears throat] he moved into this big hollow banyan tree. I think it was like two big banyan trees. Banyan trees get huge and they kind of grew together and there was like this hollow place in between. He lived in there for a while and just the stories you hear like when he came to America this story I've told before where there somebody

was having a meditation retreat at that monastery and so they asked him to give a dharma talk to the meditators which he agreed to do. And so at the time of his dharma talk, he comes sits down in front of the the group of meditators and just sits there in silence for about five minutes and then he just gets up and leaves. And so the organizer of the meditation retreat, you know, chases after him and says, "Why'd you do that?" And he said, "There's somebody in the in the audience who's wearing a stocking cap and it's against Vinia for a monk to teach Dhamma to someone whose head is covered."

So the the organizer of the treat of the retreat went back and got this this lady, it was winter time, it was cold to take off the stocking cap and then he came back and gave the domat talk and he he was doing that kind of stuff a lot. He was just really he was just kind of an eccentric person and just he was he was like a Buddhist Rambo and he was sort of like my role model for a long time in my early years as a monk especially.

He eventually dropped out of the monkhood but he just did not stop living a monastic life. He remained like this monastic hermit wearing like like robes, shaving his head sometimes, letting his

hair grow long sometimes. So he was like
a yeate in Burmese, which is like a
non-ordained

like religious hermit monastic type,
[clears throat] but he changed his name
legally. So even after he dropped out of
the monkhood, he still had this poly
name with Biku as his last name.

So, he'd be the most radical Buddhist
I've I've ever met. At least he's the
the obvious example of a radical

Buddhist that immediately came to mind
when when I came across this question.

You you see some other like similar kind
of Asian Buddhists, although I didn't
know them as well. I didn't have

conversations with them as much, but there were some Asian Buddhist monks who were just like absolutely uncompromising in practicing as strictly as they possibly could, following all the rules. There was one monk who came to my monastery and he [clears throat] was thinking about staying there, but at one point he had this long like a bamboo pole and he's measuring the distance to the nearest village with this bamboo pole. And it turns out that it wasn't quite enough of a distance for him to be following the dutonga of being a forest dweller because according to some texts, if you're a forest dweller, you have to live at least a certain distance from

the nearest village. And this my
monastery where I was living was just
right inside. It wasn't quite far enough
away. So he just moved on to the next
place because it he couldn't follow that
rule or that optional aesthetic practice
of living at least you know xum x
distance from the nearest village.

So there there are people like that that
are just like uncompromisingly
strict to just like this wildeyed
semihysterical degree in some of them.

So, I'm just going to move on to Sedart
Loha's next question. And I will say
before I'm moving on though that I mean
it's not necessarily following the

middle path when you're just like
absolutely like obsessively strict.
So there there has to be like some I
don't know equanimity involved. And you
can be you can be completely strict and
have equanimity which would be good. But
if you're like really just sort of like
clinging to being absolutely strict and
not breaking any rules, that can be a
hindrance also. So anyways, getting onto
Sedart Loha's next question here.

Aristotle used the expression that we
usually translate as extreme democracy
which is hippokratias
in Greek in badly pronounced Greek or
democracy taken to excess. Then he says,
"Do you think that the Western

Hemisphere has reached that point that
has turned a total tyranny?"

And then he's got another question which
I should separate into a different
question. Let's see.

Then he says, "So do you think when we
have reached that point only can be
removed by brutal force?" Okay, I'll
just answer the first question first
because there's two question marks here.

So do I think Oh, just a minute. I got
to blow my nose. This is ridiculous.

>> [clears throat]

>> I'll get out of the picture so that you
just hear the disgusting noise.

Okay. [snorts]

When you have a mustache, you have to blow your nose more carefully than most people do.

But I digress.

So, [clears throat] do I think that we have excess of democracy? Yeah. And the founding fathers warned against what America was becoming. just setting aside all the other more or less democratic countries in the west just dealing with America. The founding fathers like Thomas Jefferson realized that when you give the right to vote to everybody including like people that are living on the dole then they're just going to vote for more free stuff. You just it just kind of degenerates into a kind of

socialism

and

that's that's not good. Originally in America, like the 1776 or starting with the Constitution anyway, the only people that could vote in America were white men who owned property.

And to some degree, I mean, the the whiteness probably you could you could dispense with that without too much damage to the system. But allowing women the right to vote, I mean, immediately you're going to start like sliding towards socialism because women are more interested in security than in liberty. they'll they'll vote away their own

rights and freedoms and the your rights
and freedoms for the sake of security
and taking care of everybody. And when
you start

like rewarding

this being a kind of economic parasite

on society, you know, you're not

contributing. I mean, you might be

paying a little bit of your dole back in

the form of taxes, something like that.

But seriously, it should be like only

the people who are like supporting

the the system should be the ones who

have the right to participate in the

political system.

And women, I mean, they tend to be less

informed with regard to like current

events and so forth. They have done studies on that. And again, they're just willing to vote away everybody's rights and liberties for the sake of security, which generally means a kind of socialist mommy state where you can't smoke cigarettes anymore. it's going to be illegal because we have socialized healthcare and other people are going to have to pay for your lung cancer. That kind of thing. You have to wear seat belts. I mean, this was an argument used when I was a teenager. You know, they just passed the seat belt law that you have if you're going to be driving your car, you have to have your seatelt

attached. And the main argument mainly that you get from girls is, well, you get in an accident, you could become a ward of the state. The government will have to support you. and which means everyone else in a kind of socialistic or you know semisocialistic system is going to have to pay for your accident. So yeah, I mean you can use socialism as a kind of like a a ratchet device for getting farther and farther away from from rights and liberties.

You stop being citizens and start being subjects.

But yeah, I do think that when you've got people on welfare voting, you've got extreme democracy or democracy taken to

excess. It should be only the people who really are in a position to make valuable contributions to society and not just by like selling empanadas from a from a food truck.

But at least those people have jobs. I mean like a welfare queen with eight kids by five different fathers who I mean her career choice was just going on welfare then I mean a person like that should not be able to vote because they're just going to be voting for more free stuff. Of course they're going to vote Democrat every time which is why the Democrats like this kind of thing.

[sighs and gasps]

So let's see. I wouldn't say it's a total tyranny, but I mean it is a corrupt system that no longer is really um it's no longer really designed to promote strength. You know, like socialism or the left in general, they glorify the weak and demonize the strong. And when you've got an entire civilization with glorified weaklings and demonized strong people, then obviously the civilization is going to go downhill. I mean, you shouldn't take the exact opposite approach where you glorify the strong and demonize the poor. But glorifying the strong, I mean, that's

what the ancient Greeks and Romans did.
you know, their culture heroes up until
they turned Christian were like heroes.
You know, Theseus and Achilles, Achilles
was a real but he was a hero.

So,

yeah. I mean like you can glorify the
strong while at the same time having
some compassion for the weak but still
that compassion for the weak should be
demonstrated by private charity and not
just raising taxes so that the some
government bureaucracy can very
inefficiently support the weak.

So yeah, I do agree that we have got an
excess of democracy and it's it's even

worse in places like Australia or New Zealand or the UK or the EU or Canada than it is in the United States. The United States, as I said, I think in the previous Q&A, hasn't been fully castrated yet. We still have one ball. Okay. So I guess I'll just move on to the second half of this question by Sedar Taloh. Do you think that when we have reached that point only can be removed by brutal force? Well, anything is possible. So, I don't think it's necessary for the system to be violently overthrown necessarily.

Um, you could have

um I mean it is po anything's possible.

So I mean you could have just enough

people like a critical mass of people
just kind of waking up to hey this
postmodern leftism just doesn't work
very well then I mean if you have enough
people shifting in their consciousness
like that then sure like in in the going
with Rome Rome is like a good example of
what can happen with America that um I
mean you can have reforms but I think
taking the vote vote away from women or
taking the vote away from people living
on welfare handouts. I mean, that's
going to really take some doing. That
might actually require just an overthrow
of the government. But even that, I
mean, it could be like a a peaceful

coup, you know, a bloodless coup could result in that sort of thing. But yeah, I mean for that kind that radical improvement or change where you're reducing you're limiting the people that are able to participate in the political process just to kind of weed out the deadwood just people voting for free gimmies or just voting away rights and freedoms for the sake of some imagined security. And as I think it was Benjamin Franklin said, when you vote away your freedoms for the sake of security, you wind up with neither.

And you're you're worthy of neither. But a lot of people on the left just don't see it that way.

So yeah, I don't think it can only be removed by brutal force. I mean, there can be peaceful means of doing it. You know, it's like the government is like gains control of the propaganda machine, then you know, they can sort of propagandize people into going in a certain direction. But really, I think taking the vote away from people living on welfare handouts just just for one example. Um, yeah, that would take some kind of radical change because you're going to have just millions of people just rioting in the streets if you just all of a sudden just declare that. Say

Trump just suddenly declares that. Yeah, there's just going to be like yowling bloody murder just on a nationwide scale coming from certain people.

So I mean it's not necessarily changed by brutal force, but historically that is generally the way it works unless you just have somebody voted in as emperor and then they just are st suddenly start changing changing rules. But then the brutal force would come in when the when people start rioting and then you just send out the the troops to quell the riot by any means necessary.

So probably there'd be some brutal force involved if um the excess of democracy were turned around and turned into

something a little more healthy, also a little more patriarchal.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Fred and Fred says, "I pulled into a derelict to monastery last year that was really spooky and I don't spook easy." Here I got to input two spaces between monastery and last. Okay. What What's your thoughts on that? So Fred pulled into a derelict monastery last year that was really spooky. And Fred doesn't spook easy. What are my thoughts on that? Well, um I remember as a kid and as an adult also, you go into a house that's just like an abandoned derelict

house and there's kind of a spooky feeling to that too. You know, it's like there was like families living there, you know, it's like lots of people there and it is just like empty and dead. It's sort of like instead of um a snail shell inhabited by a living snail, it's just like a dead empty shell. that kind of thing. So that can cause kind of a spooky feeling. I don't think the fact that it's a monastery would really be the key point here. I mean, it could be a school, it could be a a house, an apartment building, a hospital, any kind of building or group of buildings or whatever that used to have like lots of people there, a community of humans all

interacting and all of a sudden now it's
it's just dead and empty. It's going to
cause a spooky feeling. you know, it's
it's a dead building just like uh an
empty crab shell is like a dead crab
shell. It's it's not inhabited by a
living crab.

So, it's it's kind of that kind of deal.
I would I would guess, but I really
wouldn't presume to try to psychoanalyze
Fred enough that I could really get into
what his subjective experience was when
he's um at this derelict monastery.

I mean, derelict. I mean, I I assume he
means there's nobody there. It was like
an abandoned place. I mean, it could

just be like a monastery with people still there, like monks still there that's just kind of run down. That could be kind of derelict. I went to a place like that in Burma once. It was in in the town of Yay, which is like a brown zone. Foreigners can't visit the the city of Yay very much. It's like southern Mon state, which was in an insurgent zone most of the time I was living there. So anyways, I got a permit from the government to go and visit pagotas in Yay. That's not really why we went there, but you just say that on the on the application. And there was this monastery that specialized in contemplation of corpses. And there were

like mummified corpses throughout this monastery. And as there was just like mold and mildew all over the place in this monastery. There's pictures on the wall. You couldn't even tell what the pictures were because it was so overgrown with like mold and stuff. You look up on the bookshelf, there's like a hum a mummified human foot just sitting with all this other junk on this shelf, that kind of thing.

And then they have like these cases of like mummified humans everywhere. It was I mean that place kind of was gave me the willies kind of. And it wasn't just that there was human bodies and human

body parts. It was just like the mold and rubbish and everything anyway. The dirt. It just

I don't think the monks that would live in a place like that would be completely healthy unless they were like very advanced and were just above all that kind of stuff.

Anyways, [sighs]

that's some of my thoughts on that and I'm moving on to to the next question which is from Drip Walker. And Ripw Walker says, "You said that in Burmese society that people whose livelihood involves killing are of low social status. How does this apply to people who serve in the Burmese military?"

Yeah, there is still some of that in the Burmese military. Although, of course, the government being a military dictatorship pretty much, it does glorify the army. And so in the the culture at least like in the propaganda and so forth and just in the culture in general um soldiers get kind of a an exemption from this to some degree.

Uh, I mean it's like being in the military is like the avenue to social advancement sort of like in like the Roman Republic, early Roman Empire where if if you were going to amount to anything like in society or politically especially, you had to go through the

military and it's kind of like that in Burma to some degree like most of the richest people are either like generals and colonels or else close relatives of generals and colonels.

Um

but even so there is still I mean Burma is possibly the most devoutly Buddhist country in in the world and so people realize that soldiers who kill people including citizens of their own country um that they're not doing what is wholesome. You know they're making bad karma especially if they're actually killing people. Not all people in the military are actually shooting people but or blowing them up or whatever.

But the thing is um there is enough of a semi-stigma on the army partly because the army is like the oppressive government you know the oppressive arm of the government and all that you know the Burmese military is mainly used against people within the country rather than you know in foreign wars obviously. Um, so most of the the recruits into the Burmese military, or so I have read, are not ethnic Burmese. They're like Chins and Karen and these Christian ethnic groups that live on the outskirts of the country. So it's like the heartland of Burma is ethnic Burmese. and all the way around, you know, like you've got the

Rakines and then you've got the Chins
and then you've got the like the the
Kachins up north and you've got the
Shans and you've got the Kayas and the
Cayins and so it's like all the way
around the country um on the frontiers
or the borders it's these non Buddhist
or anyways non Burmese groups and a lot
of them were converted to Christianity
during the British colonial times and
after British colonial times with
American American missionaries. First it
was English missionaries. Then American
missionaries also came in and converted
a lot of these the Nagas and so forth to
Christianity.

The Nagas being a a tribal group living

in northwestern Burma north of the Chins
kind of in between the Chins and the and
the Kachins in the northwest. They used
to be head hunters up until you know
well into the second half of the 20th
century.

So I guess converting to Christianity
was an improvement on being head
hunters.

Let's see. So yeah, I mean the Burmese
they tend to have a certain like
Buddhist reluctance
to consider becoming soldiers. At least
it's a stat statistically significant
reluctance and the uh the government
like selectively targets these ethnic

groups to become soldiers.

So that's that's a factor also.

So

yeah, I mean the the military really does not have a very good reputation in Burma mainly because it is a repress a brutal and repressive and incompetent military dictatorship or it has been for most of the time that I've been associated with that country.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from SG

and SG says what is the fundamental ontological relation between samsara and nibbana or the unconditioned element? Is samsara itself sustaining and nibbana is this separate thing that has no

connection to it or is it dependent on nibbana? There must be some connection if liberation is even possible. Or else, how would one get from here to there?

Acknowledging that there isn't a physical place in space. Well, there's two ways I can answer this question. One is like the orthodox terraovodan way and then the other is what I consider to be more what I consider to be closer to reality.

So the orthodox terraodin way like abidama philosophy it's got nibbana essentially part of samsara at least with regard to the scale of the ultimate realities you know there's 128 ultimate

realities nibbana is just one of those
tongue sensitivity earth element you
know all this stuff is just as real as
nibbana is from the point of view of
Abidama and I just cannot buy that at all
I've really have very little use for the
Abidama philosophy of Terabara Buddhism
and most western monks, most western
Buddhists really don't have much use for
Abidama.

So um it's just
like the way that the early Buddhist
philosophers early Terabato Buddhist
philosophers worked it out is they did
not have really a sophisticated formal
logic in northern India at that time
apparently. And so there's what we would

consider to be kind of sloppy thinking involved in working out the system. Like nibbana is no more real than wrong view or tongue sensitivity or femininity fire element.

That kind of stuff. I mean it's that's just

they can't really explain nibbana very well at all because they're trying to keep nibbana at the same level of reality as everything else and it just doesn't work that way. So my explanation is what I was explaining in answer to the very first question on this Q&A and which I talk about in pretty much every Q&A the the the simile of the uncarved

block infinite formless consciousness
which because it's infinite and formless
and it's really the only thing that
really exists. I mean it just kind of
becomes
indistinguishable from absolutely
nothingness. You know, like the
philosophy of Hegel, his his logic, his
first thesis is pure being. And then his
antithesis to that is pure non-being.
And he points out that you can't really
tell them tell them apart because
there's no discernable content in either
one.

So after that, Hegel in his philosophy
just accepts that pure being and pure
non-being are synonyms, that they're the

same.

And so you wind up with this strange paradox of the absolute in Buddhism that I mean you talk about it a little bit but it's it's kept to a minimum in Buddhism. I think the Buddha wisely knew that when you reify the absolute you start calling it an it and talking about it a lot. I mean you just wander off into delusion because no perception is going to stick to that absolute truth ultimate truth. Paramontas satcha cannot be put into words. Once you start talking, you're talking conventional truth which is delusional at well at worst it's delusional at best

it's just illusion.

So you've got this uncarved block of marble in the simile and contained within that block of marble is every possible statue including an infinite number of impossible statues like a statue with its head levitating above its neck.

Or, you know, you've got Myron's discus thrower with legs as thin as threads that couldn't really stand up under its own weight, you know, if it were really carved out of marble, but it's still in that block of marble.

So, the the connection between Samsara and Nibbana, Samsara is all the virtual statues

and Nibbana would be the rock. You know, it's like essence and form. Like I keep using coffee mugs lately. Ceramic. Is this a coffee mug or is it ceramic? Well, by golly, it happens to be both at the same time. Even though coffee mug and ceramic are not synonyms. So, it's violating the laws of thought. You know, it's a and not a at the same time because it's coffee. It's a coffee mug and it's ceramic at the same time. Even though ceramic is not the same as coffee mug. Coffee mug and ceramic have two different meanings, but it's both at the same time. So it's a and not a simultaneously violating the aristotelian

laws of thought.

So

samsara is like virtual imaginary
potential statues contained in the the
infinite formless block of marble which
in the daoqing is called the nameless
uncarved block.

The Dao teaching says, you know, from
from [clears throat] the Dao came the
one, from the one came the two, and from
the two came the 10,000 things.

So just sort of translating that into
Buddhist terms, it's like the Dao is the
absolute is isn't it's nibbana nibana
datu and the 10,000 things are samsara.
So first you reify the absolute call it
the one

even though the the sins Ming says all
you can say is not two because he's not
even going that far. He's not even going
to call it the one

because like Hegel points out one and
zero I mean ultimately they're the same.

If that's the only two numbers there are
you can't tell them apart.

So let's see here.

Yeah. So I the difference just putting
it in easy terms

the difference between ultimate reality
and like conventional reality. The
difference between nibbana datu and
samsara

is the ultimate is like the essence

and like ceramic whereas the
conventional is the form or coffee mug.
So, it's a matter of essence and form.
And the forms are all like subjective,
arbitrary, ultimately unreal.

I'm just going to move on. Next
question. Now, this is from RFS.

And RFS says, "Do you think I'm going to
make sure we're recording now?" Yeah, we
are. Okay. RFS says, "Do you think it is
easier for a monk to be reborn in the
lower realms being that they might be
held to a higher standard?" And um when
I was a monk, I used to remember reading
somewhere, I think it was probably in a
book by Thomas Merton, [clears throat]
that there's a saying among the

Catholics that a monk can go to hell easier than a lay person simply because they've got a higher standard they have to live up to. And there is some support of that in the poly text like there's uh a series of sutas or just like narratives because I think some some of them are in the the vignia also where somebody like Maha Mogalana or Mahakasapa will smile and they're just he's just walking along with another monk and the other monk asked him why are you smiling just now and he says ask me later. So later he gets asked and then he says I happen to see this ghost or a spirit flying through the air and

there's different ones you know some of them are in flames. There was one that was

had like elephantiasis of the scrotum and they were like hawks and and like and like crows and stuff following along pecking at this gigantic scrotum that this guy was having to carry over his shoulder. you know, they were like ghosts that had done something really bad and so they're being punished for it in this, you know, this lower realm. And um sometimes it's it's like a a corrupt judge, but in some cases it's like a monk who broke his vow of celibacy, that kind of thing. And so um yeah, people held up to a higher standard, they can

um get bad results from their mistakes or their bad choices more easily than the average person.

So yeah, a monk going around declaring himself to be enlightened and fooling lots of people would probably be doing something worse than some kind of eccentric person standing on a street corner declaring himself to be enlightened and nobody's paying attention or believing him.

So yeah, I think in some ways it's easier for a monk to be reborn in the lower realms. Although in general it's easier for a monk to be reborn in the higher realms too because you know

they're they're living a more they're dedicating their life to virtue and the cultivation of wisdom to a higher degree than most lay people. So in a way it kind of broadens the spectrum of potential results. You know easier to get into a higher realm, easier to get into a lower realm, easier to get enlightened assuming that within a saric context that even means anything.

But like bad monks like Dewa Data, he went to Avichi hell. He's roasting in hell, the lowest pit of hell right now for trying to kill the Buddha. Although probably if he was a lay person, he'd be down there still because you try to kill the Buddha, you make the Buddha bleed,

you're guaranteed hell. Just going with orthodox terraoden doctrine or tradition.

So, I think it is easier for a bad monk to be reborn in the lower realms than for a bad person to be reborn in the lower realms, assuming that they're doing approximately the same kind of acts. And it is easier for a good monk to get into higher realms than for a lay person to get into higher realms simply because the monk is like dedicating his life. I mean, he's working at it full-time ideally, especially if he's a good conscientious monk.

He's going to be developing wisdom which

is going to help keep him out of the lower realms. That kind of thing. So like a lax, sloppy, unconscientious monk who is stealing or like seducing women.

And once he successfully seduces a woman, like you know, he has sex with with a woman, he's not really a monk anymore. And that that would be bad, too. I mean, you got people pretending to be monks, and there are some out there

that they're actually excommunicated, and they just don't tell anybody. Nobody really, nobody has called them out on it or anything.

So

yeah, I do think it's easier for a bad

unconscientious monk to be reborn in lower realms if he's just really like disregarding dharma and just using his position as a monk for like personal gain.

[snorts]

Okay. I mean it's like slandering the Buddha, that kind of thing. Like if I [clears throat] mean this happens a lot too where you've got I mean this happened relatively recently where I just happened to see this YouTube video of somebody sort of passing themselves off as a Buddhist monk who are just giving these like left-wing platitudes and I think it was um they're talking

[clears throat] about how being anti-Israel is being the same as being anti-semitic and it's hate speech and so forth. for and I was kind of taking him to task in the in the comments of this YouTube video and I mean it just got to the point where he was just like scoffing and mocking at the idea that um what was it exactly? It was like uh that that Will is volitional or you know it's like that

I mean it was something just completely bizarre just completely non Buddhist and he's just like scoffing and mocking at the very idea that um like suffering is ultimately self-inflicted because um you know our our desires are volitional and

that was it. I was he was just scoffing and mocking at the idea that desires are volitional and that suffering is ultimately self-inflicted, which is pretty basic to Buddhist philosophy. And he's just like I mean he I mean not only is he like promoting this sort of anti-darmic view, but he's just like scoffing and mocking at actual dharma or at least what is considered to be actual dharma anyway.

and somebody who's doing that kind of thing like pretty much slandering dharma and just for the sake of getting clicks or something. I mean, yeah, I mean that's that's flirting with disaster

right there. Or then there's Ken Wheeler who declares that the Buddha was murdered by Mahakasapa, his chief disciple at the time of his death, who was like senior monk in the in the SA after the Buddha passed away because his two chief disciples, Mahā Mahamogallāna and and Mahā Sārata or sorry Puta both had died before the Buddha did. They're probably older than him.

And Ken Wheeler is just declaring that Mahakasapa, you know, the senior monk in the in the SA at the time of the Buddha's death, actually participated in murdering the Buddha. And I mean, you'd have to be damn sure that you're telling the truth in a case like that. Because

if you're just slandering an arhan, if you're slandering a saint just through reckless disregard for the truth, even though you might actually believe it's true based on what? Based on like really crappy translations that you made yourself to make it look that way, then yeah, I mean that's that's bad, too.

Although I'm I'm completely digressed from just wandered away from the question because Ken Wheeler is not a monk.

But you got to be really careful about some of this stuff if you're [snorts] like teaching the exact opposite of dharma

while saying that it's dhamma so that you're leading people astray.

I mean people could say that I'm doing the same thing but at least I tend to differentiate my own personal opinion from orthodoxy. you know, if I digress, if I deviate from what orthodoxy teaches, like with regard to the the relationship of Nibbana and Samsara, I generally make it known and then you can choose for yourself, which you prefer.

But I'm not going to say that the Buddha taught this when really there's no evidence that he did. That's you're getting into d you're getting onto thin ice with regard to that.

So, let's see here. I mean causing a

schism that's that's a guarantee of hell
supposedly and plenty of plenty of
Buddhist monks did that in the past.

But I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Phil

and Phil says, "What is your advice for
loneliness from a Buddhist perspective?"

Gosh, that's tough because I really I
really never felt lonely very much.

There were times when I was a monk when
there was a certain friend of mine named
mucus man that I would really miss.

And I mean being a red-blooded male, I
would be lonely for a woman sometimes. I
mean just sort of having this
unfulfilled desire m for, you know,

fulfilling one's mating instinct, that kind of thing. But as a general rule, I've been a loner. I've been relatively self-sufficient throughout my life.

So advice for loneliness from a Buddhist perspective first of all I mean you can just do the panacea just practice mindfulness of it what does it feel like you observe the loneliness and then it's not you being lonely anymore it's just loneliness is arising you know this mental state is arising and you just observe it like an ichthyologist observes a dead fish what does it feel like that kind of thing

um I mean loneliness I mean solitude is
is definitely praised. We wake up is
definitely praised in Buddhism. So, it's
a good thing. If you don't like it, then
it's just kind of like you're not, you
know, you've got certain karmic
tendencies that are making your
personality not a perfect fit for
advanced Buddhism, which I mean, all of
us have that to some degree.

Most of us anyway.

So, what is your advice for loneliness
from a Buddhist perspective? The best
advice would just practice mindfulness
of it. Just psychoanalyze yourself to
some degree. Why is it that you don't

like solitude? You can get insights from that.

Um, and also bear in mind that Buddhism endorses solitude. Not loneliness, but solitude. We wake up.

So, let's see. Let's just move on to the next question here from Phil. What is your advice for loneliness from a non Buddhist perspective?

Well, from a non Buddhist perspective, I mean, if you really do have a need for like a social life, then yeah, you you you can cultivate that. You have the the freedom and the right to cultivate a social life. Even if you're a monk, I mean, you could live in a crowded monastery with other monks

and have monk friends. There's no rule against that. I mean it's not really praised in the texts very much. You know solitude is really receives the highest praise in the Buddhist texts but this is from a non Buddhist perspective I guess the least says so. So what is your advice for loneliness from a non Buddhist perspective?

I mean, if it really is in harmony with your nature to interact with other people, have a social life, then you can do that and you can practice dhamma within that context. You know, it's like there's different ways you could you could develop a life of ser selfless

service of others,
which would be dharmic, beneficial,
wholesome, and at the same time, you're
interacting with other people all the
time. In my case, it doesn't work very
well. I really don't like the human race
all that much. I'm not really a
socially or oriented person, but some
people are and that's that's fine. I
mean, that's kind of helped keep the
human race going all these millennia.
So my advice for loneliness from a non-B
Buddhist perspective is I mean if you
can't use Buddhist methods to just be
mindful of it and observe it and kind of
denature it by you know through
philosophical detachment

or whatever or you just force yourself
you just grit your teeth and just force
yourself to live a life of solitude
because the Buddhist texts say so that's
what you sh ought to do then yeah you
just you can go ahead and interact with
other people and do it as dharmically as
possible, you know, just cultivate a a a
yoga of selfless service, you know,
karma yoga.

So, I mean, there's that, too. But, I
mean, you can be mindful of of
loneliness and observe it in a detached
like empirical manner. Um, even if
you're not a Buddhist. So, there is that
too.

But forcing yourself I mean there
there's always a certain gamble in
forcing yourself to be like saintlier or
more aesthetic than is natural for you
because then you start getting into the
realm of like Freudian hysteria like
repressed urges that don't just go away.
They don't just disappear. you just
repress them down into your subconscious
mind where they build up pressure until
they start percolating up to the surface
as neurotic symptoms.

And like for for a lot of people,
they're they're willing to cultivate
neurotic symptoms for the sake of making
progress in dharma or you know like
medieval Catholic saints. Some of them

were extremely nutty just because they were so repressed going with a Freudian approach anyway. And I think he was probably correct in in regard to this.

So you might be healthier

like physically and mentally if you are a socially oriented person to develop some kind of socially oriented dharmic existence like selfless service, work at a homeless shelter or something, work at a soup kitchen,

that kind of thing. You can you can do that.

Be a teacher.

So, I'm just going to move on to uh Phil Lee's third question here. And he says,

"For one whose entire body is hopelessly riddled with wrong view and who is a burden on others, wouldn't it be best to cease being through autotermination?"

Well, from a Buddhist point of view, you're just going to get reborn again probably with even worse karma because usually people who autoterminate do not do so with wholesome mental states. So it messes them up even worse and so they'll be in an even worse position next time. So one whose entire body is hopelessly riddled with wrong view.

Gosh, I mean that that is an unfortunate situation, but I mean sooner or later going with the Buddhist point of view, they're going to have to like see the

error of their wrong views. And you're not going to do it by just opting out and just getting reborn with even worse karma next time.

So I mean being a burden on others.

Yeah. I mean there are people like that and the people that they are a burden on are like they're they're experiencing the fruition of their own karma by having this person be a burden on them.

But I mean the best you can do is the best you can do. I mean that's really I mean that it sounds like a complete tautology. It's just kind of silly. But really, I mean, you just all you can do is is the best you can do. That's that's

it.

And and some sorrow is always going to be up. There's always going to be people with wrong view or a burden on others. I mean, that's why that's we're here just

it's always going to be that way. Some sorrow is always going to be up.

You're never going to have a perfect world.

There's always going to be like bad people, people with wrong views. There's going to be just liars and thieves and and all kinds of stuff.

So, I mean, you just have to accept that. I mean, if if I hope Phil Lees

isn't referring to himself,
considering himself to be hopelessly
riddled with wrong views and a burden to
others. I mean in that case I mean
obviously at least Phil Lees is
inquiring and trying to find the truth
and all that but I mean for if Phil
Leethes is just referring to other
people who are hopelessly riddled with
wrong views and a burden to others well
I mean you shouldn't really be too
worried about other people just like
tend your own garden [clears throat] as
Vultater would say
because there's always going to be
up people out there and you can't

like change 8 billion other people. You can just change yourself. And even that's difficult enough. It's hard enough to change yourself. So there's there's no way in hell you're going to change 8 billion other people so that they're all going to be behaving in a way that you consider to be appropriate and acceptable.

You know, if people are continually bothering you in a certain way, that's that's really your problem. And so you got to change your own attitude. just learn, figure out or work out some way of not being bothered by it because they're not going to just disappear. I mean, you can just go out and be a

hermit, but that's that's sort of like a
a slipshot way of dealing with the
problem. It's like avoiding temptation
just or just like overcoming temptation
temporarily just by avoiding it. I mean,
that's that's like a slipshot way. just
um I mean the best way is to learn how
to resist the temptation when it's right
there in your face. And so the best way
of dealing with people that are
considered to be, you know, like
hopelessly riddled with wrong view and a
burden on others, then you just have to
adjust your own personality, your own
attitude so that they don't bother you
anymore. You just accept that's the

that's the best they're doing they can do at the time. Bless their hearts. and continue with your life because they're always going to be there. It's always I mean it's I mean by improving yourself you improve the world partly because the world as you experience it is just like a an outward reflection of your own mental states.

So purifying your own karma is going to purify the world you live in to some degree.

But it would not be best to cease through auto termination just because auto termination generally creates even more bad karma because the person does it with bad mental states, you know,

despair and and whatever. So it's just
it's just going to set them up for an
even worse situation next time.

And I'm going to move on to the next
question which is from Sam Papalalapa.

And S Papaalapa says, "Is there a
tradition in Terravada to confess
everything before and after ordination
to the SA?" Not confessing everything,
but like at the ordination ceremony,
[snorts] you are asked a number of
questions with regard to do you have any
certain serious diseases
and uh like are you in debt? That kind
of thing. And are are you a human being?
are you a man? That kind of thing. And

so, I mean, that's the the only real confession you have to make like before your ordination is like right at the ordination, you have to declare yourself to be, you know, you have you qualify for being ordained as a monk. That's really all you have to do. And then after ordination, there is confession, but it's only if you break a rule. I mean if you have some kind of you know you've got hatred in your heart it's you're not breaking a vineia rule but still you've got some kind of issue of like some sort of unh wholesome mental state or something obviously you can go to your teacher you can go to a wise monk and discuss it with them but it's

not mandatory

the only really mandatory confession in Terabat Buddhism after your ordination is you got to confess to the rules that you have broken and then that's just very like corrupt you know it's become almost a meaningless formality in Terabat of Buddhist countries like Thailand and Burma you know in Burma you just say oh I I confessed many offenses of various sorts and you don't even have to say what you did and then in Thailand they're maybe a little better they just confess each category of offense without mentioning any exact offenses that they committed which is not much better than

the Burmese method.

So confession itself, I mean it's not like in Catholicism which is I consider to be a respectable tradition making real confession of you know just anything that you think is sinful that you have done since the last confession in Terraana. It had something similar to that with regard to breaking rules, but it has become corrupt into practically a meaningless formality that like in Thailand they'll confess to breaking like pyania offenses when nobody breaks potty dania offenses anymore. It's just four rules that are so obscure that as a general rule, nobody breaks the rules.

Some of the rules refer to bikunis which technically don't exist. Although in sort of western and westernized countries, they've been making efforts to revive Bikunis.

Um let's see here.

Yeah, but but seriously, if you have a good friend, you have a wise friend who is also ordained. you're you're you're a monk and or if even if you're not a monk, you can still go to a monk dude that you trust and you consider to be very wise and tell them what you consider to be, you know, whatever you want to confess. You can do that. It's not mandatory, but you can certainly do

it. And it does happen sometimes.

So, you know, in some places more than others, it's a tradition for lay people especially to go and just confess all the unskillful stuff they've done to monks that they revere.

But the monk isn't going to like tell them, okay, you do five hail Marys and and you know, two aspirins and call me in the morning, anything like that.

So

yeah, kind of there's kind of a tradition in terra to confess um make confession of your lapses from virtue,

but it's not it's not like in

um Roman Catholicism and it's really not

before ordination. If you're intending to become a monk, you don't have to confess anything other than just like assert that you haven't that you're not in a position that disqualifies you from becoming a monk. So you you aren't asked about that during the ordination ceremony and you have to say, you know, I'm a bande or nati bande, you know, saying that, you know, I have it or I don't have it.

Um,

but I mean it does it does occur. So even if it isn't like a scriptural tradition, it does happen and it's not against the rules either. Anyways, I'm

just going to move on to S Papa Alapa's next question, which is from your perspective, what has been the benefits of love and kindness practice throughout your time as a Buddhist? I really didn't do much loving kindness or meta meditation as a Buddhist. It just seemed so artificial to me. It's like you can't really just turn on meta with a like like turning on a faucet. I mean, some people can do that, I suppose. I just haven't been able to do it. So, if I experience meta towards others, it would have to be spontaneous. I mean, to some degree, you can kind of set yourself up to be more spontaneous by, you know, just deliberately not trying to have bad

thoughts or close yourself off against other beings. you know, try to be openhearted and just, you know, just in that way. I mean, that could be a kind of meta meditation. And like the monk goes for alms round in the morning and he just tries not to have any negative thoughts. You know, the little old lady just pours soup all over the piece of cake that was already in your bowl. And then, you know, you have you should like resist saying, "Oh, great lady. You just poured soup all over the cake." Even internally, not even like silently. You shouldn't be doing that. You know, you should just have like a impassive poker

face. You accept everything with
equanimity and you should be like
sending meta like
before I would go for alms a lot of
time, you know, I'd be like sunda
which is just like a a blessing, you
know, may all the people who will offer
food be happy and and healthy, you know,
this kind of thing. So that's just like
standard practice for monks to send out
like a blessing before they go for alms
round just to kind of help them to have
like love in their hearts or at least
equanimity when they're going for alms
round and getting [clears throat] some
little old lady put or they put in the
cake and it's swarming with ants. You

know, it's like a little old lady's
their eyesight isn't good anymore. So
they have cake on the on the cupboard
and the ants find it before she puts it
into your bowl. And so I mean that stuff
happens

and a monk is just supposed to just
calmly impassively accept it all.

Mahakasapa I think it's in his verses in
the Terraagata where this leper is
putting food into Mahakasapa's alms bowl
and one of his fingertips breaks off and
lands in the bowl and Mahakasa I mean he
doesn't raise an eyebrow he just accepts
the food with the fingertip of the
lepous beggar who just put food into his

bowl he just continues on his way and then the the beggar the person with leprosy I mean he's mortified he wants to see what Mahakasa is going to do. So he follows him to see, you know, what what he's going to do with that fingertip. And when Mahakasa gets enough food, you know, he just sits down at the the base of the the the city wall and he just he doesn't even take the fingertip out of his bowl. He just calmly moves it over to one side and starts eating his meal.

So I mean, you really have to have that kind of mental state as a monk. You know, sometimes it's like I remember there's this one little kid in this one

village I used to go for alms. He looked like the the feral child from I think it was uh

the road warrior. It was like the second Mad Max movie. Just this filth covered kid with like wild hair, you know, and he'd sometimes he'd have like this creepy sounding cough and he'd be like coughing and sneezing directly into the food before giving it to me. And you just have to accept it. people with leprosy putting food into my bowl. You just have to accept it. There's this one lady who actually ran some kind of little shop. I remember one time I'm walking towards her. She's waiting to

offer me food. She sees me coming. She blows her nose with her hand really fast, you know, just kind of snarfs into her hand and just flings the snot off and then offers food with the same hand. And a monk just has to accept that kind of stuff.

But practicing loving loving kindness or meta meditation as a monk is just something it just seemed too artificial. So many people practice meta meditation and they're just pretending. You know, they're they're kidding themselves. They're like deceiving themselves thinking that they're sending meta to all beings when really they're just kind of cultivating this warm glowy feeling

in their chest.

So you have to be careful about that.

and just turning meta on and off

deliberately just doesn't work for me.

It has to be spontaneous. And so the

best I could do with regard to meta meta

practice is just try to be openhearted.

You know, just make a make an effort to

just not judge people, not be like

biased against people. You just accept

what happens, that kind of thing. And

there's some meta that spontaneously

leaks out from that.

But doing meta meditation is just

something I never really did very much

at all just because it just doesn't work

for me very well. And possibly as a consequence, meta is probably one of my weakest parameies.

For those of you who don't don't know what parameies are, there's this list of 10 virtues that a fully enlightened Buddha has to perfect before he becomes enlightened. Otherwise, he'll just be like an ordinary enlightened being, just an aura.

Anyways, let's see here. [clears throat]
Going back to some papalapa, he says, "Which of the five hindrances do you feel is most destructive to love and kindness andor wisdom?"

And he says, "I asked because I'm currently trying to concentrate my

efforts in love and kindness and
focusing on the body during meditation."

Well, the five hindrances and the five
um what was the other one? There's
another list of five that are similar,
but I think ill will is one of the
five. So, I mean, that would be the most
destructive to to meta because it's
essentially the opposite of meta. In
meta, you want all beings to to be
fortunate and and content, whereas with
ill will, you want bad things to happen
to them or you just just hate them.

Yeah, the Samiojinos is another one. The
five the five attachments or something.

Yeah, I've never really been into these

these kind of lists of these technical things because it didn't really seem to apply

really well to my practice,

but I'm just going with the I maybe I should have looked it up beforehand, but [clears throat] I'm just going with the idea that ill will be one of the five hindrances.

So, yeah, that would be it, I suppose.

Um

with regard to wisdom, yeah, ill will is still I mean in order to have ill will first of all you have to have self view. You have to believe that other beings really exist at least while you're feeling it.

You that

you know, it's it's foolish as well as being sort of hostile.

So yeah, I suppose I should have done my homework on that one because the the hindrances and the samiojenos,

they uh I get them confused in my mind because I've never really never really taken much interest in in that kind of list. Anyway,

so trying to concentrate his efforts in love and kindness. Actually, I mean technically it's called loving kindness, which is the kind of weird translation that has struck traction in the west for the word mata, which literally means

something like friendliness,
benevolence, that kind of thing.

So

yeah. Well, good luck. Good luck on
that. But you got to be careful if
you're going to be practicing meta that
it should be genuine meta or at least
the practice should be just sort of like
getting rid of obstacles that would get
in the way of the spontaneous arising of
meta, which is about as far as I got
with it. Just try to minimize anything
that would stop meta from arising
spontaneously because I just could not
just turn it on and off like like like a
faucet. And you got to be careful that
you're not just deceiving yourself if

you're practicing metal meditation.

So I guess I should just move on to the next question here.

This is from Dhamma River.

And Dama River says, "Can we talk about the Assura realm? In my opinion, it's the most fascinating realm of existence because they already have everything most human beings would want. beauty, high status, long lifespan, power. They are demigods. But instead of being happy and grateful, they spend their entire lives angry and jealous and fighting with the devas because they have more than them. In my opinion, this realm of existence gives all of samsara away due

to the insatiability of tata or craving.

What are your thoughts on this? Well,

the Assura realm, it's one of the the lower realms, the five lower realms, and it really it's the lower realm that receives the least mention because really the Assur Realm is is like a vestage of like protoindo-uropean religion that the protoindo-uropeans, they had there's they have this legend of the gods and the the titans or the the Davas and the Assuras who were at war over like overlordship of this world and the Davas or the gods won the Assuras or the Titans lost this battle and so the the the Titans or the Assuras get chained up under a mountain and the

Greeks had this legend the Indians had this legend probably other Indo-European peoples also had this legend of this ancient primordial war between two sets of superhuman beings over overlordship of this planet. One side wins the gods and one side loses. And for the most part, they get chained up under a mountain and they hate the gods. And by the time the Buddha came along in the Ganges Valley of ancient India, I mean, that was just ancient history. And the Assuras really didn't play have much of a role in anything. It's just that like for example, there's supposedly one Assura called Rahu who is free to roam

and he's huge and that uh eclipses of the sun and moon are caused by Rahu swallowing the sun or moon into his mouth temporarily.

Um

so I mean the Assura realm is just kind of a vestage. It's a mythological vestage even by the Buddhist time because they really weren't I mean, they weren't really mentioned all that much. Usually, when you're talking about the lower realms, you just talk about hell, ghosts, animals, and what was the other one? Hell, ghosts, animals. Well, I guess the assaurus would be the fourth. No, seems like humans should be sixth from the bottom. What am Which which one

am I missing?

Maybe we are just fifths from the bottom. The four lower realms. Yeah, I guess so.

Yeah, I'm just my mythology is getting rusty.

But I mean animals obviously get a lot of mention. Ghosts get more mentioned than assuras and hell gets a lot of mention because that's like the main punishment for doing really bad things.

Assuras I mean it's just really it's just a myth mythological vestage from probably prehistoric times. there was like this religious war between two main tribes within the the

the millu of the the Indo-European peoples. You know, it's like which pantheon are we going to follow? So, it was more of a war between priests than a war between gods and titans in my opinion in all probability.

And it was just sort of remembered as this legendary war between these two pantheons.

One of them had to win out in the long run.

But uh yeah, I do consider it to be for the most part mythology. Not that there aren't like demonic beings out there.

Um, Buddhism really doesn't have a a convenient category for demons. Like, like the demons in hell that are

torturing people, according to the commentarial tradition, they don't even really exist. They're not they're not really sentient beings. They're just like holographic projections that are generated by the bad karma of the denizens in these hell realms.

So the Assuras are kind of like a vestige of earlier Indian and pre-Indian Indo-European philosophy and really it's just it was hard to to like do much with them. They're not mentioned very much.

So let's see what is the actual question though. Can we talk about the Assura realm? Yeah, I kind of did.

Sorry to be a buzzkill with regard to

that. Let's see. Where's What are your thoughts on this? Yeah. Okay. Yeah. So, I mean, they're they're generally viewed by tradition as like very I mean, they're superhuman even though they're in a lower realm, like a subhuman realm, but still, I mean, their powers are superhuman like Rahu can actually swallow the entire sun into his mouth.

Um,

I think the Hindus have developed that theory so that Rahu is just a severed head of a of a an assura. So when he swallows the sun or moon into his mouth, he swallows it and it just comes out the bottom of his neck and so it doesn't stay swallowed. But in in Buddhism, I'm

pretty sure he's not just a severed head, but he has an entire body. He just spits it back out again.

Um,

yeah, I do think that the Assura realm really probably is the same realm as the Titans of the ancient Greeks. that probably reminiscent of some very ancient prehistoric like theological conflict between two pantheons that were being taken seriously by, you know, different different uh like segments of the population. And one of them wound up winning, the other one wound up losing.

And so it got mythologized into a war
between the gods and the anti-gods.

That would be my guess.

And that actual demonic beings that are
very powerful

um really don't have a a convenient
category in the 31 plains of existence
in orthodox Buddha Buddhism.

So I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Ethiopian fake
TIG or possibly just fake Ethiopian fake
TIG. And he says, "Is it said that the
Buddha actually didn't like the idea of
Oh, it is said that the Buddha actually
didn't like the idea of hope very much.
Can you speak a little about that?"

Yeah, there is a question, I think it's

in the pseudonyata, where somebody asks
um the Buddha, you know, should one have
hope and the Buddha says, "No, like a
like an enlightened being has no hope.
An enlightened being does not experience
hope. And hope is is a kind of desire.
It seems to me, I mean, there could be
some way of just being optimistic, being
open-minded towards good things
happening, but I don't know if that
would qualify as hope. Hope seems to be
that you're actually desiring something
to happen in the future. Generally,
something good, but you can you can hope
for something bad to happen to your
enemies. So it's really is just kind of

a desire for the future. Desire for something to happen in the future. And desire is the cause of all suffering. So yeah, hope is a kind of craving or attachment that is ultimately unskillful. Even though um like at more elementary levels of practice, you can hope to become a monk someday or you can hope to get you know develop janna that kind of thing. But eventually, I mean, because hope is a kind of desire, you're better off without it. I mean, you can use it as skillful means, like an elementary level, but eventually you got to get rid of it.

So, I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake TIG or fake Ethiopian

fake TIG's next question,
which is as follows. In the book, What
the Buddha Taught, which I assume he's
referring to the book, the famous book
by Walp Polo Rahula.

He says in the book what the Buddha
taught there is an attempt to show
Buddhism for what it was such as full of
light and not nihilistic. Why do you
think people view Buddhism as nihilistic
nowadays? And do you personally think it
is? Well, while Polar Rahulu was being a
kind of missionary, you know, he was
trying to portray Buddhism in the the
the best possible light and he did kind
of glorify it and romanticize it to some

degree.

You know, this portraying Buddhism in the stark almost inhuman way of the earliest texts would not attract a whole lot of Western people to convert to Buddhism. And that's really what Walpolo Rahula was trying to do with this book is to portray Buddhism in the most positive possible light to get more people to become Buddhists or at least to have respect for Buddhism and interest in Buddhism.

So

let's see the actual question here. Why do you think people view Buddhism as nihilistic nowadays? And do you personally think it is? Um, it depends

on what you mean by nihilistic. Let's just look it up. Let's just look it up in the dictionary here. Nihilistic. Nihilistic.

Okay, it's an adjective. Rejecting all religious and moral principles in the belief that life is meaningless.

Okay, so now I got to rejection of all religions and moral principles in the belief that life is meaningless. That would be nihilism like modern nihilism anyway. Sort of like the the pre-marxist

Russian nihilists of the 18th century or the the 19th century that Dostki was always taking pot shots at. He was

always bashing away at these nihilists.

Um like Bazzerov in Tarv's Fathers and Sons was a nihilist of that sort where life is meaningless and you're just trying to tear everything down. Don't believe in anything. um and you don't really care what happens after that. So they were sort of like the forerunners of the Marxists. They were helping to you know sort of tear down the traditional structure of society and then the Marxist capitalized on that and replaced it with dialectical materialism and so forth.

But do I think Buddhism is nihilistic? I do think that ultimately all meaning is delusion. So yeah, the meaninglessness

of reality or the meaninglessness of the world. Yeah, I'd be a nihilist in that sense ultimately. Even though like at a conventional level, so long as we are dealing in this world, we have to deal with meaning.

I mean, if you're unenlightened and like a real nihilist and you just like dispense with all meaning, you're just going to be a vegetable. You won't be able to function really.

So we have to behave as though things are meaningful. I mean so long as we're operating in the context of samsara we have to assume that there is meaning to certain things even though at the

ultimate level like nibana nibbana is meaningless. There is no meaning in in nibbana because meaning is like symbolism. Meaning is like a perception where you're saying that you know A represents B or A stands for B that kind of thing and so A would be the meaning of B.

So like meaning seems to me to be ultimately delusional but because we are living in samsara we have to deal with that kind of language.

So, it's good to have some kind of meaning to things, especially if it's based as much as possible on empiricism so that everyone can more or less agree on it

while at the same time kind of holding it loosely in an open hand and not like clinging to it, which just strengthens the delusion. But it's just skillful means in order to function in this version of reality or in this samsara you have to accept that there are meanings to things like words. I mean I mean even nihilists use language but language by definition has to have meaning otherwise you're just babbling incoherently.

So even a hardcore nihilist still accepts meaning and uses meaning within the context of everyday life. But I think some people consider

Buddhism to be nihilistic in that you know there is no self, there is no soul, there is no capital G god, that kind of thing. And that's not so much nihilistic as mystical because you're again you're transcending the delusive meaning to get to ultimate reality. And ultimate reality stands for itself in a manner of speaking. You can't have something else be the meaning of ultimate reality because I mean ultimate reality is it's not symbolized. You know it is as it is. And even the Old Testament gets into that to some degree, you know, like God didn't have a name in some parts of the Old Testament because I mean once you slap a name onto it, it's just this

label that gets confused for the reality or God doesn't show his face, that kind of thing. I mean that's sort of inklings of this kind of realization that's even found in in the Old Testament.

But I mean a lot of people that that really want to like cling to like a samsaric understanding of reality where there is a capital G God who is our father and takes care of us and we have this immortal soul and we're going to go to heaven after we die. This kind of stuff. Um I mean people cling to that and then they just do not like at all the idea of that is ultimately meaningless.

You know, it's it's almost like the same kind of resentment that people have towards people who commit well who who selfdelete

certain words you're not supposed to say on YouTube. So like there are people who selfdee and other people are just like resentful of that. That's the coward's way out. Even though that person just did what this person who's criticizing them fears the most yet he's calling them a coward.

So it's just kind of a resentment of rejecting what you consider to be most dear, what you consider to be most valuable. That can be seen as nihilistic. And Buddhism, yeah, it does

that too. But I don't think it's really nihilistic with regard to saying, you know, nothing is real other than just I mean, reality is beyond words. And so you have to approach that through mysticism rather than through like mythology or theories, that kind of stuff.

And I'm just going to move on to fake fake Ethiopian fake TIGs. Next question. Do you believe someone can pass the the stages of insight till equanimity? Okay. Their I think he means instead of okay, I think he means on. Okay, I'll start over. Do you believe someone can pass the the stages of insight till

equanimity on their own without any help? And if so, how hard or easy is it to do really? Well, according to Buddhism, traditional Buddhism, the only people who can become enlightened on their own without any help would be a Buddha, a sama sam Buddha or at least a pacheka Buddha because they're the ones that get the wheel of dharma or at least the the sama sam Buddha gets the wheel of dharma rolling and then other people can hear the dharma and practice the dharma and then they they can become enlightened through the help of already having learned dharma from somebody else.

But a pacheka Buddha, they're just a

like a hermit Buddha. They they they realize dharma on their own and then just don't teach it. Whereas a Samasam Buddha, you know, they also I mean obviously the Buddha did receive meditation instructions from at least two teachers before he became enlightened. But they weren't those meditation techniques didn't get him enlightened. They just caused him to be a better meditator. Maybe he got some insights from it or something, but he had to discover Dhamma on his own. Like dependent core rising for example, the middle path, that kind of thing. He had to discover on his own.

So I mean passing the the stages of insight, that's kind of a commentarial thing. Um I really don't think that that is mentioned in the sutas. That's a a commentarial thing that is really dwelled upon a lot in Burmese teraba Buddhism. It's called nyanzin. It's the stages of whiposa insight knowledge that you have to experience in the proper sequence in order to become enlightened or at least become a sodapana.

So let's see.

Yeah, I I mean without any help is kind of

it's kind of vague because it could be like there's there's a story I think it's in the commentaries of a monk who

is walking along and he's he's been meditating on bones, you know, he's been meditating on the the ati the the uh the the part of the the bone part of the body, you know, it's like he's doing the 32 parts of the body meditations and just singled out bones, I I guess Ajan Mun did this for a while, too. But this monk, he's just like meditating on bones all the time. And then there's this woman comes up to him and she's kind of like a a loose woman and she's sort of like laughing and and showing her teeth while talking to him. And he just gets this insight, this flash of insight from looking at her teeth that just, you

know, the teeth bones, even though teeth technically are a different part of the body than the bones, he just had this flash of insight and, you know, it helped him to become enlightened somehow, just looking at this woman's teeth. You know, there's [snorts] this famous Zen master mentioned in, you know, the Chinese Chan texts, how he's striving and striving to become enlightened and just can't do it. So finally he just kind of gives up and becomes like the the like the the guardian, the caretaker of a cemetery. And he's just sweeping leaves or something in the cemetery one day and the the broom hits a a rock, a little

pebble which flies and hits a bamboo and makes this sound like talk. And when it makes this talk sound, it somehow jars him into enlightenment. So it's like that rock helped him to become enlightened. There's another I think it was a nun like a Chinese Buddhist nun who or maybe it was a monk I don't remember now but the they're like fetching water from a well at night and the the person looks into the well and or looks into the the bucket full of water and they see the moon reflected in the the surface of the water in the bucket and then right then because it was an old worn out bucket the bottom

falls out of the of the the bucket and
the water just disappears. and the
reflection of the moon disappears and
then they become enlightened. It just
triggers this insight and there's lots
and lots of cases of this kind of thing
happening.

And so even to say the Buddha didn't
receive any help, it may be that his two
teachers gave him some help and just
experiences of life can give help. I
mean without any kind of help at all,
without any kind of experiences in life
that help you to become enlightened,
then you're just like in a state of
sensory deprivation somehow becoming
enlightened in this void with no help at

all, not even the help of your own like experiences that cause insight to arise.

So,

do I believe someone can pass the stages of insight till equanimity? I assume he means enlightenment on their own without any help. It depends on what kind of help, but at least some people they can be living in an unenlightened culture, but in like they're surrounded by reality. They're completely saturated by ultimate reality. I mean, how far away is reality?

And so just through some kind of event or insight, they're just ripe for it, they can become enlightened.

[clears throat]

But I mean, how hard or easy is it to do really? I mean, that's that's a trick question because I mean, really, from a samsaric point of view, like I keep saying, enlightenment may not even be possible really, or it's just meaningless. It's just off the scale of samsara. So using samsaric ideas to try to wrap your head around it just isn't going to work.

Let's see.

So can you become enlightened on your own without help? I mean there's your own experiences are going to have to help you at least to some degree. I mean yeah your own experiences are going to

have to help you which would sometimes involve other beings. I mean, sometimes you can just watch a dog lick its balls and it can cause some kind of insight to arise

just right on your own. The dog wasn't trying to help wake you up by licking its balls. It just turned out that way.

But how hard or easy is it to do? I mean, it's like a it's like a miracle. It's like a paradox.

and just look at the number of people striving for enlightenment and then look at the number of people who maybe really did succeed and you're going to find it's just this vanishingly small

minority.

So becoming enlightened is uh

[clears throat] even if you're striving for enlightenment, chances are very very low that you will succeed.

Just going with empirical data, which is unfortunate. But the reason why we don't become enlightened is just because we don't really want to become enlightened.

We're still clinging to unenlightenment.

It's not that we're not trying hard enough to become enlightened. It's that we're always striving to remain unenlightened in various ways largely just through habit.

But it is possible. I mean, I can't

really say how hard or easy it is. I mean, it's extremely rare. It still happens. Assuming that anyone becomes enlightened, it still happens. But I mean it's one in a million maybe at best one in 10 million.

But I do think it is possible that you can become enlightened. I mean Buddhas and Pacheka Buddhas are examples of this in the poly texts that they become enlightened without a teacher teaching them how to become enlightened.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Stellar Supreme, sometimes known as Librelam and also increasingly known as Wuura Wira.

And so Stellar Supreme, etc. says,
"Because one is advised not to direct
meta at animals on account of their
instincts to kill and whatn not, would
there be a solid case for having a sort
of detached aloofness towards animal
comforts, like petting your own pet on
account of a translation along the lines
of friendly benevolence? or would a mix
including a bit of the more charged
loving kindness way of translating it be
more accurate in this context? Well, for
starters, I don't recall ever
encountering in the Buddhist texts the
advice not to direct meta at animals. I
mean, obviously, if you're directing
meta to all beings, that would include

animals. In fact, like as a monk at uh the first monastery where I was ordained, you know, every evening we'd be sending meta and it would include animals, you know, lower realms, higher realms, male, female, just there' just be like every imaginable category practically with larger categories including animals.

So I mean I don't think one is necessarily I mean maybe somewhere in the commentaries or something one may be advised not to use like a specific animal as one's primary focus for sending meta but I don't recall coming across that. And obviously if you're

sending meta to all beings and you're
sending meta to the animal realm you're
sending meta to animals.

So, let's just get to the actual
question though after after I uh address
that issue.

Would there be a solid case for having a
sort of detached aloofness towards
animal comforts like petting your own
pet on account of a translation along
the lines of friendly benevolence? Or
would a mix including a bit of the more
charged loving kindness way of
translating be more accurate? I mean,
just loving your animals is fine. I
mean, I love our dogs. I have a certain
amount of love even for the the fishes

and shrimps in there,
snails.

So I mean to have love like acceptance,
openhearted acceptance for all beings
would be the enlightened point of view.

So yeah, openhearted acceptance at the
very least. But I mean just deliberately
beaming love, I mean these dogs that
that that we have, I mean they demand
it. There's sometimes they just come up
and just there's this one little dog we
got is I mean it just start like
punching my arm just wanting attention
wanting to get loved on.

And I mean if you cause happiness to
another being you're making good karma.

I mean it might help to ensh you in some sorrow a little more but still you're making good karma.

Like I was thinking just I think it was yesterday and I've thought this many times before. I mean, if if you want the gods to smile upon you, you should be smiling on those that are lower than you are on the scale of things, which would include animals.

I mean, if you're cruel to animals, then maybe that higher beings will be cruel to you just as a way of maintaining cosmic balance.

So yeah, I mean loving animals, I mean clearly like even in the dharmapata it says you should sort of put yourself in

the position of an animal like to put
yourself in the position of other other
beings. You know all beings you know
they fear death and you know they they
want to be safe and all that. So you
should take that into consideration.
Well the kind of compassion although
compassion is different from meta that's
karuna instead of meta.

Ah, yeah. Friendly benevolence. There's
nothing wrong there's nothing at all
wrong with that.

And just I mean petting a dog. I mean I
just love petting dogs and they love
getting petted too. There was one dog in
Burma

uh I can't remember if it was I can't remember its name. It was this white female village dog that would come to eat my leftovers um in the morning time and I would pet that dog and the the dog really just preferred getting fed. You know, it was like it just kind of endured being petted because it figured I liked petting it. You know, it was sort of tossing me a bone by letting me pet it, I guess, because it really didn't seem to get any anything emotional, any gratification out of it. But I'm digressing all over the place. Let's see here.

Yeah, I really don't see any problem at all with with sending love to animals,

even particular individual animals, so long as you're not clinging. I mean, there's a difference between love like sending meta and like emotional attachment.

I mean, if you can do one without the other, that's there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. You could be beaming meta at a at a slug. There's nothing wrong with that. As far as I know, I've never seen anything in the text indicating that there's anything at all wrong with beaming meta at a slug.

So, yeah, I mean, it doesn't matter what label you put onto it, how you how you would identify it. Just feeling love

without necessarily any kind of like emotional attachment, that's always good. no matter who the object or the subject the I guess it would be the object is.

So I'm just going to move on to Stellar Supreme etc's next question.

Is awakening from a dream like going to sleep in the dream world itself? Yeah, I don't think so. I think it'd be um I mean you're just kind of like disappearing from the dream.

Like I was lucky this I was having like the the bad work you know sort of the the work semi nightmare last night in my dreams just you're you're like in this work situation that that there is no

resolution to the problem that kind of
dream which I've I've had many times
since starting at this job which can be
like an aggravating kind of job
that uh you know when the dream ended I
just faded out and I mean if you assume
that there are still beings
in that dream world. Let's say you
created a dream world and then you wake
up from the dream and then somehow the
beings in that dream world stay in this
kind of dream world. How you have just
kind of created this new universe that
that continues to exist after you wake
up from the dream and there's a
multi-dimensional being named Seth that

actually gave me the idea of this reading in the books long ago. um it would just be you just you would just disappear sort of like you're in a da realm where one of the davas just fades out because you know it's like their their sojourn in that David realm is over to the other davas you know that one just faded out I mean um I really don't think that awakening from a dream uh is is like going to sleep to the dream world itself.

Huh?

Then I'm and all of a sudden I'm starting to see this question maybe a little more a little more accurately.

So is awakening from a dream like going

to sleep to the dream world itself? Oh
yeah, I think I was trying to answer it
as going to sleep in the dream world.

Uh, well, of course that reminds me of
Jang Zoo where he dreamed that he was a
butterfly and then when he woke up he
wasn't sure if that he was

[clears throat]

su dreaming that he was a butterfly or
maybe he was the butterfly that's now
dreaming that he's Jew.

Um,

let's see. Now that I'm actually seeing
the question differently due to the
change of one little two-letter word,
is it like going to sleep to the dream

world itself?

Maybe at some level, but it wouldn't be

as like profound

of an application of that as like

uh

man going to going to sleep to the dream

world itself.

Yeah. Well, you're more awake in the

waking state than you are in the usual

dream. Dreams tend to be kind of murky

with like blurry edges, that kind of

thing. And there's not as much like law

and order and stability in the dream

world. So, it's it's really less

it's less of a conscious state. The

dream world as in in general in general,

the average dream is less of a conscious

state than being awake

in the ordinary sense of the term.

So yeah, I mean to some degree maybe,

but it wouldn't be at the same level as

like [clears throat] going to sleep to

the waking world when you're dreaming,

you know? I mean, in a way, you're just

sort of alternating between different

realms, but I mean, the the waking realm

tends to be a higher realm. like the

dream world is sort of like a ghost

realm in my opinion

as a general rule.

So yeah, I mean to some degree, but it

wouldn't be the same magnitude

as the other way around. And I'm just

going to move on to the next question.

And we still got quite a few. Man, we're there wasn't a whole lot of questions. I think I'm just like digressing more in this one because we're already um over two hours. Gosh.

Okay. So, let's see here. This question is from Newman. And Newman says, "Do the Buddhist statues that feature so prominently in Theravada have a kind of instantiation of the Buddha in them or inherently sanctified nature. For example, they are manifestations of the Buddha in the world that carry blessings or some kind of miraculous quality, etc. use their karmic weight attached to actions done

toward them like prostration, respect, gratitude, or negative additions? Okay, that's a different question. So, we got an extra question just got added.

Okay, so do the Buddha statues have a kind of instantiation of the Buddha in them? Um in Burma to activate a Buddha statue you have to have monks come and chant Ankaza which starts with etc etc. It's like the Buddha's first words after enlightenment and then there's some dependent core rising going forwards and backwards and this kind of thing that's all in the chant and that kind of activates the Buddha image so that it has more like

dharmic power or something and I've read that traditionally in Sri Lanka what activates a Buddhist statue is painting the pupils into the eyeballs of the statue and so there are special painters who specialize in this and they will it's like they have to they don't look directly at the statue. They have to like back in with a mirror and then they paint the pupils on the eyeballs looking into the mirror and then they leave the temple where this or wherever the statue was. And they have to smash the first thing that they see just to kind of like somehow release the pentup dangerous guju that that they made just by like activating the Buddha statue by painting

pupils onto the eyes. And so they'll place like an old clay pot right outside the door so that the painter can smash this old clay pot and so he doesn't have to damage anything more valuable.

And then that somehow, you know, it's it's sort of like a Hinduistic activation of the statue that sort of instills the the the cosmic juju into the statue somehow. I don't know what they do in Thailand. Maybe they have something similar to chanting anaza or painting pupils on the statue. What they do when the eyes are closed, I don't know.

But yeah, if if you're more of an

idolatrous to sort of person, I mean, it's not mentioned in the text because there were no Buddhist statues in when the the poly sutas were composed. So, it's all going to be later tradition and it's going to depend on the individual. Some people will just acknowledge that a Buddhist statue is just a hunk of rock or bronze or or brass or or whatever it's made out of, cement, whatever.

And I mean, I've I've tended to be that way. I I don't bow to statues very often, but even so, if someone were to spit onto a statue, a Buddha image, that would bug me. Or just walk over and knock it on the head like this. I mean,

I would hesitate to do something like that just because of just kind of respect for the for the Buddha himself that the statue is a representation of the founder of the religion. So, you know, it's like you don't want to just be openly disrespectful or negligent really.

So,

let's see. Are Buddhist statues manifestations of the Buddha in the world that carry blessings? the more idolatrous and faith oriented you are, the more that is the case.

But like I've said before, I I didn't really bow to Buddhist statues. Like at

the UOTA ceremony, the entire SA has to meet in the congregation hall. There's usually a big altar with a Buddha statue there. Possibly in some monasteries, it's the only big altar with a Buddha statue and the entire monastery is right there in the congregation hall. And then the monks bow to the statue before they do their ceremony, you know, reciting the pimoka or whatever. And I would just sit there. I mean, I I wouldn't bow to the statue usually. And a few times a Burbanese monk would say, you know, you get merit by bowing to that statue. And I'd say, you know, that statue, it has no sila, no samadei, and no pa. I mean, it has no virtue, no wisdom, no

concentration. It's just rupa.

So, it's it's a matter of individual taste really. I mean, some of them are really some of them are really idolatrous. You know, they'll just assume that there's that a Buddha statue, especially one that has had Anikaza chanted in its presence, is somehow like got the Buddha in it, and they're like offering food and water and flowers and stuff to the statue as though it were really the Buddha.

So, I mean, it's it's all beyond the sutas because there were no Buddhist statues when the sutas were composed, but it's just Buddhist tradition and

you're going to find the whole spectrum of people just believing that the that's a manifestation of the Buddha himself all the way down to that is a lump of rock that probably doesn't even look like the historical Buddha.

And I was kind of more at the the second end.

So, I hope I answered that question because I'm moving on to Newman's next question, which is their karmic weight attached to actions done toward them, Buddhist statues, like prostration, respect, gratitude, or negative actions. Well, you've got like popular opinion and then you've got like Buddhist philosophy in popular opinion, then

certainly, especially if you're at the more idolatrous, faith-oriented end with regard to opinions toward Buddha images. Um but then I mean going with Buddhist philosophy, it's all a matter of mental states. Your karma is based on your volitions. I mean it is your volitions. And so I mean if you do anything with like a mind full of like reverence and respect and you know like respect for the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha then you it's going to be meritorious. And at the same time, if you do anything with disrespect, you know, hatred, contempt, anything like that, then it's it's going to be demeritorious. And if you do

anything with purely neutral mental states, then it's going to be neutral. It depends on your mental states when you're doing it. It's not just outward actions that determine whether what you did is good or bad or indifferent. It's your attitude, your mental states, your your motives.

So that would be more the Buddhist philosophical explanation.

So let's see here. The dogs are slightly they're slightly distracting me because they're roughhousing and [clears throat] the little one is making these horring noises. When it gets all excited it horrors.

So let's see.

Okay, I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Arpad RP AD. He says, "In what order should one read your books?"

>> Well, I mean, reading any individual book, just a second.

>> Hey, you guys, stop it.

>> Reading any individual book, I mean, the chapters are not in any kind of order. I mean, they're they're roughly in chronological order into the order in which I wrote them, but there's not really any like sequence of thought going on in the chapters [clears throat] in my books. So you could read them in any order. And the same go JUST A

SECOND. HEY, STOP IT.

Oh yeah. Then they come in here and they want to play with me. You guys stop it.

I'm busy. Yeah. No, you're you're all riled up. Stop it. Stop it. Me yelling at you didn't say for you to come in and play with me,

man.

Okay.

Where was I? Oh, in what order should you read your books? Well, it's you can read it in any order. I would I would advise reading it sort of forwards instead of backwards because if you read it backwards, the sentences will all be in reverse order. It' be harder to understand.

But I mean the first book that I wrote
which is okay like essays in terra
Buddhism or studies see I don't even
firmly recall the title of it. I mean
that's that's the first book I wrote is
just with regard to basics of like terra
Buddhist monasticism. So if that's your
main interest you read that one first
then Buddhist see [clears throat]
Buddhist practice
God can't even remember the titles of my
own books just a second this is
ridiculous.

Okay.

Okay. first book, Essays in Terraata
Buddhism. If you're mostly interested in

like the basics of Theravada Buddhism,
um especially like monasticism,
this would be the main one with regard
to this is the second book I think.

Gosh, I don't even recall which is the
second one.

Let's just go with this one.

Philosophical Dharma. This is more like
like eclectic philosophy. You know,
there's mention of Christianity, more
mention of Mahayana in this one. So, if
your your interests are more like
eclectic philosophy, this would be the
book you'd start with, I guess, or maybe
the only book. And then Buddhist ethics,
Buddhist practice, and this is more
practiceoriented. So, if your your

emphasis is on Buddhist practice and just how Buddhist ethics work, you know, how karma works, that kind of stuff, this would be the main the main book that you'd start with, I guess. But you can read it in any order. It really doesn't matter. It's just sort of [clears throat]

more or less random essays that are kind of loosely um added to books this on like a general theme.

So just follow your heart, I guess. Just follow your intuition and read it in the way that you would prefer to read it.

And you're you're doing fine as far as

I'm concerned.

Then sooner or later I will come out with a fourth book. I'm going to have to have some considerable time off from work in order to have the time and inclination to really like do the final editing and to get my woman to do the illustrations. But that's going to be like more autobiographical just what it is like to be a monk. Mainly in Burma, but some of it's outside of Burma, too. So anyways,

yeah. In what order should you read your books? just remove should and just read them and it doesn't even matter what order you read them in just depending on your interest read what is calls to you

read what seems most interesting to you
and I'm just moving on to the next
question this is from Raphael and
Raphael first he includes this quote
from the the Casey Suta as translated by
Biku Sugato

and so it says sir What do you do with a
person in training who doesn't follow
these forms of training? And then the
Buddha says, "In that case, Casey, I
kill them." And then the questioner
says, "Sir, it's not appropriate for the
Buddha to kill living creatures, and yet
you say you kill them." And then the
Buddha says, "It's true, Casey." It's
kei

case. It's true, Casey. It's not appropriate for a realized one to kill living creatures. But when a person in training doesn't follow any of these forms of training, the realized one doesn't think they're worth advising or instructing, and neither do their sensible spiritual companions. For it is killing in the training of the noble one, when the realized one doesn't think they're worth advising or instructing, and neither do their sensible spiritual companions. So Raphael just put this excerpt from a sutra into the the the Q&A room in the the Discord server. And so I said, "Well, what is the actual question?" And then he says, "So is

there skillful killing?"

And first of all, before I even get to the answer, Casey kei just means having head hair. So probably not a monk that was asking the question. and realized one probably is Biku Su Jato's preferred rendering of the word dagata.

Um, [clears throat]

so anyways,

the killing here, I mean, it isn't literal killing. That killing is just metaphorical where the Buddha, if he sees that the person really isn't inclined to follow his teachings anyway, he'll just stop teaching them. And in a way, you could say that's killing them

in like killing their potential for becoming enlightened, but it's not really killing them. So when Raphael asked the question, is there skillful killing?

Then I mean what this text is referring to isn't even really killing. I mean it's it's just sort of like killing your chances of becoming enlightened in this life unless you change your ways. And that's really all it amounts to. It's just metaphorical. I mean it's not like the Buddha really does go around stomping on ants anything like that. Doesn't go fishing.

So

yeah. So the question is there skillful

killing? The only skillful killing from a Buddhist point of view, I mean, it would just be neutral. I mean, if you could somehow kill without any like unwholesome mental states, then that would be skillful killing or at least neutral killing.

So, if you're just walking along, you accidentally step on a bug and don't even notice it, then that might not be skillful killing, but at least you didn't do anything wrong by [clears throat] doing it other than maybe whatever it was that you were doing that was unskillful. Let's say you're just thinking delusional

thoughts. Then thinking the delusional thoughts would be bad karma, I suppose. But stepping on the bug would not because [clears throat] you didn't even know that you did it. It was not deliberate. There was no no intention. There was no ill will, no desire to kill.

So skillful killing, if it's possible at all, it would have to be devoid of any desire to kill or at least desire to cause suffering.

And there were attempts at this like the the samurai who are students of Zen in like feudal Japan, you know, they did try to cultivate um as skillful of killing as they could manage where

you're not killing through ill will or hatred or blood lust, you know, no kind of like maniacal frenzy involved. It's just duty and honor. And you just try to keep your mind in a state of equanimity and wide awake. You know, you try to be as mindful and awake as possible when you're out there chopping heads off with swords.

But I don't think even that would really qualify as skillful killing, even if there was like a like a sword master also a Zen master. And there were some of those who could really just I mean they're just kind of in the zone while while they're out there on the

battlefield or in a duel or whatever
that still I don't think that would
qualify as skillful killing. It would be
getting closer and closer I suppose to
neutral killing. But even neutral isn't
the same as skillful. Um, unless you
want to go with the idea that any
enlightened action would be skillful, in
which case then I mean I'm sure like a
tantric Buddhist would say there is
skillful killing if an enlightened being
is able to kill. Like the story I've
given before of um Padma Sambava dancing
on a flat roof, kicking a rock off the
roof which then just happens to go down,
hit somebody in the head and kill them.
That might be skillful killing even

though it wasn't deliberate

but from a terra Buddhist point of view

killing is in general the worst thing

you can do.

So

u just sort the best you could get would

be like neutral killing like an orahant.

Oh, here's a case you've I think it's

the [clears throat] very first story of

the Dhamapata commentary where Chakupala

is the name of eye protector is this

monk who goes blind.

So you've got a and he's enlightened.

So, you've got an an Araant who is blind

and he's doing walking meditation and

he's doing walking meditation at the

beginning of the of the the rainy season, the monsoon season and there's these little red bugs that come out and I think they're a kind of like velvety colored like vermilion colored mites that they come out in Burma. They're all over the ground. They're really cool looking. I like them a lot. They come out and they're just kind of bumbling around, walking around slowly on the ground right after like the first heavy rains.

Mostly [clears throat] they live under the ground. And so he's stepping on him and squishing them, but he's a fully enlightened being. And so there's these other monks who are seeing him do it.

And they go to the Buddha and kind of tell on him. They tattle, say, "Look, how's he's supposedly an enlightened and here he is killing all these beings."

And then the Buddha says, "Well, I mean, there's no intention to kill. I mean, he's blind. He doesn't even see them when he's stepping on them. He's just doing walking meditation. He's an enlightened being doing walking meditation. And he's stepping on these little red colored bugs without even without even seeing them. I mean, he has no intention to kill. So, that could theoretically be a kind of skillful killing,

but that would be about as far as it goes.

And and the kind of killing that's mentioned in this this sutta isn't really killing at all. It's just he's just the Buddha is just not teaching them because he sees they're not receptive to the teaching. And that's a kind of metaphorical killing because he's just killing their chances at at enlightenment. Although, of course, this reminds me of the dreaded elephant look where if someone is behaving really badly, the Buddha would turn and look at them, but he wouldn't turn his head. He would turn his entire body to look at them like an elephant does. You know,

the elephant doesn't turn its head to look behind it. It has to turn all the way around. And then the person would just die. It was like the ground would open up and they would just fall into hell. And there's some controversy over this in the text. Whereas, I mean, the Buddha isn't deliberately killing them. You know, maybe he's just out of some sort of enlightened curiosity wanting to turn around to witness them plunging into hell because it's going to happen anyway because they've already behaved very badly. You know, like, you know, cursing him or something.

Cursing some enlightened being or

whatever.

So,

yeah. Where is it? Oh, yeah. Skillful killing. But even that isn't really killing. I'm pretty sure Buddhist philosophy would say, you know, orthodox terra Buddhist philosophy would say that an enlightened being would not deliberately kill anything. I mean, he wouldn't break the any of the five precepts.

An enlightened being just won't break any of the five precepts. So, right there, the only way you could kill would be if it is not your intention to kill and it would just happen accidentally.

That could be called skillful killing.

if you've got skillful mental states
going on otherwise and just accidentally
step on a bug or whatever.

So I'm just going to move on to the next
question and we are kind of getting
close to the bottom here. This is from
Tzas is and Task is says, "When you were
a monk, have you ever met other monks
who claim to be enlightened? Monks can
talk about such things among themselves
without breaking the rules." Um, I do
not recall ever meeting a monk who
claimed to be enlightened. I met quite a
few monks who were claimed by others to
be enlightened and that included me. I

was considered to be enlightened in some areas of of like northwestern Burma [sighs] and that but there are some monks that are considered to be enlightened by others who just I mean they don't want to admit that they're not enlightened. I mean I admitted that I wasn't enlightened to some of these people in northwestern Burma and they obviously were very disappointed. It's almost like their their feelings were hurt.

So I mean you kind of some monks I mean there there is like this pressure that if people think you're enlightened not to like tell them that you aren't.

Although I did it a few times and and obviously I mean it they didn't they didn't like being told that I wasn't really enlightened. But um there are quite a few monks who are considered to be enlightened by like credulous faithoriented lay people who they don't really do anything to make them to set them straight on the issue. That's about as far as I ever got. But I mean with regard to my experience with monks, I never met a monk who just went around claiming he was enlightened.

It's it's kind of strange. even like the the schizophrenic ones like the psychotic like the crazy ones. There are

some of those and also Buddhist lay people too. It's like like one of the stereotypical crazy Christian people is the person who thinks that he's Jesus. You know, there's been quite a few of those that they're Jesus reincarnated, that kind of thing, the second coming of Christ or whatever. But for some reason in Buddhism, Buddhists are more humble. And you don't I' never really came across a crazy Buddhist even who thought that he was the Buddha. They just think that they don't even think that they're arroants really. They just think that they're like sodaponas. That I've met quite a few nutty Buddhists who believe that they were

sodapons. And it wasn't just their belief that they were a sodapana that caused me to think they were nutty. I mean, they were already pretty nutty even before they they finally let the cat out of the bag and declared that they were an Arya.

Um, I did meet one monk, a Burmese monk who was a Dhamma teacher who was very smug and I didn't like him very much. He didn't follow the rules very much. Um, like one time he was talking to me like how he went on this pilgrimage to Bodhi Gaya and he was just handing out money to the beggars and he didn't feel any any like he was doing anything wrong at

all. It's like he's like I just don't understand it. And I just kind of muttered to I just kind of muttered out loud you know a like shamelessness causing a monk friend of mine to kind of snicker. you know, he started kind of chuckling under his breath. But this this monk, this uh monk that I didn't like very much, very smug, you know, just delighted with himself. He he once told me that I'm not an Arya, but I'm like an Arya.

So, I mean, he would be another kind of case that comes to mind, but I mean, he didn't claim to be enlightened. He just kind of claimed that he was sort of like being enlightened.

But yeah, I mean, for some reason,
Buddhists tend to be more humble with
regard to that sort of thing than
Christians.

Crazy Christians anyway.

And so, let's see here.

Uh, and also I just kind of avoided like
the really wildly um like what's the
word? Lax monasteries, you I I tended to
gravitate towards more serious kind of
monasteries where monks would be much
less likely to be like blurting out that
they consider themselves to be
enlightened.

So anyhow, I'm just going to move on to
Chas is his second question here.

And he says, "Do you support short-term ordination as a monk as practiced in countries like Burma?" And no, in fact, when I was the abbot of a monastery in Burma, I just refused to do any temporary ordinations of monks. It's it's called Don Laba ordination in Burma where um a lot of a lot of guys like like especially during like thin jen like like Buddhist New Year where there's it's like five days of like holiday, no work. And so they'll just go in to the monastery and ordain for five days or I mean some of them will even ordain for just like two days, that kind of thing. Um and some old guys will brag, you know, I've been ordained 26

times, that kind of thing.

[sighs]

But the thing is [clears throat] like temporary monks as a general rule, they don't get rid of their money and they don't know the rules very well. Some of them are just clueless with regard to how a monk is supposed to live. They don't know the rules of monastic discipline. They're breaking all kinds of rules. They still have their money. So, it's it's just they're it's like they're pretending. The Burmese consider monks to be a superhuman being. So, just being ordained as a monk is automatically you're just getting all

kinds of merit by doing it. But I really don't think so. I think they some of them could be getting more demerit just because sort of like we were talking about earlier how you know a monk has to live at a higher standard and they're just like a lay person that is wearing monk's robes you know they're living in a monastery they might be eating only one or two meals a day more likely two but still both in the morning um but the main arguments I have against temporary ordination one they don't really renounce the world, you know, they still have their bank account. They still got all their money. It's just they're not handling it with their hands

in many cases. And then second, they just don't know the rules. They don't know how to be a real monk. They're just essentially it's like pretending. And they just think they're going to get merit just from shaving their head and wearing brown robes and going through like a 20-minute long ceremony. And that's it's like sila bata paramasa clinging to morality and observances. So no I do not support short-term ordination. I mean if you want to be ordained short term you're better off ordaining as a sinara or novice rather than just complete just jumping straight into full ordination as a beu. You want

to you know test the waters. you want to do like a trial run, a dress rehearsal, then do like I did. Like before I became a monk, I was ordained for five weeks as a sana, a co-eng as they're called in Burma. And still I did have money, so I was kind of breaking the rules anyway. But at least as a novice, it's not as big of a deal breaking a rule as if you are a fully ordained Biku who's really supposed to renounce the world. And you are admonish this at the ordination ceremony that you know it's like you've renounced the world. You're going forth from the the home into homelessness, this kind of thing. And I mean, you should do it for real and not just

pretend.

So short-term ordination, I'm more open-minded with regard to like ordination as a novice or a somara than full ordination as a biku for just like a week or a month.

Okay, so I'm just going to go on to Trzescus is his third question. Is short-term ordination available in western monasteries? And certainly yeah it is like um in Burmese monasteries you can be a don laba you can get temporary ordination there but as I say I would encourage anyone who wants to do like temporary ordination to just ordain as a somara and not a full beu um cuz you're

you're not as held to as high of a
standard and so you won't be like
failing in those standards as
egregiously. flee
unless you really are serious like
you're going to be ordained as a beu for
one month and still you just liquidate
all of your assets just for the sake of
that one month and you're just going to
start from scratch after you get out of
the monkhood then I mean you could do
that but there are very very few
temporary monks who do that
unless they don't plan on being
temporary and it just doesn't work out
and then they they're
then they drop out and they don't have

any money.

Anyways,

I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from PSA.

[clears throat] PSA is kind of a a wise guy and he says, "What criteria do you use to select your weekly beverage?" And it's just whatever I feel like drinking. Usually it's coffee lately, which is what this is, and it's just the dregs of some cold coffee at this point.

with bovine glandular secretions added.

Um, but it [clears throat] just depends.

Like if I'm already caffeinated, I'm already sufficiently caffeinated, I might drink something else,

but it's just whatever I feel like drinking.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is the last question. Boom.

And this is from Cyrus Frame, who I believe asked this question on Rumble, which is kind of uncommon. I really don't have much [clears throat] of an audience on Rumble because I just steadfastly refuse to get somebody to maximize my presence on Rumble. Like half the comments I get on Rumble are people wanting to maximize my presence on Rumble for a a fee after like the the asskissing, you know, oh, your your content is so wonderful.

It's so great. It really needs to get out there better. Here, let me help you kind of a thing. And it's it's just people who do that for a living.

But let's skip back to Cyrus frame and he says in the atakawaga the Buddha says a wise man is not stuck to by the scene or the herd. And in poly it's so lipid is a passive term. It means to be stuck to not to stick to but to be stuck to.

And then Cyrus frame continues saying normally we think of us doing the clinging to perceptions which would be something like a wise man does not cling to what is seen or heard. This passive

sense seems to be saying that perceptions can stick to us. Any thoughts on this? Well, one reason why it's they're talking to perceptions sticking to us rather than us clinging to perceptions is that there is a simile or a metaphor given in the Atakawaga more than once of the lotus flower. It's like the lotus flower was like a symbol of the enlightened being. It's like it grows in like muddy water. It grows in swamps. It grows in ditches. And so it's just like muddy, polluted, dirty water. And then the lotus comes out and it's just immaculate. Nothing sticks to that lotus flower. Water just beads off and drops

off. Mud won't stick to it. It's just perfect. And so that was a kind of symbolic metaphor for an enlightened being who grow up in like they originate in the mud of Samsara, but they are just immaculately clean and pure. So part of it is that

um part of it is just the fact that um in this in the atakawaga very early Buddhism

um it's it was a cultural thing where like for example in Janism which was contemporaneous you know the founder of Janism Mahavira the person reputed to be the founder of Janism anyway Mahaviraa was a contemporary of the Buddha they

knew each other and so in like Janism, you've got a ja or like a soul and bad karma sticks to it. It's like karma sticks to your soul. And so it was just a kind of ancient Indian way of thinking like asawas in Burma or Burma in like in early Buddhism the term asawa it means like influx. It's like defilements that cling to you rather than you clinging to the defilements.

It's it's like adventitious defilements. It's defilements coming from outside and sticking to you. So in a way it was just kind of the the cultural way of looking at things less like ego oriented like in the west that would be more inclined to say you don't cling to defilements. It's

in the in India especially in in in
Buddhism where there is no self there is
no ultimately real personal ego or
identity there's there's nobody to cling
to other things but then again other
things cling to or stick to what appears
to be an individual anyway.

So let's get back to the question here.

Normally we think of us doing the
clinging to perceptions which would be
something like a wise man does not cling
to what is seen or heard. Yeah. I mean
it goes both ways in these texts like
the atikawaga. I'm pretty sure it goes
both ways and one way is just it's it's
kind of a poetic metaphor and also it's

more in harmony with ancient Indian philosophical beliefs of like karma sticking to the ja of a jane.

It's like gluey stuff. I guess the Servost Buddhists also almost turn karma into like a physical substance that it's sticky.

So it's largely cultural. It's largely just kind of going with the metaphor of the lotus blossom that nothing sticks to even though it grows up out of mud.

Um let's see. Perceptions can stick to us. I'm trying to think of a more philosophical explanation here.

Um,

but really I mean there is no like ultimately real personal agent that does

this stuff that isn't can't do any active clinging to perceptions or whatever. And so there is some Buddhist philosophy in sort of deemphasizing the the individual person as the clinger. Instead, it's just sort of like outward forces that are that are like doing the sticking, you know, that's the sticky stuff. I mean, there's there's a little bit of Buddhist philosophy thrown in there, it seems to me.

And I guess that's enough. I guess I guess we're done. And it's a little less than three hours. Not too bad.

So, as I should always say at the beginning and have only once that I can

recall, if you have any questions you think I can answer, especially with regard to Dharma or Dharma, you know, Terra Buddhism, early Buddhism, you know, what the original Buddhism was likely to be like, Buddhism in general, meditation, monasticism, this kind of stuff, if you think I can answer it, then feel free to ask. I cannot promise that I will give a satisfactory answer, but I'll give it a shot. I'll I'll do my best. And no more than three questions per person, please. And if you have not already liked and subscribed, then if you like the content, then it would make sense to like and subscribe, wouldn't it?

And uh feel free to look at the URL
links below which includes the uh Amazon
[snorts] links to my three books that
are on Amazon. And uh aside from that, I
would just say be happy.

Okay then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 172.

I am your host Po Basa. And of course
172 is not a prime number. It is in fact
 $2 * 2 * 43$.

And we got kind of a long list of
questions today. So I shouldn't really
take up too much time with a lengthy
preamble. Just introduce you to the
beverage. So I got that. I've also
prepared I've got the the bobblehead
heretic mahayana monk
and so

oh got the emergency backup little paper
umbrella with no emergency backup

beverage. So I'm kind of taking a risk
by not having the emergency backup
beverage. But we'll just see how it
goes.

And I suppose I should just like wade
into this. just start answering
questions
relentlessly like some sort of question
terminator.

And the first question is from Romeo.

And I I'm always resisting the urge for
like the wherefore art thou Romeo stuff.

So I'm just don't even wait for it
because it's not going to happen.

Romeo says, "Although I was raised
Catholic, I have long since left
Christianity behind. Every now and then

my interest in Buddhism comes up in conversation with people in my life who remain devout Christians. This sometimes lead to some awkward moments. The reaction I usually get from them is a mix of concern, confusion, fear, and a bit of disdain.

Let's see here. Recently, one particularly zealous family member even gave me a warning that my going too deeply into Buddhism would open me up to evil spirits and demons.

A few Google searches later, and I came to find that this aversive view of Buddhism is not limited to people in my life, I even came across an article from

a Christian preacher that warns against something as innocuous and beneficial as mindfulness meditation of all things.

Have you ever come across this paranoia view of Buddhism from followers of other religions either online or in your everyday life? If so, how do you respond to them? How do you make sense of such warped views of Buddhism?

So I mean probably the most extreme reaction from a Christian from a non Buddhist that I got um ever was I used to uh do a lot of commenting in the Breitbart comment sections and my like my name in the the Breitbart comment sections is politically incorrect Buddhist. So Buddhist is in my name. And

as you may imagine, Breitbart gets a lot of like conservative sort of bluecollar type Christian people, not highly intellectual. You know, it's like the the the the IQ level of Breitbart comments is somewhat lower than like the IQ level of like X.

That's just the way it works out. You're not you don't really go to Breitbart comments for the purpose of having like a stimulating conversation.

It can happen, but I mean your odds are better on other platforms. So anyways, uh somebody just saw like my name politically incorrect Buddhist in the comments and they were this person was

they were they were like saying that
like mantras like when you meditate
using a mantra that really you're you're
like calling out the names of demons so
that they can like possess you more
easily. And also there is saying that
the the weird contortions of the body
confusing Buddhism with like hata yoga
is like making it easier for the demons
to get in which is pretty extreme and
some like hysterically intolerant
preacher probably told them this stuff
and they just believe it.

That was that would be like the most
extreme example of what Romeo was
talking about. I remember um one time
like a supervisor at work who's a really

nice guy, you know, just like the the
blue collar just you know goes probably
goes to church, maybe he goes to church,
I don't know, but he's a Christian
and uh he he asked about my YouTube
channel or something and I said it's
like I I answer questions about Buddhist
philosophy and he asked me, "Are you a
Buddhist?" And I said, "More Buddhist
than anything else." And then he just
kind of made the sound like
maybe it wasn't as extreme as that. I
mean, he didn't jerk the head sideways
or anything, but it was just sort of
like this kind of a sound that uh
indicated that he was not exactly

satisfied with my answer.

And of course,

when I was a junior monk, before I even

went to Burma, still in California,

there was this really nice Jehovah's

Witness guy who would come like once a

week trying to convert me. And uh I

remember one time, I mean, he was giving

me lots of these Jehovah Witness

pamphlets, you know, like Watchtower

magazine and all this stuff. So finally

one time I tried to give him it was like

a little booklet like a ginka booklet

you know I just just you know sort of

turn about his fair play and all that so

I tried to offer him this and he didn't

do it really consciously but he recoiled

from that pamphlet as though I were trying to hand him like a a centipede or something you know it was like like real just genuine like deep aversion like whoa you know he just backed up. You know, he didn't want to even touch it. But let's see here. Let's just get to the actual question. Let's see.

Have you ever come across this paranoia view of Buddhism from followers of other religions, either online or in your everyday life? Yeah. Well, I've answered that part. If so, how do you respond to them? Well, I mean, just not responding is probably best. And I mean, they're not like right in my face. It's not like

any kind of confrontational thing, you know, like some ignorant person in Breitbart comments. I might like calmly explain the truth of the situation. I mean, that would that's probably best, you know, just calmly, more or less rationally explain to them, you know, how they are mistaken in their assumptions.

with regard to the supervisor at work. I mean, he just kind of made this sound and and I just, you know, just didn't didn't really follow up on that.

So, let's see. How do I respond? I answered that part. And so, how do you make sense of such warped views of Buddhism? Well, I mean it is strange

because like for example, especially in
like the the contemplative orders of
Christianity like you know Carmelite
Christians, Carmelite Catholics I should
say or um you know some of the Greek
Orthodox or just Russian Orthodox
Orthodox sects you know they have yogic
practice not just asecism and prayer
but also they've got mindfulness
practice they call recollection at least
St. John of the Cross called what what a
Buddhist calls mindfulness recollection
which is kind of weird because
recollection means memory and the
polyword sad in like ordinary parliament
in in the northern Ganges or northern

India Ganges Valley in the Buddhist time
I mean it also mainly means memory. So
why like completely like dismissing
memory and being in the present moment
came to be called recollection for the
Catholics and you know like mindfulness
which like recollection in in ancient
India also is is something that I really
do not understand. I don't know if
there's any connection or it was just
some weird coincidence where
essentially just like abolishing the
memory and just being in the present
moment gets used I mean the word for it
is a word that means memory that part I
don't understand but like the practices
of in Buddhism practices like in the

discourse carmealites of of whom St. John of the Cross was an ordained member is very similar. The main differences are just the the theory, you know, it's just the like the narrative and that kind of thing, but the actual practice is remarkably similar and some of the insights that arise from that practice that aren't like attached to some dogma and like you know like conforming to some dogma. Those also are remarkably similar like some of the insights of St. John of the Cross are very similar to what you can find in in the sutas.

So

I mean there is that similarity and it's

mainly just the like the theory part you
know it's like the view part that that
is like the stumbling block
in my opinion
especially for Christians it seems
um let's see there was something else I
was going to say oh yeah with regard to
like Catholics I mean one thing you can
say to a like a Christian especially if
they're a Catholic or or or orthodox
is that I mean there are many people
consider the Buddha to be a Catholic
saint or Christian saint St. Josephhat
although technically it's not exactly
true because um St. Josephhat is a
corrupted form of one of the bodhicattas
existences

as detailed in in a jotica story. So there was like this Jotica story in you know Jotica stories are like a genre of of Buddhist literature in which you take like a like an Asups fable some kind of of like a folk tale probably that had existed in India since before the Buddhist time a lot of them anyway and then you just sort of tack on like a Buddhist moral at the end and the Buddha saying that this character in the story was me in a former life And that's that character was like Sar Puta and that character was Ananda. That kind of stuff.

And one of these stories was so popular

that it got translated into Arabic like
when the the Arabs were like the Muslims
were on the borders of India maybe
hadn't actually done much invading yet.
And so they they translated into Arabic
where the word bodhicattva or bodhicatta
became bodhisaf and then it traveled
westwards across caravan routes. By the
time it got to like Georgia or Armenia
it was like loisaf and then when it got
to Greece or the Greekeaking world at
the time it became Yosaf which then in
in Latin became Yosphatus or in English
Josephhat. and he was canonized as a
saint in the middle age in the middle
ages and I have been told that there is
at least two churches dedicated to St.

Joseph. One's one's in Sicily I think
the other one I think is maybe southern
France or something and a Catholic
priest told me once that there was a a
monastery a Christian monastery in
Germany that had a shrine to all the
saints the the shrine to St. Josephhat
was just a Buddha image just sitting in
meditation,

but technically it wasn't really the
Buddha because it was the Buddha in a
previous incarnation which Christians
don't even believe in most Christians.

Anyways, I mean the reason why
some Christians have this attitude, I
mean it some of it's just right in the

Bible, you know, it's like um the gospel according to John, I'm pretty sure says that you can only attain the kingdom of heaven through Jesus. So, anyone else is going to go to hell except for maybe a few like Jewish patriarchs from the Old Testament.

they might get into heaven just because they were, you know, pre-Christian Jewish patriarchs, biblical ones.

But one of the main reasons why Christianity has prospered as well as it has for over a thousand years is simply hysterical intolerance.

You know, like in ancient Rome, you had a very eclectic religious system. You

had all kinds of different religions.

It's it was paganism. One person's

worshiping mainly this god. Another one

is a votery of that goddess. You know,

Sabel, you know, you got a worshshiper

of Sabel. And then you've got someone

who is, you know, a devote of Apollo.

And then you've got some guy who's a

member of the Orphic mysteries. You got

another person down the road who

worships the the Egyptian goddess Isis.

Then you've got some, you know,

Epicurans that don't worship any gods

and you've got, you know, stoic

philosophers and just, I mean, it was

very eclectic, kind of like what um, you

know, Western civilization has become, you know, starting like in the 20th century.

But then, but then Christianity came along and they weren't willing to play ball that way. They weren't willing to to share the playing field, you know.

They were it was like only we are right. Everyone else is a devil worshipper. You know, they just converted all the pagan gods and goddesses into demons. You're all going to burn in hell. I mean, they were quite willing to consign their own ancestors, their own recent ancestors, maybe their own parents to to eternal damnation simply because they didn't follow the new belief system. And that

hysterical intolerance actually is a winning strategy. If you're just too tolerant, then you just accept people that are not tolerant and then they're just going to like force you out or just persecute you or whatever as soon as they get the opportunity.

So historical intolerance is to some degree built into Christianity. You know, there's some of that the roots of that are already found in the New Testament

and it's served Christianity well, I guess. You know, just like Gibbons decline fall the Roman

Empire. He's talking about like the late empire when it was well into decline, well into like Christianity where you would have just riots in the streets over I mean people literally killing each other. Blood blood flowing in the street over like disagreements on whether the the Holy Spirit emanates directly from the father or it direct or it emanates indirectly from the father through the son. And that was like a major major like like dogmatic battle that went on in the late Roman Empire with literally people killing each other over it when really I mean they couldn't possibly know this. It's just a matter of we got to all believe the same thing.

We have to be on exactly the same page.

And it's it's hysterical intolerance combined with a certain amount of ignorance of other belief systems where you can just believe, you know, they're they're all just worshipping devils.

I mean, you see that on axelot even just like might have even been today that I'm seeing that, you know, Islam is not a real religion. It's just like this like political cult or it's the worship of Satan. There's people saying that on Acts, you know, that Islam is really a kind of devil worship. And I mean, I don't I just can't go that far, you know. I I can I can accept that Islam,

the founder of Islam, was a kind of caravan bandit turned into a warlord, but I wouldn't go so far as to say that Muslims are literally worshiping Satan.

So,

let's see. Did I answer the question?

How do I make sense of such warped views of Buddhism?

It's mainly hysterical intolerance combined with ignorance of what dharma is all about. And the best way to deal with is just calmly explain things.

And of course, in all likelihood, they're not going to accept the explanation very much, but at least you're not going to be fueling any kind of argument by, you know, getting heated

and like arguing back at them, anything like that.

So I guess I should just move on the next question. As I say, there is kind of a longish list of questions. I mean, it's middle path between too many questions and not enough questions. So it's a good Buddhist Q&A here. And the next question is from Thoughtf Fog. And Thoughtfog says, "Would a monk be a valuable contribution to society worthy of food stamps?"

So I mean

you I I don't fully understand this question. I mean I assume thoughtf is asking are monks like

an asset to the society such that we should be giving monks food stamps and I mean technically food stamps you don't associate that with people who are assets to society. you you you you tend to associate food stamps with people that really aren't able to contribute much to society and so they need to be like taking more than they give or some such. Um but

the thing I mean I when I was a people were were like suggesting this kind of stuff to me too. you know, you should get like the free bus pass and you should you should go on like an EBT or food stamps or whatever it is. And it just it just didn't seem right as a

monk. I mean, a food food stamps you use them as money. You go to the store and buy food with food stamps, which I mean, a monk should not be using money or anything that is used as money. So, that would rule it out right there.

Same thing with like the the bus pass kind of a thing. If you're using it as money in lie of money, then it's technically a no no.

And so for a monk, you'd be a monk would be better off just like going to a food kitchen, going to a soup kitchen, that kind of thing where you've got like generous people generally not funded by the government, you know, this is like

private charity as a general rule who just out of the goodness of their heart are helping people and the monk would be associating with like homeless drug addicts and so forth, but I mean that's And I consider that like a monk who is really homeless in in America. I mean, there's a good chance he'd be living like in a in a homeless encampment with like mentally ill drug addicts, which I mean, he wouldn't have much to steal, that kind of thing. So I mean he certain monks with a certain kind of temperament very benevolent kind of you know social sort of temperament might be able to do well in a homeless encampment just going to a food kitchen for for their food. I

mean I did know one monk who lived on the outskirts of San Diego. I think he was staying in a wildlife refuge on the outskirts of San Diego and every day he'd walk into a like a Christian soup kitchen to get his food and they just put it into his bowl and they were fine with that. So that would be more appropriate I think than using food stamps as a kind of substitute for money.

But monks are a valuable contribution, but a valuable contribution to society. Even though technically they're supposed to be, you know, removed from society, you know, they renounce society,

they should not be particularly social.
But private charity is much better than
government, large, you know, socialism.
private charity is infinitely superior
to socialism. Um in the ex to especially
from a moral point of view or a
spiritual point of view where the person
who is like

engaging in private charity is gathering
up treasures in heaven to use Christian
terminology. I mean you're you're doing
something meritorious. you're you're
being generous. Whereas just having the
money automatically deducted from your
paycheck and then squandered by some
inefficient government bureaucracy
is not nearly as beneficial as a general

rule. I assume there are exceptions to that.

But yeah, go to a soup kitchen instead of going on food stamps if you are a monk in the west. And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Drip Walker and Drip Walker says, "What do you think of Evola's take on anata or no self? It seems to me that he morphs the concept of not self or no self into some kind of weird higher self thing.

And it has been a very long time since I've read um Evola's take on Buddhism.

Um I have read you know the famous book you know like the name of which I don't even remember the path to awakening or

something like that.

in English. But um yeah, it did seem to me that I does kind of glorify

Buddhism, you know, like he's got the the Buddhist arant, you know, the Buddhist enlightened being as some kind of Nietian Superman.

So I mean he's taking Buddhism and trying to like reconcile it with fascism.

So, you've got like you have to have like the the Superman who is like the the saint, the Buddhist saint. And yeah, I I I think that Dripwalker is correct that probably Evola just takes the no self thing and just kind of turns it into like a unity with

the higher self, you know, sort of like the God man kind of a thing, which uh yeah, I think you do have to distort Buddhism at least a little bit to really reconcile it with like Evola's preferred form of fascism.

And by fascism, I don't necessarily mean capital F Italian fascism that had Mussolini as its leader. I'm just talking about like small fascism in general.

So yeah, I really don't recall his take on no self well enough to really comment on it in any kind of detail. So I'm just going to move on to the next question.

This is from Jojo Do

speaking of fascism. Jo says, "Do you think Hitler would have given a merciful death to Brian Rue on on account of his bipolar disorder? If so, why did Brian ever support him?" I'm asking as someone who has been labeled a schizophrenic.

So, that's that's another question. We got to we got to separate these. And while I'm separating these, I might as well say that um I would prefer that people use not use hyphens instead of dashes because I have I go in and I have to change all the hyphens into dashes because it's just not good punctuation. It is wrong.

So, let's get back to Joe's question. Do you think Hitler would have given a

merciful death to Brian Ru on a kind of his bipolar disorder? Um,

I mean it depends. I mean, would Hitler have actually known Brian Ru? I mean, if he would he have met Brian Rue, then I mean, he might have liked him. You know, Brian Rue would be a fanboy probably.

And so, I mean, Hitler wouldn't just be like having people executed that were like strenuously in his favor.

So, I mean, he may have been completely merciful to I mean, there were some fairly nutty Nazis that were relatively high up in the in the pecking order. So, it may be that Brian Rue would just I mean, he'd be put in charge of the Nazi

party in some remote province or something. Who knows?

Um, but it may be that I'm that if Hitler had never met Brian Rue, I mean, I don't know what his policies were with regard to people diagnosed with some mental disorder that were were they just thrown into concentration camps? It may be that I mean, some of the really extreme cases like criminally insane, that kind of stuff. Yeah, I wouldn't be surprised. But um I really don't know enough about the social policies of the the the German National Socialist Workers Party um to know I mean what they did with people who just were like I mean they weren't a danger to anybody

you know they're like the benevolent
kind of eccentric weird person
who may have this or that label attached
to them from like a psychological
perspective,
but I think Hitler was kind of
he was tolerant of eccentric people, I'm
pretty sure, so long as they weren't
like opposing
the Nazi party.

So, yeah, I don't know.

It's just kind of a weird question
seems to me, but I would like to think
that uh that Brian Rue if he existed and
Brian actually believes that he was uh I
think he was like a Luftwaffa pilot or

something in in National Socialist
Germany in his previous his previous
life. So, I mean, in his previous life,
I mean, he may have died in a plane
crash or something, may have died in
battle, but he wasn't put to death by
the Nazi party. Assuming that Brian is
correct that in his previous existence
before this one, that he was actually
was in

Germany under Adolf Hitler, Adolf as
they would prefer.

So

yeah, I mean bipolar disorder and just I
think it was called manic depression
back in those days and
yeah I I really don't think that he

would have been seen as any kind of like
deadwood in society, anything like that.
So long as he was in favor of the party
that I'm sure there's a good chance he
would have found a place for him or just
leave him alone and let him do his
thing.

So, I'm just going to move on to Jodo's
next question, which is the second half
of the first question. If so, why did
Brian ever support him? I'm asking as
someone who has been labeled a
schizophrenic. Well, I mean, I don't
know. Bri, Brian obviously would not
consider himself to have been put to
death by the uh you know under the

policies of the furer that uh you know he does believe that he was in Nazi Germany in a pre in his previous existence and you know it prospered for him except for like I mean eventually I think he I think he did like die in a plane crash. his plane got shot down or something maybe.

So I mean Brian supported him partly because Brian bless his heart. I mean he just cannot accept any official narrative. So you know the official narrative is that Hitler was like just evil. So I mean Brian is is he does he's going to go the other way. And I mean partly I mean he he did have like some kind of vision or something in his youth

like which caused him to start you know putting two and two together with regard to his previous existence as a luftwafa pilot.

Um and he just Brian I mean he doesn't talk about national socialism much anymore partly because he's got so much grief from it. You know just people I mean just shun him because of it. But um I mean he sincerely doesn't think that Hitler did anything wrong. You know, I don't think he's he'd go so far as to deny the Holocaust, but he would go along with somebody like David Irving who I think is that his name? David Irving who, you know, sort of like an

alternate historian who, I mean, it allows that, you know, quite a lot of Jewish people and others did die under under the like the the German National Socialist Party in the 30s and first half of the 40s. But Hitler, according to Brian Rue, Hitler really didn't know about that. I mean it was just um you know this stuff that was going on. Hitler was just paying attention to other stuff and you know it was going on and Hitler did not order it. Did not necessarily approve of it. Although at the end I mean a lot of of Jewish people were were dying at the end just from like uh typhus epidemics in the camps and just starvation because towards the

end of the war things were getting so bad that the Germans could hardly even feed their own soldiers.

So Brian supported and to some degree maybe still supports Adolf Hitler because Brian sincerely does not believe that Adolf Hitler was like some evil psychopath that he was just sort of like a hero who didn't do anything wrong but is just the victim of negative propaganda and you know a certain ethnicity not liking him at all and kind of running the running the narrative and so forth, you know, pressuring the United States to get into the war and all that.

So,

I mean, it's kind of convoluted as you might expect,

but uh yeah, Brian supports Hitler

because he does not consider Hitler to

have been an evil person. I mean from

even a Buddhist point of view which is

kind of strange but I mean personally I

do not think that Hitler was a saint or

a sage but on the other hand I don't

think that he was as bad as Stalin for

example. Stalin killed more people than

Hitler did. Mao killed more people than

Stalin and Hitler combined.

But it's quite okay to endorse Marxism

still even though Nazism,

National Socialism or just fascism in

general is considered just to be like absolute evil. you know, even to just be associated with it is, you know, like people on the left will use that as a weapon against somebody when really Marxism historically is responsible for way more deaths and more misery than all the forms of fascism combined.

But I think I'm just wandering toddling away from the from the topic here.

So, let's just go on to the next question also from Jodo.

And this is kind of a good question. He says, "Now that Brian has been allowed back on YouTube after being kicked off like at least 12 times, can can you

restore the lost videos of you and his talks?" And to tell you the truth, um, most of the videos that I did with Brian back when I was a monk, I never even put onto YouTube. I was for a while I was just kind of uploading old videos with Brian and I got about halfway through the the list. There's we did a lot of videos and then just kind of lost interest and so I've got way more old videos of me and Brian on Bitshoot than than on YouTube because um as Joe Doe here has implied, YouTube used to be pretty sensorious. I got lots of videos taken down just because of just some casual mention of something in the past. Whereas now, thanks largely thanks to

Donald Trump and Elon Musk, the the
sensoriousness of social media has has
been lifted to a great degree.

So you got people just like using the
n-word on X and it's just it's fair game
now. Apparently,

you can say that the 2020 election was
rigged and not just lose your job
or whatever.

But, uh, yeah, so there's lots of old
videos that never even got put onto
YouTube. And most of them, I mean, there
were a few because of those casual
mentions and so forth, but um, a few of
them did get taken down, but most of
them that were put on YouTube are still

up. Um, it is true unfortunately that some of the videos that Brian and I did with venerable Ajan Punadammo got taken down. Some of some of the most popular videos that I did, it was like a group discussion between Ajan Punadamo Brian and me about various topics that some of those got taken down. So yeah, I've that Joe Doe is not the first person to suggest that those videos, especially the ones with Ajan Punodamo should be like put back up on YouTube now that uh the uh symbolic book burnings of the Biden administration have have uh have passed.

So

let's just uh move on to the next

question.

This is from Jimmy Lad.

And I there's I suppose I could just start putting up old videos with Brian again, especially the ones with Ajan Puna Damo that got taken down. But uh I'm answering the question to Jimmy Lad now. Jimmy Lad says, "Where can we learn more about the concept of mind generated karmic demons in the commentary tradition?"

So this is in response

This is in response to uh a statement I made in the previous Q&A where the demons in hell in Buddhist cosmology are not real beings. They're just like

holographic projections
that are generated by the karma of the
denizens of the hell realms. And um how
I learned about this is I happened to be
at Pa Doya in southern Burma visiting a
German monk there. And I was just kind
of curious about I don't know if I
brought this up with him or I brought it
up elsewhere and he just decided to
respond to that while I was there, but I
used to wonder where the like the demons
in hell fit in the 31 plains of
existence. You know, there is no demon
realm really. There's the Assuras, but
never in the text does it say that it's
Assuras in hell that are like boiling
people in pitch and like hacking them

with axes and this kind of stuff. You know, the the actual torturers in hell. Um there's not really a connection between them and the Assura realm. So, what are they? You know, I mean, would they just be denizens in hell that are like trustees, you know, just they get promoted because of good behavior so that they get to like torture everyone else? That kind of thing, you know? I was wondering about that. And this German monk told me that in the commentarial tradition, they're I mean, they're not real beings. They're they're just like um you know, holographic projections. And he also

said that the celestial nymphs in the heaven realms are the same way, which is kind of kind of a ripoff. I mean, some people they're doing this striving to get into heaven realm so they can have the herm of celestial nymphs. And it turns out the herm of celestial nymphs are all like, you know, celestial blowup dolls or something. You know, there's there's not really a woman there or a nymph, I should say. And I really don't know where in the commentaries. I mean he was more orthodox than me you know he was he would scoff at my my pernicious wrong views sometimes you know just in a very smug way it's like that's wrong because in this suta the Buddha says

this you know that was as far as he was concerned that was a conclusive reputation of any argument it's like the Buddha says this in this sutas therefore you are wrong you know that was kind of his approach and our friendship really didn't last extremely extremely long time.

Partly just because of that attitude of his or just this this smug kind of attitude.

But I I assume that he is correct that somewhere in the commentarial tradition it it mentions that the demons in hell and the celestial nymphs in heaven really are not conscious beings that

they're just a kind of projection. But I really don't know what where in the commentaries you can find. There's a good chance that AI is sophisticated enough. You could ask Grock, you know, where in the the polyatagas it mentions this and Grock might actually be able to come up with an answer,

but I mean, I really have not read a whole lot of commentarial tradition. I mean, the the um Wisudi manga, I've read the Wizi manga, which is sort of like the central hub of the poly commentarial tradition. And I've read some of the, you know, like the Jotica stories, not just the verses, but the stories and

also the stories to like the the ghost stories, the pato watu and so forth.

Technically, that's commentary. It's just the verses that are scripture or canonical. So, I have read some commentary, but not a whole lot. I never had a whole lot of use for the commentary. Sometimes if you're reading Vineia, there's just like this obscure word that is not a common word in poly. In fact, sometimes you'll find a word that's found only in the entire chapica, only in this this passage, and you don't really have enough context to know what it means. Therefore, sometimes you can look into the the commentary and see

what the commentary says and still take it with a grain of salt because sometimes the commentators didn't know either. And so they just would make a wild guess without admitting that they were making a wild guess. That happens in the commentarial tradition. Sometimes you've got monks from south India and from Sri Lanka that are trying to interpret like cultural context like like what how do you say it like cultural norms and also like flora and fauna of north India centuries previously and sometimes they just guess and they don't admit that they're guessing.

So, let's see here.

Yeah. So, where can we learn more about

the concept of mind generated karmic
demons and celestial nymphs in the
commentary tradition? Yeah, you're just
I it's it's in there. I'm pretty sure,
but I really don't know exactly which
commentary states it. And there's lots
of commentaries.

Every text in the in the Polytopica has
has its commentaries. So,
good luck finding it unless you can find
some expert on the commentaries or maybe
an maybe AI or something could could
locate it for you. And I'm just going to
move on to the next question. This is
from Yoshi Buouie. And Yoshi Buouie asks
a good question. Did God Buddha commit

an offense when he proclaimed to the general public that he was enlightened? And this is following up on a statement I made in the previous Q&A that um for a monk to proclaim his enlightenment or even to proclaim that he has attained Janna to a lay person is forbidden. It is against the rules even if it's true. I mean if it's false then he's excommunicated for life. if he's knowingly lying about having attained superhuman mental states, which would include enlightenment, but also would include like psychic powers and even Janna, you know, like deep meditative states. If he's telling the truth, it's

still against the rules cuz monks aren't supposed to be bragging to lay people about this kind of stuff.

So, did the Buddha commit an offense when he proclaimed to the general public that he was enlightened? Um, technically, yeah, you'd think so, wouldn't you? In fact, there's also it's it's a similar rule that a monk isn't supposed to perform, you know, psychic powers. You know, he's not supposed to do miracles in front of lay people.

Whereas the Buddha, I mean, his most outstanding flouting of that rule was the so-called twin miracle where the Buddha levitated up into the air and

then he started spraying water out of one half of his body and fire out of the other half. And then he would switch it up so the side that was spraying water is now spraying fire and vice versa. And then he switched it up so it became like the top half and the bottom half while he's levitating in the sky in order to impress these brahinss with his psychic powers and it's just flies in the face of you know repeated admonitions that you find in the text where monks aren't supposed to do that kind of stuff. But I mean in that case I think that the twin miracle probably is mythology stuff that got added later and the people who added it considered

including this miracle to be more important than the Buddha following his own rules.

And it could be I mean it's it is pro more plausible anyway that the Buddha would go around saying that he was enlightened you know declaring himself to be the Buddha although in the text he generally refers to himself as the tagat which doesn't necessarily claim that he's enlightened. It just means that he has attained the state of suchness or thusness and which kind of implies that he's enlightened but I mean in a way it could be a kind of euphemism but it's really hard to say you know to

what extent the poly texts are reliable
objective history and to what extent
they're like paraphrase and to what
extent you know it's just like mythology
gets added in and Just because it seems
plausible

doesn't mean that it's necessarily true.
I mean that's one thing that really
struck me as a monk is that some western
monks are very intelligent. You know
it's like generally most Buddhist monks,
western Buddhist monks have like a
college education. You know it's
intelligent open-minded people. And so
they have to kind of admit, it's kind of
embarrassing, maybe bad taste or bad
manners for them to admit that the texts

are wrong about like the earth being flat and floating on water, that kind of thing. But so so they're willing to kind of dismiss the fire breathing cobra dragons and the flat earth floating on water and eclipses of the sun and moon being caused by an asura named Rahu swallowing them into his mouth. That kind of thing. But when it gets to the actual philosophy stuff, then they think, well, it's completely reliable. But what are the odds that all the fake stuff is going to be obviously fake or all the false stuff is going to appear to be obviously false to a westerner in the 20th or 21st century?

that probably most of the fake stuff
that gets added, the spurious
contents of the of the sutas and so
forth is stuff that might seem
reasonable, you know, it might seem
entirely possible, including stuff like
the Buddha not just bragging
grandiosely.

I mean, that kind of stuff I consider to
be fake, but even just to admit that he
was enlightened. I mean, it kind of goes
against other teachings in the sutras
and it's something that could easily be
added.

So,

but let's let's just get all this um
ambivalence

or vagory. No, that's a different that's that vagory doesn't mean vagueness, does it? Um, let's just set that aside and just take the text at face value. Just assume that it's all true.

Then I mean did he commit an offense by claiming to the general public that he was enlightened or did he commit an offense by performing miracles in public in front of lay people? Um it would be against the precepts that he laid down, but you could say that the Buddha himself was exempt because he's the one that makes the rules. You know, sort of like some totalitarian dictator can't really break the law because he is the

law. What he says goes. And if he says this is the law for everybody except me, then who's going to who's going to deny that? Who's going to say, "No, Mr.

Dictator, you got to follow your own laws." And then, of course, you wind up in a camp or something.

Not that the Buddha was a totalitarian dictator, but when he's the one who's laying down the rules, I mean, he's the creator of the system, then it may be that he has some leeway that he can fudge on his own rules.

But yeah, that is with regard to the the miracles, I can be skeptical that the Buddha really did perform the twin miracle, for example. But with regard to

calling himself fully enlightened,
it's possible that he didn't like
historically and that that stuff just
got attributed to him later on.

It may be that he really did call
himself the dagattop

but that would be a kind of

I don't know

it's in a way sort of sidstepping claims
to full enlightenment by just saying

I've attained thus

you know I am what I am kind of a thing

but technically yeah it would be against
the rules and I'm just going to move on

to the next question and this isn't

really a question this is from my Buddha

and he just made a statement in the comments under under the previous YouTube video that I might as well comment on it because it just seems like something that I should comment on.

Maitraa Buddha says, "Your current job seems to disturb and pollute your mind. It is my belief that you should become a philosophy instructor at a local community college. You would probably make a greater salary than you already make." So,

um, my current the reason why he said that is probably because I mentioned in the previous Q&A that every once in a while I'll get like these semi nightmares associated with work. You

know, it's just like this neverending work that has to be done. You know, I operate a forklift. I load and unload like truck trailers. And, you know, I sometimes I'll have these dreams of just keep loading and loading. It's just this the freight just keeps appearing and or else the freight doesn't have like a like a pro code. You can't scan it to know where it's supposed to go. That kind of thing, but you have to do something with it. Just these kind of sort of like school anxiety dreams happen. And I mean most people probably have school anxiety dreams, at least in the West, people that have actually

attended like high school.

And I mean, I've had weird anxiety dreams about like airports, you know, like the the bad guy chasing you through an airport, that kind of thing. But it is true. My current job is is an aggravating um sometimes stressful job. And I got to fix my collar again. Let's see. Go like that. Okay.

So, I mean, to some degree, and a lot of it is just I'm not really a social person. I was a hermit for many years, just literally like a recluse for many years. And now I'm just surrounded by people. And like I mentioned before, the average IQ of the people working on that

dock is probably below 90. And so, you got a certain amount of like blockheads that you're dealing with, people that just mess things up. And I and there's just lots of it. There just people just swarm forklifts just swarming sometimes and when it's really busy, you know, 20 forklifts all on the same dock just all getting everybody getting in everybody else's way.

So yeah, I mean it it can be an aggravating unpleasant job. I do admit that in a way it's it's like a kind of aesthetic practice but it's not a very spiritually advanced aesthetic practice just because the whole like psychic

atmosphere of the place is not very high
let's say
so then my tray Buddha says that is it's
his belief that I should become a
philosophy instructor at a local
community college and yeah I've
considered that my sweetheart has has
suggested similar stuff. Um, like
there's a place called Bob Jones
University here in Greenville, South
Carolina, and uh, you know, she was
telling me I should try to get a job
there. But it turns out Bob Jones is
like a a Christian school and I wouldn't
really be able to teach comparative
religion there very well. Especially
because um I applied there once for a

forklift job, you know, working in their warehouse for moving around pallets of books or something. I don't know. And in order to get a job there, you had to avow that you declared Christ to be your savior and Mary was a virgin and all this. and and I just couldn't do that. I wasn't going to lie and say, "Oh, yeah. I'm I'm a good I'm a believing Christian."

But, uh it's my understanding that community college instructors probably don't make a whole heck of a lot of money. I mean, I'm I'm making I mean, I'm not rich at all and I'm I'm still working on an hourly wage, but still, I

mean, I'm living a relatively comfortable life up until some disaster strikes.

And one of the main advantages of the current job I've got, I get a lot of physical exercise. I got to get off the forklift again and again. I'm not climbing around like a like a squirrel or a monkey on these on this freight.

It's just loaded into the into the trailers. In order to like strap stuff to the wall and secure it and everything, I got to lift up heavy things. And so I get exercise, which is good because I'm not good at artificial exercise. I'm not good at like working out. So natural exercise is good for my

body even if it's causing me a certain amount of frustration and aggravation.

Um, but being a philosophy instructor at a local community college, I mean, it's it's possible. Yeah, maybe when I get too old to be climbing around like a monkey and lifting heavy weights, I might actually look into that.

But I'm probably not going to be looking for a different job anytime soon, unless something radical happens.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question because that wasn't even really a question. I didn't even have to answer that one.

So, this is from someone whose name
apparently is spelled in cerillic
characters and I think it is pronounced
something like dian zamnol
which in English translates according to
Google translate into aesthetic journey.
So, let's just call this person
aesthetic journey. An aesthetic journey
says, "They say Buddha taught two
truths, mundane and super mundane.
But did Buddha really teach any mundane
truths?"

Well, yeah. Of course he did. In fact,
pretty much everything that he taught
like verbally
was mundane truth because in Buddhism
there are the the two truths.

You've got samuri satcha or conventional truth and you've got paramata satcha or ultimate truth. And when you're talking about people for example, you know, I, you, him, her, they, them, we, us, you know, any kind of talking about people, that's always conventional truth because ultimately there is no self.

And like almost everything you talk about in in regular language, I mean, it's dealing with conventional truth.

It's not dealing with the absolute. It's not dealing with ultimate truth.

It is true that according to that Abid Dhama scholars can consider Abid Damaama to be ultimate truth but I don't believe

that for one second. I don't think that ultimate truth can be put into words at all. Any any truth that you tell with words is going to be conventional truth like the Daqing says the name that can be named is not the eternal name.

That the highest truth cannot be symbolized if you symbolize it like with words. It's not the highest truth anymore. It's just symbols.

Like the the contean thing in itself cannot be explained in words.

I mean, you can kind of dance around it a little bit. Sort of like Buddhists dance around Nirvana a little bit, trying to explain it, but you really can't. So, you just keep your efforts to

a minimum really.

So the Buddha spoke in patti or wara
which it's just like language of the
world that I mean you have to use
because you're in the world you're a
human being so you've got to use this
symbolic stuff you know you got to have
this weird convention where the sound
tree symbolizes this big plant outside.
I mean, what what are the similarities
between the sound tree and an actual
tree? I mean, we don't even know what an
actual tree is like because we're
symbolizing it, but even by seeing it
and perceiving it.

So, um it'd be a a maybe a a a better

question is did the Buddha really teach any ultimate truths? because all he can do is just kind of point the way and and there's like that Zen story. I think it's uh one of the the famous coons where um the Buddha started the the patriarchal succession by one day instead of saying anything you know at the time when he usually delivers his sermons to the monks instead he just sits there in front of everybody with this flower and he's just twirling the flower between his fingers like this and the only person who got it was Mahakasapa or Kasiapa who smiled because he understood whereas nobody else did. And I mean the whole

point of it is you can't really teach ultimate truth in words. So the Buddha was just kind of twirling a flower to try and silently convey something that words can't convey. And that was like the beginning of Zen Buddhism. According to, you know, Zen people, that's when Zen Buddhism began. When the Buddha gave his his flower discourse, when he didn't say anything, he just sat there twirling a flower or a paper umbrella.

So

yeah, yeah, the Buddha really did teach lots of mundane truths. And the question, the better question is, did he

teach any ultimate truths? And then he couldn't do it directly. He couldn't do it using words. All he can do is show the way and then you've got to find out for yourself. You know, it's like somebody who's never tasted vanilla before asking you what vanilla tastes like. It's like, what are you going to say?

You could sit there and explain to this person what vanilla tastes like for hours to your just exhausted and horse. They're still not going to have a clue. They still won't know what vanilla tastes like. The only way to tell or to teach someone what vanilla tastes like is you just give them instructions. you

know, you go and get some vanilla and taste it and then you'll know what vanilla tastes like because even if you have like a like a master's degree or a doctorate in chemistry, you know, you you've you've worked out all the, you know, the neuronal pathways and and whatever it takes, you know, how the the molecules in the vanilla like interact with your taste buds and how the the perception is formed in your brain and all that. Still, you can't explain what vanilla tastes like.

I mean, you could know all that chemical stuff and if you haven't tasted Venol yourself, you're still not going to

know.

So, so the Buddha just taught the way on how to know the highest like super mundane ultimate truth because it cannot be put into words.

And I'm just going to move on to aesthetic journey's second question which is what percentage of the py mocha are sila bata paramasa in your opinion. Um see the py mocha is like the the 227 rules for a biku. There's more for for nuns and some other schools of Buddhism have different numbers, but it's like the the standard list of rules of monastic discipline that have to be recited every two weeks at monasteries or supposedly they're

supposed to be recited u every two weeks
at monasteries the full moon and the new
moon days and silabata paramasa
literally means like clinging to
morality and observances.

So I mean really I mean the commentaries
really don't understand silabata
paramasa. It's one of the one of those
words that got distorted by the
commentaries and like misinterpreted by
the commentaries. So that like dogmatic
orthodox terabara Buddhists don't know
what silabata paramasa is because they
follow the commentaries and in my
opinion the commentaries are wrong. the
commentaries

I mean usually sila bata uh it translates into English as like rights and rituals but really sila means morality and bata or vata means observances so really it's clinging to morality and observances and if you read the atikawaga it it warns against clinging even to like genuine morality that if you think that keeping five priest precepts is going to get you enlightened. That's cling to to rights and rituals. I mean, if you're just clinging to this, you're like attached to following these rules. Even though they're they're valid moral rules, don't kill, don't steal, don't lie, that kind

of thing. Then if you if you're still clinging to that that's still silabata paramasa even though the commentarial tradition has interpreted in this weird way like the standard def or the standard example of silabata paramasa in the commentaries is the like the dog aesthetics and the the boine aesthetics that that lived in the Buddhist time who would imitate animals is in the sense in in the hope that they would become enlightened through that. It's like some people think that cows are just naturally enlightened. You know, they just naturally follow five precepts, you know, they don't they

don't kill, they don't steal, they don't lie, you know, that kind of thing. And so by imitating cows or dogs, you know, just going around on all fours and just like grazing, not not speaking human languages, that kind of thing, that that is like the the commentarial, you know, practically the definition is by behaving like a dog or behaving like a cow. But I mean if you read the atikawaga and you really look into these things that the Buddha really was warning against clinging even to valid morals. Don't cling to anything sort of like Ajan Sha used to say if right view becomes wrong view if you cling to it.

So I mean in that sense

um I mean the py mocha rules themselves
are not clinging to anything. It's not
silabata paramasa

because

um I mean some monks are obsessed with
vignia and so they cling to all the
rules and so it'd be 100%.

Other other monks either they're
enlightened or completely shameless and
they don't cling to any of the rules so
it would be 0%. So that would be more
subjective. the silabata paramas
especially the paramasa the clinging
part

that's just uh

I mean that's that's subjective that's not in the rules themselves so I think what aetic journey really is asking is what percentage of the pimoka are are vata and not sila the wata is just observances you know it's just etiquette whereas the sila is real sila you know so you You know, there's a monk's rule that you're not supposed to you're not supposed to kill animals. It's a pacidia offense to kill an animal. Whether it's a mosquito or an elephant, it's the same offense. Well, I mean, that's that's that's still sila, but vata or just observances, it's like some of them are serious rules like sana rule. Second most most serious category of offense is

if you build a hut that's more than certain dimensions, you know, more than like 7 and 1/2 ft by like 5t, you know, they're tiny tiny hut. If you build anything bigger than that, then that's a sada offense. So that would be an more of an observance because it's not really immoral to build a big hut. And in fact, if you're building it for yourself, it's not allowed to be that big. But if it's like for the SA, if I if I remember correctly, somebody's willing to donate it to the SA, then it can be bigger than those dimensions. Or just shaving your head, wearing robes of a certain

material and a certain color. Those are just observances. Not eating in the afternoon is just an observance. There's nothing inherently immoral with eating dinner anymore than eating breakfast.

So if you get if you ask that way you know what percentage of the py mochoka are observances and not morality that they're just like ancient Indian aesthetic etiquette then

I would guess probably more than half of them I mean I'd have to go through know one by one in order to really make like a precise kind of estimate but maybe twothirds of them. You know, it's like

there's some of these rules. It's like the nisia pacidia rules. It's like you have to your sitting cloth has to have a certain percentage of you can't have more than a certain percentage of black goat wool in it. This kind of thing or you're not allowed to carry goat wool more than a certain distance. This sort of thing. I mean, it's even handling money. I mean, technically there's nothing immoral in with regard to holding a dollar bill in your hand. I mean, that's not immoral, but it's against the rules. So, yeah, I'd say at least twothirds of the potty mocha rules and vine rules in general, because most

vineia rules are not in the potty mocha.

They're beyond, you know, they're just

additional to the potty mocha. then

yeah, I'd guess at least 2/3, probably

more than 2/3

of the rules are just observances

instead of of morality. But when you

start like trying to get rid of the

observances to make um like monastic

discipline more amendable to western

civilization or something, then you're

just [__] [__] up. And once you open

the door to changing stuff, then people

are just going to keep changing and

changing and changing until it's just

unrecognizable. It's it's fubar.

So you're better off just dealing with

the inconvenience of following ancient Indian rules. If you want to be a terradoin monastic, then you just follow the rules. Preferably without clinging to them too much. At first, you're going to cling to them just to get them down. you know, you don't want to break the rules, but then it could become second nature after couple years and then you don't have to cling to anything anymore and it's just automatic pretty much whether it's moral or or just observances.

So, I'm just going to move on to aesthetic journeys. Next question is, do you like Putin?

And I've never met the man personally.

Um, but I really don't have anything against him. I mean, supposedly he's a he's like a gangster, you know? He's he's this ruthless person that has his political opponents arrested andor assassinated, that kind of thing.

But,

um, I mean, I as as a world leader, as a national leader, I mean, I think that I mean, America could be friends with Russia and Putin.

I I don't and they could be allies.

>> I don't see how Putin's any worse than the leader of China or a number of other other leaders I could mention. I mean, I would prefer

Putin to Vanderlayan.

At least Putin's still got a he's got an intact pair of testicles.

So, yeah, Putin probably is relatively good for Russia. I think the whole Ukraine thing, I mean, and it's just bleeding resources and money and and manpower and stuff for Russia for a long time. But, uh, yeah, I think Putin is probably I mean, if if he's leading Russia towards an improved state over the way it was before him, then he's he must be doing something okay. Of course, you could say the same thing about Stalin. I mean, Stalin pretty much industrialized Russia,

but Stalin was not a good guy.

And so, I mean, with regard to like a political leader, and this applies to Trump, too. I mean,

in a way, you have to like differentiate between like is he a nice person, is he a good person or and then is he a good leader? Because a good leader isn't necessarily a nice guy. And a nice guy certainly is not necessarily a good leader. Like Jimmy Carter was probably a nice guy, relatively speaking, but he wasn't. He was history has laid down the verdict that he was not a good president or like uh what's his name? Valentinian the great. He was a late he was a Roman emperor like around the year like the

late 300s.

And I mean he was just a sociopath. He was just he was just this cruel, sadistic bastard of a human being. But he got the name the great. He didn't call himself that. It was other people were calling him the great because even though he was a sadistic sociopathic bastard who would have people put to death, beaten to death with clubs or whatever just for making like a minor trivial mistake, still he was doing his best to serve Rome and lead Rome to greatness and kind of undo some of the mistakes that his predecessors made. And Rome was prospering under him. So, he

was a good leader despite the fact that he was a cruel, sadistic, sociopathic bastard.

But getting back to to Putin, I've got nothing against the man. Tell you the truth. I do I do think it would be good if the United States and Russia could be allies instead of, you know, you've got some kind of status quo establishment that wants to just keep the cold war going, but they can't really have a cold war against our real adversary, which is China. You know, China is a greater threat to America than Russia is, but it's just we've got doing too much business. You know, they they're selling us all this, you know, cheap electronics

and stuff that

we can't we can't badmouth China very much, even though they're a greater threat to the United States than Russia is.

So, with regard to Putin, yeah, he's all right. In a way, I kind of like Putin kind of, but I really don't know lots and lots about him. And I'm sure he is just a ruthless person, not as bad as Valentinian the Great.

And I'm just going to move on this question. This is from PSA.

And PSA says, "Do you think the dude is an American version of a renunciant semi-enlight being?" And he's referring

to the big Labowski. I can't remember.

Um, is it Jeff Bridges play plays the
dude in in The Big Labowski?

Um, so do I think he was an American
version of a renunciant semi-light being
he might be sort of like a Hollywood
attempt at portraying somebody like
that, but I mean he wasn't really
semi-enlightened. you know, he had a
certain wisdom sort of like a certain
kind of, you know, hippie wisdom to him
and he didn't I mean, he was relatively
patient, you know, he had a certain
amount of Christian charity towards
other people. He wasn't really
confrontational. He wasn't a cruel
person, you know, he he was a relatively

good person with a certain amount of wisdom, but I don't think that he was really

uh like a semi-enlightened being.

Maybe that's what Hollywood was trying to portray, but it didn't. I really don't think so. So PSA's second question. On which stage of the path would you categorize someone like that?

Putina. I would consider him to be a puja, which means he is not in any of the four stages of Buddhist saintthood. But then again, I'm skeptical with regard to pretty much all of the stages of Buddhist saintthood.

even like Araham ship to some degree

because within the context of Samsara it may be just at best a kind of paradox and I do think that the other stages sodapana and so forth originally had different meanings before somebody crafted them into this system of the four stages of like Buddhist arya hood. I do not think that the Buddha himself advocated the four stages, but that's just my opinion.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Master Poe.

And Master Poe says, "On hope, don't you hope the Buddhist point of view on reality is true?"

Um

I mean there might be a certain

subliminal level of hope with regard to that. Um but in like in Buddhism they talk more about confidence.

But in my case I mean the Buddhist point of view is not ultimately true. So I mean just going with conventional truth and ultimate truth like I was talking about before. I mean it's not ultimately true. There's a certain amount of delusion involved in believing anything. So that kind of kicks that in the head a little bit. But

I do use a lot of Buddhism as a working hypothesis, a con very convenient working hypothesis that seems to work well. It works better

in my opinion than say scientific realism. Although to some degree a certain amount of scientific realism is also a good thing. It does result in a rather robust point of view.

So hope like I was saying in the previous Q&A is is desire. It's like you're you want something to to be the case.

And I don't know, I don't it's it's not really a matter of like craving in my opinion.

Um it's just sort of a convenient working hypothesis that I have been benefiting from for many years at this point. But yeah, there could be I mean to the extent that I do hope Buddhism is

true and I really don't feel it. But to the extent if I do have that at some subliminal level, it would be a kind of subliminal unenlightenment.

So I'm just going to move on to uh Master Po's second question, which is like a followup on the first one. He says, "Whatever one's world view is, it takes hope. Faith and hope go hand in hand. Does it not?" So that's the only actual question at the end is go hand in hand. And faith, faith and hope don't necessarily go hand in hand, but both of them are delusional. Faith is delusional. Faith is belief and belief is thinking that you know something that

you don't really know.

Faith, I mean, you're never going to know that the contean thing in itself, which is actual truth, actual reality.

You're never going to know that through faith unless it's like St. John of the Cross's dark faith. I mean, St. John the Cross had this phenomenon called dark faith and it was it was based on like profound like what what a Buddhist would call Janna I guess it's sort of like a Christian version of that high contemplation he called it where you just dismiss everything from your mind that is not God so you can't imagine God so out goes the imagination you can't sense God through the senses out go the

sense you know the whole sensory apparatus you can't reason out God. You can't figure out God intellectually. Out goes the intellect. So you just dismiss all these mental states, all these perceptions, and until everything that isn't God is dismissed. And then you realize there's still something there in your mind. After you've dismissed everything that can be dismissed, still there's something there. And according to St. John of the Cross, that's like the spirit of God. And that is dark faith. You know, it's like it's beyond mere intellectual belief or emotional belief.

It's you you just know it, which in a way is not really faith. I guess the New Testament like St. Paul in the New Testament says, you know, that Christianity, I mean, he he honestly admits Christianity is based on faith rather than knowledge. You know, because if you really know it, then it doesn't you don't need faith anymore. Faith is this belief. In a way, it's hoping something is true. I guess both faith and hope are unenlightened mental states. In my opinion, the term sadda in Pali is often translated as faith, but some western translators don't like that and they'll replace the word faith

with like confidence. And then there are
at least two verses in in the the sutas
that say that a monk shouldn't have
faith. One is in the dharmapara
and then another one is in the at aka
waga where you just don't have faith.

And

I agree with that because faith is
belief and belief is delusion.

Belief is some sorrow.

Perception is some sorrow.

So you can say faith and hope go hand in
hand, but both of them are going hand in
hand down some samsaric path.

They may eventually get you to
enlightenment, but before you become

enlightened, you're going to have to dismiss the faith and hope.

And once you're enlightened, you're not going to have any faith or hope. At least that's what the texts imply.

So let's see here.

Yeah. Well, I mean, Master Po does say whatever one's world view is, it takes hope and and maybe faith, but a world view is ultimately delusional.

You know, it's it's like a perceptual belief system. And perceptual belief systems are samsara.

I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is Dhama River. And Dama River says, "Have you read the protocols of the learned elders of Zion?" We got

kind of a like a a Nazis-esque theme going here. Dama River, I I kind of interrupted myself, which is rather rude. So, I'm just going to go back to Dama River here saying, "Have you read the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion? Could you share your thoughts?"

No, I have not read the Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion. I have read about them a little bit where supposedly it's kind of like a uh what's the like a hoax, you know, it's sort of a fraudulent thing that was based on a novel that was written considerably earlier than the protocols were that a large a large part of the protocols of

the learned elders of Zion is supposedly based on a novel that was written much earlier. And that's about all I know about it. I mean it's a lot of the sort of the so-called anti-semites out there will you know cite the protocols of the learned elders of Zion which supposedly has like the agenda for the Jews to like you know undermine Western civilization and take control and all that but I mean I've never bothered to read it and probably never will and I do I think that to some degree it's it's like propaganda. Not necessarily like Hebrew propaganda, but more like anti-Hebrew propaganda.

That's just what little I know about it.
And so I'm just going to move on to Dama
River's next question,
which is I watched the interview with
you and Brian Rue,
how social justice is practically the
opposite of Buddhism and they don't want
men to be men. And you mentioned how you
used to have a Dutch friend who stopped
being your friend when she realized you
were leaning towards the right. It
reminded me of a young liberal white
Canadian feminist friend I used to have.
She was going to university at the time
and told me she was working on a project
with other people to send men to a place

like a concentration camp where men could be re-educated on how to be men. I thought she was joking, but she was dead serious. What are your thoughts and feelings on being sent to a concentration camp to be re-educated on how to be a man? And your teacher is a young white liberal feminist from Canada. Well, that that Dutch friend who stopped being my friend when she realized I was leaning towards the right, she was actually the one who inadvertently redpilled me because one time she sent me a link from it was Black Pigeon Speaks. It was some video from Black Pigeon Speaks. This is back in like 2015

about how women and like feminism like women involved in politics destroys civilizations and she was kind of confused by it. She asked for my opinion and I watched it and it just like on the sidebar on YouTube you get all this you may also like kind of stuff suggested viewings and I start watching like Sargon of a CAD and and and like uh Stefan Molno and and people like that and that just it was like three days of just horrified fascination just seeing how insane the left had gone and it pretty much cured me of any leftward leanings or tendency sees to vote Democrat.

And so I mean I would I would remind her occasionally like this is because of you. I'm red pill because of you.

Yeah. That pretty much ended that. But um let's see where Oh yeah. And this same person

uh shared with me uh a paper that she had written for some university class in Europe about redefining masculinity. And it was like the the alternatives to like patriarchal toxic masculinity were all men becoming like more empathetic and and like nurturing and and non-aggressive and so forth. So essentially redefining masculinity into femininity, you know, it's like every option that was given in the paper was

there's like two or three options, two or three alternatives were just like men becoming more feminine.

So that's that was really a thing and it's going on in universities. Maybe not quite as much as in 2015

when it was really just reaching like a fever pitch,

but

yeah, I think this pendulum is starting to swing the other way now. But let's get to the actual question here. What are your thoughts and feelings on being sent to a concentration camp to be re-educated on how to be a man? And your teacher is a young white liberal

feminist from Canada. Um, yeah. Yeah, I mean it it would depend on the circumstances, I suppose. I don't think I'd be a very good very very very good subject, you know. I don't think they they would succeed in really changing my point of view other than maybe just making me even more vehemently non-feminist.

It reminds me of there was some old science fiction movie kind of science fiction movie. It was like a dystopian kind of movie from like the 19 late 1970s

and it was some actor that was specialized in like bee movies. John Saxon, I think, was the star of it. And

he he winds up in like this

post

postmodern feminist society where the men are treated like slaves and they're fed this I mean their food has is laced with this drug that makes them very like beta and passive and subservient and everything to just so that the the women can keep them under keep the men under control. And this John Saxon guy, he just kind of stops eating the food and uh eventually just like rebelss, you know. And of course in in these these shows, it's inevitable that like one of the the female leaders, you know, one of these these butch feminists who is like

just taking charge and and running everything, she's secretly like the play thing of some ultra masculine barbarian on the outskirts of society. that kind of thing. They always fall for like the super macho hero guy.

Uh so I might be something like that John Saxon guy where you know I'd be just sort of biting my time. I mean just like these kind of feminists they just really overestimate their own power.

They don't like the idea that feminism has become a thing in the west simply because men allowed it to happen. that women couldn't just seize power without men consenting to it because men are stronger than women as a general rule at

least with regard to you know like
aggression that kind of stuff.

So

what are my thoughts and feelings on
being sent to a concentration camp to be
re-educated and how to be a man? In
other words, how to be a unic would be
what they would be teaching. and your
teacher is a young white liberal
feminist from Canada.

Yeah. I don't know. It would depend on
the liberal feminist and all that. It
would just depend on the circumstances
on how I would navigate the situation.

I'm going to move on to the next
question here. This is from Cyrus Frame,

one of the few people who asks questions on Rumble.

And Cyrus frame says in the atikawaga there are these lines. If by view purity is for a man or by knowledge he abandons unease then he who is already encumbered is purified by something extra. Indeed the view betrays him claiming in that way. And I commend Cyrus frame for using my own translation of the Aikawaga.

That was my translation of the following poly here. And I'm going to use Burmese pronunciation, so it's going to sound weird.

So,

uh, Cyrus frame continues here, what I understand by the first line is that

some people pursue purity through views.

The second line, some people chase

knowledge to gain comfort, which reminds

me of Jeremy Hillary Boob in the Nowhere

Man scene in Yellow Submarine. However,

I do not understand the last two lines.

Okay, so let's just go over this verse

from the Atika Waga. If by view purity

is for a man, which means that people in

ancient India and nowadays like some

Christians believe that you're going to

become enlightened or reach the fullness

of your potential by believing the right

belief.

And then so the next line is or by

knowledge he abandons unease. And really

these are just they mean the same thing.

If by view purity is for a man or by

knowledge he abandons unease is

essentially saying if by view purity

isn't for a man which is to say by

knowledge he abandons unease.

So either way it's like your beliefs are

getting you into a state of of purity.

you know, sort of like

ghana yoga in in in Hinduism or in yoga

where it's like you realize the truth

that and the truth is some kind of like

perceptual

world view. It's not just like some

ineffable

like like void, you know. It's it's not

like that. is you have realized truths

you know you have understood you know
the laws of reality this kind of thing
it's not just like dismissing all
perception it's still perceptual
apparently

so

getting to the third line then he who is
already encumbered is purified by
something extra which means I mean from
the Buddhist point of view your beliefs
are what are preventing you from Being
enlightened, your beliefs are weighing
you down. You are encumbered by views
and perceptions and beliefs.

And the atakawaga just says over and
over again, don't have views,

perceptions, or beliefs.

So, you're encumbered, you're weighed down by all these ideas, these unenlightened perceptions.

Um, and you so you think you're going to be purified by just having a different perception.

You think that you're already weighed down by these beliefs, but you just add a few more beliefs to to just sort of pull pull it all together like the rug in the big Labowski, you know, it pulls the room together. The I mean, really, you're you're just more encumbered.

You're just more weighed down by beliefs by adding some new belief. I mean, you're you're just even more weighed

down. Even if you get rid of some of the old beliefs to make room for the new belief, you're still just encumbered by these clings to views.

And so the last line is indeed the view betrays him claiming in that way because you're saying that I'm unenlightened which means I have delusional views but I just add some new delusional view because all views are are just by nature delusional. are all samsaric that you're not going to become enlightened by just clinging to any any world view or any system of world views. I mean, there's plenty of orthodox Buddhist dogmatic scholars out there who

just cling to what the Buddha taught and still they're not still they're not enlightened.

They just don't get it.

So, that's what it means. I mean it's like if you think that by knowing the right thing or having the right belief system is going to get you enlightened, you know, then the belief system is really what's keeping you from being enlightened. So in a way it's just self-contradictory.

And I hope I explained that well enough because I'm moving on to the next question. This is from Nearmmmit and Nemmit says, "How to deal with injustice at work. There was a big

promotion recently in my office. They promoted some 10 people. I didn't get the promotion, but what hurts more is not that I that I didn't get a promotion, but people who I have trained got it before me. And with due respect, they are not on my level when it comes to being effective and getting things done. So Nitt knows way better than I do like why they might have been promoted even if he was more qualified to be promoted like he was the one who was teaching them and still knows more than them. I mean it could be like a DEI stuff it could be nepotism you know it could be you know these kind of reasons

just sort of like village politics or something. It's like, well, we need we need more women in upper management, so we'll just promote, you know, her and her and her. That kind of thing.

I don't really know what the details are. But, I mean, if you work for a place that has unjust systems like that, then you might consider just moving elsewhere, just getting a different job somewhere else. I mean, that's kind of what I was doing. the the place I worked at before, the place where I'm working at now, um the the the upper management was largely incompetent. And one of the reason why they were incompetent, there were a lot of like college educated

white women that were just hired just
largely through DEI and there's a lot of
like progay stuff. This was like we're
making construction materials and it
would not have surprised me if there
there was like some decree came from
above that we're going to be flying gay
pride flags over these shops selling
construction materials which would just
obviously would tank business
because most construction workers,
people that buy like metal roofing and
so forth, they really tend to be more
conservative. live in South Carolina
anyhow than elsewhere
or then then you know you go to

Starbucks and it's it's just kind of what you expect but you want to go buy metal roofing I mean you don't really care about gay pride and all that and the upper management was really supportive of that kind of thing and just bragging about how Newsweek magazine found their business to be one of the most inclusive progressive kind of businesses to work for and I mean it was like a kind of group think going on so that like in people that actually had good ideas would get they'd either fire get fired or leave and it was just the people that agreeing with the agenda you know that that would stay and things just got worse and worse until finally I

just had enough and I just I was gone
but again I don't know what the
situation is in Nermit's place of
business, you know, what is the
motivation for them to be hiring people
that are less qualified and overlooking
people who are more qualified? I mean,
in America, the usual explanation for
that would be like diversity hires or
sometimes it would be like nepotism or
or that kind of thing too.

So yeah, I mean if it's either you can
just have equanimity, just accept, well
that's just the way it is and just keep
doing a good job. Um or just go
elsewhere, I guess. Or I mean depending

on who your like supervisor is, who your boss is. I mean you could go in and have a talk with the boss, you know, why is this and they might explain it to you. I don't know.

But I mean the Buddhist explanation of dealing with injustice at work would be pretty much like the first two options that I gave is either have equanimity.

You know, it's just all in accordance with your own comma or I mean if it's just really bad just find a better place to work.

But sort of the middle path might be go in and have a talk with the manager and see see what his explanation is. And you might say, well, we got we're under

pressure to to have these young
diversity hires.

So, I'm just going to move on to the
next question. This is from Uiosis,
formerly known as Stellar Supreme and
more formerly known as Libra Lam and a
whole slew of other names.

And Uiosis, formerly known as Stellar
Supreme, etc., etc.,
says this, "Things have started to click
for me about my attitudes toward
Buddhist practice. So, excuse my
heavy-handed question. Do you feel that
you betrayed the Buddha's direction of
only engaging in solitary practice under
the condition that one only do so if

they have sufficient concentration and mental stability and they don't cultivate fear, dread, and mental imbalance? Considering the practice is aimed at one's dying mental state on account of the hysteric disorder that you developed and the loss of interest in practice with the further consideration that the Buddha advised up who was not established in the development of the concentration states of the nine Janna and Nibana that because of his deficiency he should heed this advice. Quote, "Upali, you should live with the SA or community. As you live with the SA, you will be at ease." Unquote. With the further consideration

that if you are not at ease with the SA
nor the solitary life, then the
requisite path would be at the very
least going back to the basics of
developing concentration as a lay person
who carries out the four duties.

I'm not trying to go hard on you.

Hyphen, which I had to turn into a dash.

These are just difficult facts that I
have been facing off with in my personal
life, considering my sweetheart probably
won't put up with the dullness of my
severe mentality toward the duties of
lay Buddhist practice and that I will
likely need to revive my drive toward
the monastic life because I have

experience with states of concentration and feel a duty to train them in a life that accommodates their higher training in accordance with the development of the fruits of the contemplative life outlined in the samya palasuta. Uh, end of question. But this I mean stellar supreme, etc., etc., he has this weird way of communicating. I mean, my sweetheart trying to understand this question actually asked an AI program to try and interpret it into plain English. I think I kind of understand it though. but he's he's got a really abstract, verbose, complicated, convoluted way of communicating that sometimes, frankly, I I don't really understand.

So, anyways, let's see. It's going to take some unpacking, I guess, since there's all these different convoluted strands all kind of interwoven in this question or series of questions or or something. Do I feel that I betrayed the Buddhist direction of only engaging in solitary practice? Um, no. Because I mean probably the best thing that could have happened to me as a monk would be I find an enlightened teacher. I mean that is like one of the best things you can do. Not just a teacher that you consider to be enlightened and that happens a lot. But you really find a teacher who is like an a master.

And I've always had bad luck or bad karma with regard to teachers like that. I mean in school I had good teachers but as a monk I never really found a monk that I wanted to emulate. I just I want to be like that. I never found one that that you like you you when I first went to Burma I had a very short list of three seats that I thought might really have attainment. One of them was upandit. Two months at Panda Rama cured me of that. Another one was Tangidon Seattle. Just 10 days or just a few days at his meditation retreat center cured me of the idea that he really had attained something really like superhuman,

you know, like really advanced wisdom.

The other one would be Muhamy Zodica who still is very intelligent, a good meditator, but I mean in his later years he was kind of a hypochondric and just kind of started living in a house in town with his daughter which I mean he wasn't really accepting disciples anyway that when I first came to Burma my teacher my acharia venerable Pakogus wanted to send me to Mahameyan Uzora because he spoke spoke fluent English, was very intelligent, had kind of a western point of view. Mahameyan Usuza did not want to deal with foreign disciples. He had had bad experiences

with foreign monks already.

So, I mean, he wasn't really an option.

But so, I mean, I just did not have a teacher that I really wanted to emulate. Ironically, one of the the spiritual teachers I would most be inclined to say, "Yeah, I want to be like him." would be Nim Kuroli Baba right there up there on the altar. Even though he was obese, he died of like diabetic shock. I think he was really rotunded partly just because of you know sort of the way he he worked out the we don't need to get into that. But I mean his only possessions were a loin cloth, a blanket and a water pot and a and a diary. I mean allegedly those were

his only possessions. And in the diary
he wrote the same thing every day. He
just wrote Ram.

It was like his his meditation mantra.

I mean you see pictures of his diary.

It's all just Ram.

All of it.

So

gosh,

where do I I kind of lost the thread,

but uh yeah. So I mean if I had found a

good teacher or even like a really good

community I would have gone there but I

never really did. So I was pretty much

on my own. Like monasteries I mean you

go to monasteries and you see that I

mean almost all monasteries in Burma
is like they're not following Vineia.
They're not even trying to follow Vineia
correctly or even in the relatively
strict monasteries. You know, there's
this rule, you must follow Vineia, but
then the monks are secretly not
following Vineia. Monks are secretly
handling money and this kind of thing.
So, I learned fairly quickly that if I
wanted to be a conscientious monk, I
should avoid monasteries. And I just
never found an enlightened teacher or
anywhere near to an enlightened teacher
that I could really just want to emulate
and just trust what they told me. And
there's like the culture barrier between

a westerner and a Burmese monk. Of course, I was ordained in a Burmese tradition. Spent most of my monkhood in Burma. And there's like this cultural barrier where the Burmese still have like this medieval attitude towards Buddhism. You know, everything in the text is true. You know, you can't question any of it. And I just can't do that. I mean, it my mind just doesn't work that way. And so I was on my own. No good community to join. I mean it's like some people advised me to like join an Ajan Cha monastery but other monks who knew me fairly well would would warn me there's no way you you'd make it an

Ajan Cha monastery because even a Jan
Cha monastery it's still like
conformitybased.

You have to fit in. You wear the uniform
even if the uniform is not in accordance
with line. you know, you wear the the
pajamas underneath or, you know, the the
kung fu pajamas or whatever it is they
wear underneath their their robes in the
West even though it's against the rules
technically. I mean, you do that or
you're just seen as a troublemaker. It's
conformity oriented. Everyone has to
like fit in and I'm just I'm just not
going to do that.

So, just being solitary and doing the
best I could on my own was the best I

could do. And I did fairly well. I mean with regard to let's see here the hysteric disorder that I developed. I mean even Arahans apparently have hysteric disorders. I mean you just know anything about Sigman Freud then I mean he wasn't like some sort of infallible oracle like the the Edypus complex and all that I really don't have much use for. But still, what he said about hysteria seems pretty valid that you have these natural urges and a civilized person represses these natural urges because you can't just be like fondling every pretty woman you come across. That sort of thing. You can't

just take whatever you want. You can't
just like punch anybody you don't like.
You have to repress your urges, restrain
yourself, self-restraint,
which is basic to Buddhist practice.
Then these urges don't just disappear.
They just get pushed into your
subconscious mind where they build up
pressure until they start percolating up
to the surfaces up to the surface as
neurotic symptoms. Especially hysterical
symptoms which can be like
psychosomatic illnesses, weird
behavioral ticks like me clearing my
throat a lot could qualify as
that. Although there's also a certain
genetic aspect to me clearing my throat

a lot. My mother was the same way.

So let's see here.

Getting to uh the Buddha's advice to up
and if the his advice to the pali
involves the nine Janna then yeah
obviously that's an anacronism. It
shouldn't shouldn't be taken too
seriously because the Buddha didn't
teach nine Janna. He taught four in all
likelihood.

Even the somaya palasuta doesn't mention
anything more than four janna.

And the somaya palasuta is a relatively
old suta. So old that some of the later
additions into orthodoxy didn't make it
into the samaya palasut.

So let's see here. Yeah, live with the songos. Yeah, good luck finding a good SA where everyone is like following the rules correctly and really striving for enlightenment. I was really idealistic when I first became a monk and before I became a monk. When I was intending to become a monk, I just assumed I'm going to be joining the brotherhood of these wise men striving for enlightenment and they'll all be wiser than me because they'd been striving longer. And then you get into an actual monastery and it's not like that at all. I was very like sullen, very disillusioned when I first became a monk just because I was surrounded by these Asian monks.

And west, some Western monks are like, a lot of Western monks are like this, too. I mean, they're not even trying.

They're just try, they just want to live an easy life.

I mean, they might have a devout Buddhist belief system, but they're just striving for a better rebirth. They're not even trying for enlightenment.

I remember one time the Jehovah's Witness who used to come and try and convert me about once a week asked one of the senior monks, one of the Burmese monks, you know, why are you a monk? And it was like he got this embarrassed look on his face and he was like, because I

want to attain nibbana, you know, it's like a question mark at the end cuz that's what he's supposed to say. But that was just what he was supposed to say, so he said it.

So, let's see here.

Did I answer the question? I think maybe I kind of did.

Let's see. I'm gonna kind of review this long complicated question. Man, it scrolls way up there. Okay. Do I feel I betrayed the Buddhist direction of only engaging in solitary practice under the condition that one only do so if they have sufficient concentration? Well, I mean I mean you can do solitary practice as a beginner practically. I mean once

once you've gotten enough wasa under
your belt you know once you've you're
you're like no longer independence upon
a teacher but even if if you're still
you know it's been be less than five
years that you've been a monk you can
still go off and live alone if you're
you're making progress and I was making
progress for a long time

so and mental stability I'm relatively
fairly stable mentally I'm not really a
flighty kind person. I'm not
flip-flopping and that kind of thing.

So,

yeah,

I think I I think I pretty much answered

that. If I could have found a good community in which I would have fit in that was led by like a a really wise monk that I would want to emulate, that I could really take seriously, that's what I should have done. But I just never encountered that situation.

And so I'm just going to move on to what's his name now? Usis

formerly known as seller supreme more formerly known as Libra etc. Second question

which is as follows. Do you agree with this advice? If one struggles at advancing in concentration development, they should remain as a monastic working on insight development in the capacity

of the three marks of existence because that is conducive to liberation at the last mental state before death. Well, not necessarily. I mean you see if you struggle at advancing in concentration development still you have the option of of just mindfulness general mindfulness um which is one reason why mindfulness is much more popular among westerners like compulsively thinking westerners who can't just get into like deep like concentrative states that in a way having a more moving target of just doing basic mindfulness practice tends to work better for most Westerners, it seems. But I I didn't

even Let's see.

Huh. Okay, I'm just going to have to like recollect myself here and sort of get back on the track of this question. Should one remain as a monastic working on insight development? I mean, you there's more that in the capacity of the three marks of existence. I mean, there's so much more to do than just doing that. I mean, just dealing with your basic defilements, dealing with your urges and and like your preferences, that kind of thing. Um, I mean, you can use the context or like the the theme of the three marks of existence as a kind of unifying theme to your practice,

but I mean, there's there's so many
so many routes or emphases you can make
depending on where you're at
spiritually.

So let's see if one struggles in
advancing in concentration development.

I mean

it sometimes I'm reminded of there's a
suta I don't remember what suta it is
where it's talking about a certain monk
who he's got like strong defilements you
know he's got lots of loba dosa and moa
and so he's just doing his best with
weeping face just beating his breast you
know just sort of like the the guy in
the Bible dear God please have mercy

upon me a sinner. He's just sort of like enduring this ordeal of self-restraint.

And the result of that is when he dies, he doesn't become enlightened, but at least he goes to heaven.

And that's I mean that's in the sutas.

It's it's kind of a you know it's it's praised by the Buddha. At least it's

it's given as a as like a potential scenario for some monks that I mean, you just not ripe for enlightenment yet.

still you just kind of force yourself to follow the rules and be a good monk as good as you can that still there's going to be karmic payoff for that you're at least going to go to heaven.

So I mean it's there's it's so

complicated there's so many you don't
just follow a cookbook method. I mean to
some degree you've got to follow like
your intuition

or if you've got a good wise teacher you
can just follow what your teacher
advises you instead of making these
decisions on your own.

So it's it's I mean it can work just
emphasizing the three marks of existence
but then again I mean it's not the only
possible way of doing it and it's going
to depend on just numerous
variables

and it's it's going to be infinitely
complex situation that it's it's not

just one size fits-all. It's not just one explanation for how things should be done.

And I'm just going to move on to Uiosis, formerly known as Stellar Supreme, formerly known as Libra Lamb's next question, which is as follows.

You noted in your studies in archaic Buddhism episode on the Saka Pa Suta that you regard it to be a composite suta that to some degree discredits archaic material as corrupted by ancient politics. I understand why you would say this, but I find it hard to believe that there could be teachings that are so potent that they could include things like the perfected mind, like an

eightfaceted gem of digaya 2 or halting
the autonomic nervous system. I
understand these are doubtful claims to
many people also wherein Buddha wisdom
is even possible to arrive at
organically by sheer willpower. these
days.

My question is, if many people have
their own signs to the depth of the
Buddha's wisdom, like your own
experience with malaria in the rain,
what reason do we really have to believe
that this is a matter of free will and
not simply the Buddha being a man
fortunate enough to be at a high stage
of bonga maturation

that such high strangeness is possible
like with human birth being so rare to
come by. Who is to say this even has
temporal reference on a human scale and
isn't just a causal opportunism wherein
say stream enterers
experienced their last seven lives eons
apart and wherein in the past can be
traced back for eons things can't be
traced forward contrary to Abid Dhama
such that the Buddha just knows his
dispensation will age in an
opportunistic way the world is pretty
wild with paranormal phenomena like with
your ashtray anecdote. So, it shouldn't
be a big deal for Buddhism to have
folkloric features to it. I am reminded

of the handful of leaves simile. Sorry, massive question with many threads, lots on my mind. Yeah, this it's it's a massive question that's going all over the place. So, that it's hard to say exactly what the question is. Like about halfway down it was my question is and then it's just continues with with the rambling. I mean, possibly as like a matter of like discipline that people should try to keep their question down to 50 words or less because I mean when you get into like like a 500word long question or a thousandword long question as a general rule it's more than just one question.

So let's see here. I mean, I did say that the sakapa suta is probably corrupt in that it's got like an archaic central portion and then it's got like a much later beginning and ending kind of like jotica stories.

So yeah, I mean that's that's mainly what I was saying that the central portion of the sakapa suta is like an archaic protoicha samup.

Okay, but this part I understand why you would say this, but I find it hard to believe that there would be teachings that are so potent they could include things like the perfected mind of or halting the autonomic nervous system where in Buddha wisdom is even possible

to arrive at organically by sheer will
willpower these days. Yeah, this is it's
getting really obscure. My question is,
and then he gets to the question, if
many people have their own signs to the
depths of the Buddha's wisdom,
um what reason do we really have to
believe that this is a matter of free
will and not simply the Buddha being a
man fortunate enough to be at a high
stage of bonga maturation? I mean, this
is it's just such an unnecessarily
obscure way of asking a question.

Seriously.

Oh boy. Okay. Well, with regard to banga
maturation, I mean, that doesn't even

really make any sense as far as I can tell. Bwanga, according to according to the Abidama philosophy, is just a kind of test pattern in your mind when you're not thinking any anything in particular and it doesn't change over the course of your life.

Um and this free will stuff. I mean the the best I can make of this question is like to what extent should we consider success in dharma to just be like you're just ripe for enlightenment rather than like some person just striving and developing like systematically and yeah I mean the Buddha was ripe I mean he had his parames were fulfilled

according to tradition and that's like the main or the main one of the main statements I get from Burmese people you know about how they've been born into a Burmese culture or Buddhist culture you know they've been Buddhists their entire lives but still me as a westerner I as a westerner could just adopt Buddhism and then start practicing it at a higher level than them they say that's because of your paramy

You know, it's just your past karma.

It's not like just anybody can practice dharma and become enlightened. There's no guarantee. And most people just are not ripe for for dharma practice. In

fact, most people couldn't even practice dharma correctly. They would just crack up trying to practice dharma correctly. Even some meditation instructors would crack up if they really were required to practice dharma correctly. they just could not do it.

So I mean it's a largely a matter of are you ripe for enlightenment and it doesn't have to be like obviously like according to the text Angulim Mala who was a serial killer nevertheless had like a mature enough spiritual route that he could become enlightened in that life. If he was converted to Buddhism, converted away from being a spiritual a spiritual

killer, a serial killer,
he became enlightened. So, um it's the
the systematic practice that may be
required to kind of bring your
parameies, your your past mo spiritual
momentum to the surface, something like
that. But free will, I mean, I don't
even necessarily believe that free will
exists. If it does exist in this world,
it's it's a paradox. Like maybe an
inexplicable paradox.

Free will logically is impossible.

And also from the Buddhist point of view
especially when you have no self. Then
what is I mean how can you have free
will with no self? Free will require

some kind of autonomous individual to have the free will. It would seem to me that the free will itself would have to be some kind of autonomous function which is ruled out in Buddhism.

So

various people just take upon themselves Buddhist training. Some of them are like more mature than others and they get farther with it.

And that's about I mean that's about all I can say really

because I mean the question is so obscure that it's really hard to tease out what actually is is the question. It seems to me that the the main point of the question is just does a person

become enlightened just because they're
just fortunate and have like the enough
karmic

capital to just fall into enlightenment
or is it some sort of systematic effort
through strength of willpower and so
forth and

in the west I think it's more the latter
because most westerners who have some
sort of awakening experience erience.

They they have it accidentally, you
know, they have a near-death experience
or something that just jolts them out of
the some soric rut that they've been in
for who knows how long. But it may be
that you need some kind of systematic

practice at least to kind of clear your mind and set yourself up for the availability of that

whatever it is that happens, the crisis that jolts you out of some sorrow.

And I think I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is a very short question. This is from Ruie. How much value do you place on etymology?

And I mean, that's it's kind of an interesting question. How much value do you place on etymology? I mean, I like etymologies. I'm interested in etymology.

Sometimes I'll look up etymologies of words and sometimes it can help you to understand the meaning of the word but not always like the word the English

word understanding. I mean literally it means you're standing under something but I mean how does that help you to understand what the word understanding means?

So, um it's it's really interesting like just following uh like Indo-Uropean roots, that kind of thing. That's interesting to me. Like most people wouldn't realize that the word goose in English has the same Indo-Uropean etymology as the word Hamsa in Pali or in Sanskrit, which usually is translated as swan or wild goose. But I'm pretty sure the Hamsa bird is the ruddy shell duck which is like a goose.

So how does Hamsa and goose how are they derived from the same word? Well uh goose the English word goose comes from like the the Germanic word gans like still is found in in like the word gander which is a male goose and from gans to hamsa as it's a lot closer. It's more obvious that way.

So sometimes the etymologies of words can help you to understand the meaning or at least the original meaning of the word but it's not really necessary and uh indulging in fake etymologies like like the commentaries do a lot you know like the word beu you know it means usually translated as monk or sometimes as like mendicant beu

and it's like the the commentatorial tradition has this weird folk etymology that it's like um it's like ba ead which means one who sees the danger in samsara when really the real etymology of the word beu the more likely etymology anyway is it means beggar beam bead beu bead is is like the verb form of beu and it means to ask for to beg for bea Pam is another noun form of that same verb which means alms food given to a beggar.

So how much value do I place on it? I mean it's not really necessary to know etymologies except for maybe in a few cases. You want to know what a word

means? Like the word asawa can help you to understand what what asawas mean you know it means like influx influence something that flows in that is becomes like an encumbrance.

It's like sticks to you that kind of thing. I mean it can help you to understand certain things but I mean not necessarily.

So, I mean, it has some value, but it's not like invaluable.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Ethiopian fake TIG. And Ethiopian fake TIG says, after I look at the clock and see, we've been going for over two hours already. Yeah, this is this is going to be a long one.

This is Yeah. Ethiopian fake Tig says,
"Daniel Ingram has a book called
Mastering the Core Teachings of the
Buddha. And in it he explains the stages
of insight in a very westernfriendly
way. The connotation of the entire thing
is that one can start the insight
practice and finish it. He himself
claims to be an arahant and he has done
some form of study to prove that his
brain waves are unique to that of a
regular person. What are your thoughts
on people like him? And do you think
just about anyone can complete the
stages of insight with just a few years
of practice? because that is how

everyone is treating it and claiming that they have achieved equanimity.

Well, like in my answer to uosis

is not every I mean most people just are not right for enlightenment that even if they try to practice correctly, they won't be able to. It'll just drive them into some sort of mental breakdown or meltdown or something.

So, what are my thoughts on Daniel Ingram?

My best guess with regard to Daniel Ingram is that he is a sociopath.

That I mean anyone I mean like on his website I looked at his website years ago when I was a monk. The like the homepage of his website the first thing

you see is him bragging and listing off all these attainments. It was with just like becoming fully enlightened was like one of the like the minor ones.

And so I think he's probably a hustster.

I mean, he's a clever one and he's got some kind of insight like a lot of like cult leaders have. I mean, you don't become a cult leader just by just being a truck driver and deciding, well, I'm I'm tired of driving trucks. I'm just going to become a cult leader. You have to have like charisma and like a glib way of explaining like difficult subjects, especially spiritual ones that just sound like you're this fountain of

wisdom, when that's not necessarily the case. Like Osho was another one. the Bagwan Shiraj Nish, he'd be kind of the same way. I'm not even sure if the Bagwan himself would would go as far as Daniel Ingram and just brag about how enlightened he is.

The so-called Jed McKenna is another one of these who just brags and brags and brags about how enlightened he is. And anyone like that, I mean, that's red flags.

That's it's like something that according to the text a really enlightened person shouldn't do even though like it was mentioned earlier on the Buddha himself

in the text is continually doing this stuff but I'm skeptical as to whether the Buddha himself really did that kind of stuff.

But I saw uh like a video with Daniel Ingramman. He seems just like this nervous fidgety kind of guy. Not like you'd expect from a fully enlightened being, but that's just my best guess. So, let's see.

Do I think that just about anyone can complete the stages of insight with just a few years of practice? No, I do not. Yeah. Okay. So, I guess I answer that question. I'm very skeptical. Um, I'm not just going to like flat out assert

that Daniel Ingram is like a fraud and a sociopath, but that would kind of be like a plausible guess based on what what I know of him, which isn't very much, I have to admit. I mean, there have been some of these enlightened beings like uh Andrew Cohen, I think was his name, who he was sort of a Daniel Ingram type. He was declaring himself to be fully enlightened until after years of this, he kind of got into some kind of unsavory thing going with a female supporter or something. And then some of his supporters were saying, "No, wait. You're not really enlightened if you're doing that." And then he actually said,

"Yeah, I guess you're right. I guess I was mistaken." Because you can be mistaken. Even an honest person can believe that they're enlightened or have some attainment. And really, they're just overestimating their own attainment.

So, that's possible, too.

So, it may be that Daniel Ingram isn't a deliberate fraud, but at the same time, he's not fully enlightened either. He just kind of thinks he is. That's a possibility, too. But all the bragging about how enlightened he is is that just seems like a red flag to me.

And I'm just going to move on to

Ethiopian fake Tig's next question which is as follows. While reading Yungian books, I have come across the idea that a coming of age ritual for boys needs to be done for them to mature into men. I have also realized that what keeps men infantilized is this idea that something bad might happen here or there. uninitiated men have high levels of stress hormones like w like women do and don't take the risk and do what's needed to be on their own. What are your thoughts on this and a coming of age ritual for men these days? Well, my coming of age ritual was on my 16th birthday when I got drunk as a skunk and higher than the proverbial Georgia pine

both for the first time in my life and it just opened up like this whole new world for me.

But um yeah, I've got a book on the book is Battle for the Mind by William Sergeant. That is one of the most important books I ever read. I recommend it to anybody even though it was written back around like 1950 or something.

And he talks about um how higher vertebrates including humans and Pavlov's dogs are governed by habit.

We're just kind of locked into habitual habit habit patterns which are from a Buddhist point of view karmic. And it takes some kind of crisis to to knock us

out of this habitual habit pattern. It's like even if that these habit patterns are like dysfunctional and cause us to be unhappy, you know, we can go through life just a miserable mess. So long as it's keeping us, you know, like above water, you know, it's like so long as it's keeping us alive and functioning, it's good enough. And just instinctively, we cling to it. We don't want to let it go until we get into this crisis situation when our habitual way of dealing with reality just isn't working anymore. And then we have like this breakdown. And then we become very open to suggestion. And that is capitalized on by various people. Like

Chinese brainwashing was like this where you just break the person down in this indoctrination camp, you know, through just working them half to death, not giving them enough food, not allowing them enough sleep until they have like a breakdown. And then like the commasars, the the polit the the communist party representative comes in and starts indoctrinating you and you just soak it up like a sponge and become a good communist afterwards.

You know, like 1984, you know, that the ministry of truth or whatever it was.

No, not the Ministry of Truth, but you know, the place where they get sent to

get indoctrinated, you know, room nine or whatever it was is like that. like um indoctrination methods of like the Stalinist Soviet Union was like that where they get you not only to confess to trying to overthrow the government but actually get you to believe that you were trying to overthrow the government through the same kind of stuff just lack of sleep, just horrible conditions. You're being eaten alive by bed bugs. You know, you're wearing clothes that are way too big, so you got to hold your pants up all the time. And then you're just like being sent into this you don't have enough sleep. You're sleepd deprived. You get sent into this room

where they're just like just hounding you, asking the same questions over and over again. Why did you do it? Why did you do it? This kind of thing until you just have this breakdown actually start believing that you did it. And it turns out like military basic training, you know, like full metal jacket kind of stuff. I mean, that does the same thing. It breaks down this soft, wimpy city guy and he has this kind of crisis and then the drill instructor just reforms him into this fighting machine that will not hesitate to obey an order. Some religious methods like Methodism started off this way where you you trigger this

breakdown by just pounding away at the fact that if you don't repent, you're going to burn in hell forever and ever. And they people just could not argue against it. you know, it was just the 1700s in rural England. I mean, that was just the truth. I mean, you couldn't really argue against it. And so, uh, like John Wesley, they would just pound away at this. If you don't repent of your sins, you're going to burn in hell forever and ever. And then they'd give these fire and brimstone sermons about what it's like to be tortured in hell. And people would just start freaking out. You know, they'd be foaming at the mouth like in convulsions on the floor,

but when they finally come to their senses, they were born again. And that's when you had like the Methodist, you know, the the indoctrinators, you know, like helping them to become good Christians. This sort of thing. And like in tribal societies, the manhood rituals are the same where these kids, they'd get the like the Jesus scared out of them, you know, doing these manhood rituals or just being sent off into a forest alone to survive this kind of stuff. They'd have the crisis and then they'd get reformed into these men worthy of being, you know, warriors of the tribe who will just sacrifice their

life for the benefit of the tribe
without hesitation.

That kind of thing happens has happened
in humanity in various contexts for
since the stone age. And now it is true
that people just do not have these
initiation ceremonies anymore.

these rituals where you go through like
a crisis stage that where then you
become malleable and can be like
indoctrinated.

So let's see what's the actual question
here.

What are your thoughts on this in a
coming of age ritual? Yeah, I mean to
some some degree in the west coming of
age rituals I mean joining the military

where you go through basic training and you're still in kind of a a tough level of the military. like in the army now it's or the navy um it I' I've read articles about how it's just got totally wimpy and you're not really doing anything remotely resembling you know the recruits in full metal jacket where you've got the guy threatening to gouge out your eyeballs and skull [__] you and this kind of thing.

So,

let's see. What are my thoughts on this and a coming of age ritual for men these days? Yeah, the coming of age ritual. I mean, I I'm unaware of really going

through anything like that until

Well, no. I've I've had my my crisis

like when I was like 16, 17 years old, I

had like a spiritual crisis that um

resulted in significant spiritual

growth.

So,

um, in my case, the the like the coming

of age ceremony was just kind of

spontaneous and just thrust upon me by

circumstance.

Well, I mean, if you could even call it

a coming of age ceremony, not the 16th

birthday, but just like the spiritual

crisis that resulted in my father

sending me to a youth counselor who

happened to be a spiritual guy, giving

me Ram Doss books to read, etc., etc.

Um, I don't know if it's so much the initiation. I mean, the in this kind of initiation, it can have good results or bad results. Turning into a good communist is not necessarily a good result.

So, it can be used for for good or for bad.

Um, I think it's it's more just like a feminized culture. It's not so much the lack of these indoctrinate or these like coming of age ceremonies that it's not necessarily the lack of that that's turning men into social unics, culturally castrated

social unics. It's just growing up in a feminized society where being masculine is considered to be toxic. It's a problem and men are just sort of like discriminated against for being men.

a real alpha male, I guess, would just like say, "Fuck that. I'm being who I am." But a lot of the, you know, sort of young guys who, I don't know, maybe they just didn't have much of an opportunity for that. You know, they have sort of a beta father,

>> feminized mother, feminist mother, that kind of thing. You know, it's just sort of like a a handicap.

But I mean, being really like just a total animal of a man where you're like

punching holes in walls for no good reason, that kind of thing. That's not good either.

But like athletics was another kind of way of, you know, just being a wrestler or a football player in junior high or high school that could help you to sort of instill you some masculine virtues.

So I really don't think that this kind of

reforming initiation putting you into a state of crisis is necessary, but having um like a culture that promotes um you know masculinity that doesn't demonize masculinity. ancient Sparta. I don't know if the ancient Spartans had

their manhood rituals other than just the toughness of of raising boys and to be fighters, that kind of thing.

So, I think it's more just a culture, a feminized culture is more pernicious than the modern loss of like manhood rituals, that kind of thing, where you got to have these cuts made without flinching. You know, you got to keep like a complete poker face while they're making the cuts in your chest and like putting ashes in so that it'll become like these wel like scars that are like decorations, badges of honor kind of a thing. It's not really necessary to be a man, but having some kind of culture that

promotes masculine virtues is much more important in my opinion. And I'm just going to move on to

Ethiopian fake Tig's next question.

He says, "There is an ancient Hawaiian practice called hooponopono.

It's a kind of Did I say that right?

Hopo."

Yeah, it's hoonop po. It's a kind of transcendental meditation type of practice where you repeat the mantra the the he's got mantra the mantra I love you thank you have you ever heard of it and thoughts on transcendental meditation I don't know much about transcendental meditation you know it

was brought to the west by the maharishi
mahash yogi and it was in fashion among
celebrities like the Beatles went to the
Maharishi's ashram and uh it inspired
the song sexy radi
possibly uh come together.

Um

but I mean the Hawaiian practice of ho
ponopono never heard of it before u
where you repeat the mantra I love you
thank you it reminds me of there's a ram
das book where he wrote about or he he
it's a transcript of his talks I think
but he was talking about uh some Tibetan
llama came up with a mantra to help
Tibetan people understand the western
mind and it was this mantra of like

please please sorry thank you please
please please sorry thank you you just
keep doing this and it helps you to get
insight into what it's like to be a
westerner

that's what it reminds me of because it
obviously doesn't remind me of any
transcendental meditation

p practiced by ancient Hawaiians who are
cannibals I mean it didn't make them all
that saintly apparently

because they were still practicing
ritual cannibalism although I guess
Catholics practice ritual cannibalism to
at their secret ceremonies.

So yeah, I mean doing just doing

meditating on the mantra I love you,
thank you. I mean it might work for some
people. It might help. It might make you
be a more like benevolent or empathetic
sort of person possibly. I mean you
could try it and see what it does. See
what the effects are.

But I really don't know that much about
transcendental meditation. It was a big
deal back in the late60s though.

So I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Sedarta
Lohachita.

And Sedarta Lohachita says, "Do you know
if there is any equivalent in an old
European language to the word dharma?"

Well, if you wanted to find an

equivalent in an old European language to the word dharma, your best bet would probably be Lithuanian.

look up like some equivalent to the word dharma in Lithuanian,

you know, maybe it would have the same etymology as Dharma. Um, that might be

your best bet because Lithuanian is is very um conservative Indo-European

language and it comes very close in many respects to Indic languages like Poly

and Sanskrit. It's it's remarkable how close to Poly and Sanskrit Lithuanian

can be at times.

Um but the word dharma is just a weird word like in Pali it's dharma and it is

like a noun form of the verb d which
means to bear to hold up and
before the Buddhist time it came to mean
law like law is what holds up society I
guess

um and then it came to mean like
philosophy

also it has the meaning of anything
ultimately real, not just uh some
ephemeral phenomenon that is just
relatively real, but anything. I mean,
it could just mean anything.

Like in the first verse of the tamapata,
it apparently means just things.

Um but it in the commentarial tradition
it's interpreted to mean mental states
like in the first verse of the dhamapata

which then the commentator Buddha Gos
has to explain why the dharmapata would
say that that consciousness precedes
mental states when really they're
simultaneous.

But we don't have to go there although
we already did.

So I mean there is no equivalent in in
English to the word dharma or dharma
because dharma or dharma has so many
meanings. You know it can mean
philosophy. It can mean law. It can mean
something that's ultimately real. It can
mean mental states. It probably can mean
a bunch of other things I'm just not
thinking of right now.

But um if there is any equivalent in an old European language or the closest you're going to get to an equivalent for for a word that has so many different meanings just there are like conditioned by ancient like Indo-arian culture then I would I would go with try Lithuanian. If you don't find it in Lithuanian there's a good chance there just isn't one.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Tzasiz and uh I do hope this this Q&A doesn't turn into four hours. I just saying Tzas says, "Do you think it is possible to predict lottery numbers?" I don't see why not. Anything imaginable is

possible.

So, yeah, it's possible. Sure. Why wouldn't it be possible to predict lottery numbers?

It would be kind of liinal. I mean, if anyone consistently predicted lottery numbers, then in a way, you'd be sort of creating like a like a tension spot in the matrix, which could then cause the matrix to to crash or something if it got too extreme.

But yeah, it's definitely possible. I don't see I don't see why it wouldn't be possible. And I'm just going to move on to Trz because this is the next

question. What is it with all these fortune teller monks in terraada? Well, it's sort of like I was saying earlier that most Asian monks really are not striving for enlightenment.

And so in Burma,

uh there are a lot of fortune teller monks. Also, there are a lot of alchemist monks. Also, there are a lot of just, you know, astronaut monks who are just taking up space. I mean, there's like in in the Zen, they'd be called uh clothes hangers and rice bags because, you know, all they're good for is just to hang clothes on and to put rice into.

Um, so yeah, I remember reading

back when I was a monk about the Thai forest tradition in Ajan man, how like over a hundred years ago in Thailand, there was almost no forest tradition at all. There were almost no monks who are really striving for enlightenment. Like in Sri Lanka, even nowadays, there are a lot of monks who think there's there's just no more enlightenment in this world. There's no point even trying.

Just be a scholar. Just memorize the the texts and just preserve the text by memorizing them and learning, you know, the ex Jesus and all and that's that's the best you can do.

So in uh like Ajan man's time that

people just were not used to monks that actually practiced monks were like secular clergy and a lot were fortune tellers. A lot were like herbal healers. There's there's some herbal healer monks in Burma too. Tangidon had his own line of herbal medicines. But if you you'd read what he would say about health, you'd realize that I mean he didn't know. You know, I remember reading some of the stuff of Tanji Doniato that he's saying like for for the teeth white things are best, but the best white thing for the teeth is salt. For general health, bitter things are best, but the best bitter things for general health are neem fruits and neem leaves.

You know, this this was like his health advice to people like bitter things in general. I mean, most natural occurring poisons are bitter, but we don't need to go there even though we already did.

So, fortune teller monks in Terravada.

Yeah, fortune teller monks and teachers, you know, teaching grade schools, you know, that kind of thing. That was that was a big thing. Like in in Burmese, the word Jon means monastery and school

because traditionally

you just kids would get like up to like a fourth grade education just going to the monastery and the monks would be teaching them how to read and write and

do arithmetic.

So there's that. There's herbal herbal healers. There's alchemists who I mean there's supposedly a number of monks in Burma who can transmute base metals into gold even though you don't see large piles of gold around in Burma.

So it's it's largely just a traditional thing. It's a kind of an esoteric thing that you kind of it's kind of mysterious and exalted that that monks can kind of practice and you know ignorant villagers don't know any better and just assume that's what they're supposed to be doing that kind of thing. Palm readers, astrologers, that kind of thing. It's pretty common. And one of the main

reasons is that Dharma has become corrupt and most monks just aren't monks because they want to strive for enlightenment in this very life. they just you know for whatever reasons various reasons why uh like some Burmese villager will become a monk and desire for enlightenment isn't it probably isn't in the top 10 of the most common reasons not in the top three definitely so it's just the way it is and I'm going to move on to Trasaziz's third question what about a new video with auto excelsia your Yeah, it's that's possible. New videos with Brian probably

going to happen. Possibly even new videos with Ajan Punadamo.

So yeah, it's possible. It's just that I'm lazy. I work for a living. I work hard even though I'm lazy. So on weekends when I don't have to work, I tend to be lazy.

But if he comes up with a good idea for us to talk about, strangely the the most one of the most popular videos I have on YouTube is Otto and me talking about um esoteric Hitlerism of all things from a more or less Buddhist perspective.

So yeah, it'll it's it's probably going to happen. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. And we're getting close to the bottom here. I don't think

this this probably won't even be three hours. So, we're doing all right.

See here. Next question is from Xenithoid.

And Xenithoid says, "What do you make of Carl Jung's quote? For a tree to reach up to heaven, its roots must reach down to hell." In the context of Buddhism, I think this may be true and that one will have to have their dark night of the soul. But to achieve full enlightenment, anything unpure must be erased completely. In many sutras, the Buddha says, "Tatna must be cut off at the roots." Well, one thing that I mean, this quote from Yung, for a tree to

reach up to heaven, its roots, its roots must reach down to hell reminds me of William Blakes's the marriage of heaven to heaven and hell, which was like my bible as as a high school student. that and the madman by uh Khalil Gibron.

Those were like my two Bibles. The Marriage of Heaven and Hell by William Blake and The Mad Man by Khil Gibron.

Those were like my two Bibles when I was like 17 years old.

And The Marriage of Heaven and Hell points out that you can't just have good without bad.

I mean, it's a dichotomy. You good and bad have to balance out.

Heaven and hell. You can't have one

without the other.

But with regard to Buddhism, I mean, yeah, it's it's this it's that way in Buddhism, too. I mean, they don't really emphasize it, but it's like good and evil have to both be abolished by a biku who's striving for enlightenment. You don't want bad karma. You don't want good karma either. Karma is for lay people. So the monk has to abandon good and evil. The whole duality of good and bad. The wise monk just dismisses them. So let's see.

To achieve full enlightenment, anything impure must be erased completely.

Anything pure must be erased completely.

I mean, you just don't even go there.

You're not wallowing in this samsaric dualism of good and evil.

So, Dowoism really puts more of an emphasis on this, but in Buddhism also, it's like uh the wise monk, I mean, he's not trying to do good any more than he's trying to do evil.

I mean, you just transcend the duality of it.

But if you're going to have heaven, you're going to have hell. I mean, you're going to have plus, you're going to have minus. You're going to have good, you're going to have bad. You're going to have if you have beautiful, you're going to have ugly. So long as

you're dealing in that samsaric

dualistic way of of perceiving things.

Like I've said before in accordance with

my principle of subjective equilibrium

that if a person somehow managed to

eliminate all of what he considers to be

bad in his life, one of two things is

going to happen. either a whole bunch of

new bad stuff is going to have to take

the place of the old bad stuff or the

line differentiating good and bad is

going to shift so that the lower half of

what he used to call good now becomes

bad.

So

I do think Carl Young's quote is correct

in in like a samsaric dualistic context.

For a tree to reach up to heaven, its roots must reach down to hell. Yeah, I can I can I can live with that.

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Daario, and he's the last questioner of this Q&A.

And I almost always get taken by surprise because for some reason the little bar on the side that shows how far down you are. It it somehow messes up and and it it just doesn't work right. So that it's like I'm halfway down. The little bar thing is like halfway down the document and all of a sudden boom, I'm at the the last question even though there's not a lot

of empty space below the last question.

Anyways, Daario says, "What is your position on Zen Buddhism?" Not the westernized and liberal form or or this this form. See, look at his head's little head's bobbling.

But uh okay, I I let's just start the question over again. The bobble-headed monk distracted me ever so briefly. What is your position on Zen Buddhism? Not the westernized and liberal form, but the actual teachings of Bodhi Dharma and the sects that pay more respect to the original teachings of the Buddha and more importantly, do you think that Zen Buddhism can be a

path to enlightenment and Nirvana? Well, I guess that's two questions, isn't it? Let's just separate them and I'll deal with the first question first. What is my position on Zen Buddhism? Well, I have said before I was converted to Terravada, my intention was to become a Stoz Zen monk. My original plan after I decided to become a monk was to become a Zen monk. And part of the reason for that is that I thought Zen Buddhism was like Zen Buddhism in the books where you've got these mysterious men wearing black standing around speaking in riddles and hitting each other with sticks. And I mean I could I could relate to that. I

mean, I could that just seemed like attractive to me as an option, like a career option to be a man dressed in black, very enigmatic, just talking in riddles and and beating people with sticks. I mean, it really seemed like, you know, a worthwhile way of spending one's life. And then I went to an actual Zen monastery and I found out it wasn't like that at all. Nobody would dare to hit anybody with a stick at that monastery. And it was lots of pure land Buddhism was mixed in. And I was told that in Zen Buddhism that for some reason traditional Zen Buddhism has just absorbed lots of pure land Buddhism

which I've never had any use at all for
pure land Buddhism. Zen Buddhism like in
the in the books like in the the Coons,
the the Blue Cliff record or the Mumon
Khan, that kind of thing. I really like
that. I was really drawn to that. I
really like the
um sort of the disorientation of coons,
you know, it's sort of like trying to
break through the intellectual process
and which is, you know, samsara
essentially.

So yeah, I do think that Zen Buddhism
does have a just remove the pure land
elements which I got no use for and just
some of the
like even even if you dismiss the pure

land elements, there's still a lot of weird like later Mahayana philosophy and cosmology and mythologies like Vrochina, you know, there's a lot of mention of Vrochina in in like Zen texts. There's no mention at all in in terra you know it's just like a later thing like these bodhic sattvas and all this you know the mahayana elements in zen also I really don't have much use for but zen as just iconoclastic

and don't rely on dogmas you know you meet the Buddha in the road kill him that kind of stuff um and just the the coons you know like um there was uh there's One coan I really like Joe Joza.

This he's an obscure I mean he's pretty much known only from this one [_]

There was this monk named Joe Joza. At least that's the Japanese version of his Chinese name. And he asked possibly Renzai. He asked some Zen master, you know, what is the what is the essence of the teachings of Buddha? And the the Zen master just like comes up to him, grabs him and just like shoves him.

And Joe Joseph stood still. You know, he's just kind of confused. He doesn't know what to do. And so another monk who who witnessed this says, "Joe Joa, Joe Joseph, why don't you bow?" So Joe Joseph gets down and starts bowing. And while he's bowing, he becomes

enlightened

and that kind of thing. I mean, it's interesting to me because there's obviously some meaning to it, even though it's like this paradoxical non really not rational or logical really, but it it kind of makes sense to me.

You know, a lot of a lot of coons are like that. I mean, it makes sense without making sense, sort of, which is a zen-like

thing to say, I guess. So, Zen Buddhism, I've I've liked Zen Buddhism. I don't like the pure land elements. I'm not particularly fond of of the Mahayana elements. The emphasis on bodhic sattvas

over like arahans that kind of thing
that just becoming fully enlightened
just somehow isn't good enough. That's
clearly not what god Buddha was teaching
but u and also eating bamboo shoots. I
really do not like bamboo shoots and
they eat lots of bamboo shoots at Zen
monasteries or so I have read. So I
wouldn't like that very much. But yeah,
it's just sort of the austerity and the
simplicity of Zen with or without the
coons. I mean, you soden doesn't do much
[—] stuff, you know? It's it's just
more like shikant taza or just sort of
um a kind of meditation that I was
doing. I used to call it second gear
where you're just watching the mind

intently just observing you know just trying to catch anything as it arises trying to catch any thought just as it begins to arise that kind of thing.

But the the one mon the Zen monastery I went to in California, it just kind of cured me of any desire to become a Zen monk. And then I went to a Terravada place after that and it just seemed pretty obvious to me that the Terravada monastery came closer to what the Buddha originally taught than the the Zen place I went to. There's just way too many like ceremonies and chanting and bowing and all this that I've really never been into ceremonies. Um, in terra Buddhism,

there are ceremonies, but there's always a reason for the ceremony instead of just like gratuitous bowing to doorways and that kind of thing.

So, yeah, Zen Buddhism would be my second choice after Terravada, I guess, of of the extent schools of Buddhism in existence. And it was originally my intention to become a STO Zen monk until I got more experience with like Zen as it actually is not in the books but as it actually is and or at least as it actually is in America and Terravada Buddhism. So Terravada Buddhism came seems pretty obvious to come closer to what the Buddha originally taught especially if you're reading books like

the Sutin Pa.

So let's see. Did I answer the question yet? What is your position on Zen Buddhism? Yeah, I guess I gave my position on Zen Buddhism. So um secondly, Dario says or Daario. And more importantly, do you think that Zen Buddhism can be a path to enlightenment and Nirvana? Yeah, I think that they're probably assuming that anybody becomes enlightened in this world, in this samsaric environment. Just assuming for the sake of argument that anybody has become fully enlightened. I see no reason why a lot of the Zen masters that you read about um I see no reason why

they would not be fully enlightened.

And sometimes you come across a statement like in the platform sutra of Hui Ning which I guess is now considered to be like a forgery not really taught by Hui Ning. But in this platform sutra of hu nang there is this statement that really made an impression on me that is I mean when you become enlightened you look around and you notice that everybody else is also enlightened you know it's like you look through the world with enlightened eyes you see enlightenment you see nibbana which kind of reminds me of St. Paul Paul of Tarsus in the New Testament saying to the pure man all things are

pure.

So there there's some insight. It seems like a statement like that may have been based on actual experience of some Zen master even if it wasn't Hui Nang himself.

So yeah, I mean Zen Buddhism can be a path to enlightenment and Nirvana. I think Hinduism, some some types of Hinduism can be a path to enlightenment nirvana. I think St. John of the Cross who was a Catholic, a Roman Catholic Christian. I think he may have been enlightened.

It's possible. I mean, sometimes people are just ripe and so they can somehow

manage to become enlightened
in spite of their culture or in spite or
largely in spite of their religion. Some
of the some of the doctrines of Roman
Catholicism are not really like
conducive to enlightenment. Like the
idea that no one is worthy, you know,
it's only the grace of God that's going
to get you into heaven. That kind of
thing. I mean, that just sort of implies
that nobody's going to be perfected. You
know, Jesus himself denies being good in
the New Testament. Somebody calls him
like good teacher or something. And
Jesus says, "Why do you call me good?
There's none good except God." which
seems to imply I mean not only that

Jesus was denying being good or God but
he he was denying that anyone is perfect
including himself

but then along comes St. John of the
cross who is the the the mystical doctor
of the Catholic Church. Anything he says
on the topic of mysticism is considered
to be official dogma of the Catholic
Church. He's saying that you can that
there is the stage of perfection that an
adept at high contemplation can reach
this stage of perfection where their
self-will is mortified. They no longer
have any self-will. They no longer have
any china using poly terminology and so
they become just this instrument of God

an instrument of divinity. They're like
God's puppet

and I mean St. St. John of the Cross was
apparently teaching this based on his
own insight, his own experience. And
this comes very close to like the
Buddhist Ara who is making generating no
will because he's not generating any
karma and karma is will.

Although from the Buddhist point of
view, you don't say that you're just a
like a puppet of God that you're no
longer acting on your own will that
you're acting or that you're acting on
divine will. I mean they don't really
have that

to to fall back on as a kind of theory

to explain the reality in Buddhism. So I mean in terra or the the commentarial tradition or or uh abidama they have to come up with karaachita which is some way of explaining how an enlightened monk an enlightened being still functions without generating any any volition without having any will.

So anyways getting back to the to Daario's question here do you think that Zen Buddhism can be a path to enlightenment and nirvana? Yeah, I do. Um, especially if you're following like the oldfashioned kind of zen, you know, like Joe,

that kind of thing.

Um, but then again, I mean, being a
discussed caralite like St. John of the
Quran, St. John of the cross could be a
path to enlightenment in Nirvana being a
vdantist Hindu, a shyite Hindu like
Ramanamahari,

a Vishnavite Hindu like Nim Karoli Baba.

Yeah. Or I mean for some people I mean
it's like you don't even have to be
religious. you just have like this store
of of like karmic momentum or or just
wisdom

from past lives presumably and then you
have like a near-death experience or
some such and it just jolts you into
into a state of higher consciousness.

So yeah, I do think that Zen can be a path to enlightenment and nirvana.

That's I could have just answered that whole question with just yes, but then you miss out on all the extraneous verbiage and we're done. That's it. I'm done.

Which is good because the the beverage is pretty much empty. So, like I should always say at the beginning and practically never do. If you have any questions you think I can answer, especially with regard to like dharma, early Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, just dharma in general, philosophy, that kind of thing. Um, feel free to ask. I can't

absolutely guarantee that I'll be able to answer the question, but and especially I can't guarantee that I'll answer it to your satisfaction, but I'll give it a shot anyway.

And uh like and subscribe if you like or have liked at least parts of what I have said.

And uh oh, let's see what else. Be sure to check out the URL links below the video.

Um, and that's it. Yeah, be happy and stuff.

And I'm going to turn her off now.

What I'm going to do

Okay. Alrighty then.

Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 173.

I am your host Ponyo Bosa. And I've got
to rearrange some stuff on the computer
screen here. Oh, and I forgot to
increase the size of the H increase the
size of the font so I'm not like
squinting at it totally
like this.

Okay.

Not exactly on the ball right now.

[clears throat]

Okay.

Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 173. I your host Po Bossan. Yes

indeed. 173 is a prime number. The only two positive integers that multiply together to produce 173 are 1×173 .

This is my beverage. And this is kind of an exciting change of pace.

I mean, this could go down in Q&A

history because this is the first time my designated beverage for this show is hot cocoa

because we're getting into that time of season. You know, there's like fake Christmas trees and stuff behind me now.

It's winter time. It's getting down below zero here in the deep south, which is just kind of weird. I come from the Pacific Northwest, way farther north than here, and it doesn't freeze as much

in the winter time there, just because of prevailing westerlys and so forth.

Wind coming up off the uh [snorts] off the ocean instead of off the land mass.

So, let's see here. [sighs]

I guess uh I covered the prime number issue, the hot cocoa issue. So, let's just dive right into this. And the first question, oh, by the way, it's it's not going to be extremely long one. So, you don't have to go make sure you have to pee or anything before before watching this because it'd probably be two hours or less. You can go pee anyway. Just pause it or something. We're not going to wait for you. So

anyways, first question is from Romeo and Romeo says, "Working in the mental health field, I find that wellness trends with their roots in Eastern spirituality frequently become all the rage. Mindfulness from Buddhism of course is still very popular, but the latest trend to catch on are various breathing techniques which are collect which they collectively refer to as breath work.

After a little digging, I found that breath work is just the modern western iteration of pranayama.

The ancient Hindu tradition involving various techniques of breath control.

What do you know of pranayama breathing

techniques, their history, benefits,
etc.

Well,

I do know that according to the legend
of the Buddha's

like quest for enlightenment before he
became the Buddha that he did practice

pranayama like holding his breath so

that I mean for very long periods of

time or breathing so slowly that like

the devas couldn't tell if he was

breathing or not that kind of thing and

that was one of those things that the

Buddha

decided just wasn't helping. And so,

Terravada Buddhism anyway, I don't know

of any Buddhist school that really
practices pranayama in an orthodox or
orthoprax manner. Um, yeah, terraata
Buddhism just does not do pranayama or
breath control. You're supposed to
breathe naturally. There are a few sort
of heterodox or heteropra
teachers out there within terra like t
venerable tangidon. I don't know if he's
still alive or not,
but I attended one of his retreats
at [clears throat] uh what eiad
dewa guru j in in the old city of Pagan.
And uh
he part of his breathing in or his his
like
mindfulness [snorts] of breath

mindfulness of breathing instructions in the Tanjidon method is breathe a little harder than usual. And the reason he gives is that if you breathe a little harder than usual then you have to use more mental application to attend to the breath. you know, it's slightly artificial

so that you have to like you you like have to attend to it and deliberately keep it going. Sort of like M. That's one good thing about M is I mean it requires a certain like like volitional effort to keep it going unlike just regular breathing because you can be unconscious you know or at least in a

deep sleep or a coma or something and still be breathing you know you can just your mind can just completely wander away from the breath and you don't even notice it because your mind just wandered away

so what happened at Tangidon Seattle's retreats and his some of his senior disciples you know like veteran tangidon meditators. They were breathing about as fast as they possibly could. They were essentially hyperventilating and then people would just start popping off like howling like dogs or laughing uncontrollably or crying uncontrollably or just yelling this kind of stuff. And Tang Doniato, bless his heart, in his

innocence, I suppose, was calling that PT, which is one of the the seven factors of enlightenment.

But it seemed to me that it was hyperventilation that they were just getting drunk on oxygen.

So, let's see here. I told I told the Seattle that and he was just kind of sort of grinning in amusement. It's like, ah, these these western barbarians, the strange ideas they get. You breathe as hard as you possibly can so that the meditation hall sounds like a textile mill. Just chug a chug a chug a chug. All these people just essentially panting as hard as they can

and then they're like dogs unlike other meditation retreats I went to.

So almost needless to say I didn't last very long at that tang meditation retreat. It just seemed like a I [snorts] don't know just a funny farm or something. And what was even worse is that one of his senior disciples who was who who was a rich man who donated the the monastery which is probably pretty expensive inside the city of of Pagan, the ancient capital of Burma. when someone would start like acting weird like laughing uncontrollably or know flopping around this kind of stuff, he'd be right there with a video camera and it was like not only did I not want to

start howling like a dog, but I did not want to be howling like a dog on the 6:00 news in Burma because of this guy filming me while I was doing it. So, it really kind of handicapped my practice, [clears throat] so to speak.

So in in terabata Buddhism as far as I know there is no orthodox teachings of pranayama. It's not one of the 40 methods that are traditionally taught like in the wisudi maga. It's just not there. Just mindfulness of breathing is there which is like one of the main meditation techniques in terab Buddhism but

it's you breathe normally and as you get into deeper and deeper meditation you require less oxygen apparently and so you your breathing becomes more and more subtle until some people they'll get to the point where they can't really even note the breathing anymore because it's so subtle. it's it's not registering enough sensation for them to really perceive it easily.

So I mean it's sort of spontaneous natural kind of breath reduction as you get into deeper and deeper meditative states when you become just less and less your your metabolism just kind of kind of gets a lot less let's say.

So let's see what do I know of
pranayama breathing techniques their
history benefits etc. Um, from the
Buddhist point of view, there is not
enough benefit really to warrant
practicing it because I mean just the
Buddha in his his eclectic
experimentation
before his enlightenment, you know, he
tried it, you know, he mastered it and
it just didn't get him enlightened. So,
he moved on to something else. So
pranayama I'm pretty sure is mainly a
yoga thing which started off as
sananka a nonvidic philosophy in the
same sort of shramana fold as Buddhism

and Jainism and the extinct Ajivakism
um and then it got at least some of the
the followers of capital Yoga
um decided to join the the protohindus
declare the vada is authoritative and
so it's now called yoga even though its
origins were outside of of vadism
and they probably are the ones who are
mainly doing breath control. That's my
guess. I'm no expert on it. I've never
really practiced breath control other
than like as a teenager just kind of
experimenting with stuff. You read about
something in a Ram das book so you try
it that kind of thing.

Um [clears throat]

there has been breath work going on for

quite a while though. Um,
[clears throat] I mean it's it's
different from what Romeo here is
describing, but I remember reading like
back in the 1990s, I think that a
certain Stan Grath at the Eselin
Institute was using so-called breath
work, but for him it was kind of like
the Tangon method where you were just
hyperventilating essentially in order to
induce altered states of consciousness.
He switched over to breath work after
LSD and other psychedelics were outlawed
in America. So it was like a substitute
for psychedelics in his case.
So [sighs]

yeah, I would guess that the history I mean in the text the Buddha himself before he became the Buddha was trying it. You know presumably he mastered it. You know he got to the point where he was almost not breathing anymore.

Um

but and it's just not really a terra Buddhist thing and I'm not you know I'm no authority on it but probably it's origins go back into probably prehistoric times which I mean isn't super early in India because history in India wasn't really recorded. I mean you've got the rig vda is the earliest uh Indian document. Some of it is so

early that apparently it was composed
before the Indo-Aryans made it into what
in ancient times anyway was considered
to be India [snorts]
which might now just be Pakistan.

[clears throat]

So let's see the benefits of pranayama.

Um I'm really not sure. Or I mean if

you're like forcibly reducing your

breath it could sort of have the

converse of like natural breathing in

terra mindfulness of breathing where

[clears throat] when your concentration

gets deep enough you just breathe less.

So it may be the other way around that

the yogis are just breathing less as a

way of increasing the concentration
because you know you less oxygen to your
brain and so less energy to your brain
which would then be a kind of samata
method I suppose.

Um aside from that I'm not sure what the
benefits of pranayama would be. It can
be dangerous. I have come across
warnings that pranayama without a
qualified teacher, you know, you're like
I mean too much oxygen deprivation to
your brain can cause brain damage, stuff
like that. So yeah, it is kind of an
esoteric thing. It's sort of like
condundalini meditation where if you
don't have like a skilled guide, you're
better off not just trying it from a

book or a YouTube video.

And I'm really not sure what Romeo is referring to with regard to like the this the newest, you know, esoteric eastern health fad that is this being such a big deal. Um I mean it could be just a way of like causing greater calmness, reducing stress, something like that. But

>> yeah, it is true that mindfulness really has just it's it's one aspect of Theravata Buddhism that has just gone mainstream in western culture because a lot of hospitals for example are teaching mindfulness. Lots of just big corporations are teaching mindfulness

like I think Google and places like that where you know we're teaching mindfulness practices to their employees mainly as a way of improving morale and improving like productivity and reducing sick time which is just makes more profits for the company.

But in hospitals they will teach a kind of secularized mindfulness to people dealing with chronic pain you know like burn victims or so forth. Also people dealing with like the potentiality of imminent decease you know like people with advanced cancer and that sort of thing. They get taught mindfulness techniques a lot nowadays in hospitals

that are not run by Buddhists. is just
it's just sort of like a
[clears throat] what's the word eclectic
you know sort of like the ancient Romans
where if they came across anything that
worked really well especially along the
lines of like the military they would
adopt it and you know the west is
[clears throat] um is kind of famous for
that too. We're very eclectic and are
willing to absorb elements of other
cultures if it happens to work. if it
happens to to be beneficial, why the
hell not? Which is fine.

[snorts and clears throat]

[sighs]

So, I guess I've pretty much exhausted my knowledge of pranayama with this answer. So, I'm going to move on to Romeo's second question, and this is all regarding pranayama. He says, "Do you have any personal experience with any specific pranayama meditation breathing techniques that you can recommend as particularly beneficial?" And no, the only personal experience with specific pranayama breathing techniques or the the thing that comes closest to it aside from maybe a few experiments as like a 17-year-old would be the Tangidon method. And it just was not for me. It was in a way just like conjuring up fake PT or like

exhilaration enthusiasm through
hyperventilation.

So [sighs]

let's see. I guess I answered that one
easily off because I already answered
that in response to the first question.

So the third question from Romeo is did
the Buddha personally use or recommend
any breathing techniques outside of
breath meditation? And yeah, I've
already I pretty much answered all three
of Romeo's questions in my meandering
answer to the first question that the
Buddha before his enlightenment
experimented with advanced pranayama so
that his breathing pretty much stopped.

Not just spontaneous when you hit fourth
Janna supposedly your breathing almost
stops like you're a hibernating squirrel
but with pranayama it's more of a
deliberate conscious
like effort or technique to slow down
your breathing.

And so the Buddha was experimenting with
that before his enlightenment and came
to the conclusion that it was not really
helpful in that regard. And so he
dismissed it and it's just not part of
terra Buddhism.

So I'm just going to move on to the next
question. This is from Newman and Newman
says, "How common were parasites and
diseases in daily life in Burma? How did

you avoid them?" Well, you can't completely avoid them in some place like Burma. you're living, you know, just out in some forest in rural Burma surrounded by people with very rudimentary concept of like general hygiene. I mean, they would bathe, the women would bathe with clothes on, like an adult Burmese female traditionally is never all the way naked. They have this way of they they got like a bathing serong. They put that over the top of their regular clothes. They shuck out of the regular clothes, take a bath with the bathing sarong on, and then they do the like a similar thing. They put the clothes on and then

kind of shuck the bathing song out so
that they're never all the way
unclothed.

Um, but aside from that, they just
really don't have much idea of like germ
theory, you know? It's just never really
made it into the mainstream of
traditional Burmese village culture.

just the idea of microbes, pathogenic
microbes, that kind of thing. They don't
really think about that sort of thing.

So, anyways, parasites, the main, well,
I mean, you've got different kinds of
parasites. You've got internal ones and
external ones. The internal ones were
mainly like intestinal worms, pinworms,
that was very common in Burma.

Probably most of the people in Burmese villages have pinworms pretty frequently, including monks who are depending for alms on these people. And [clears throat] I remember there was this this Korean monk who was living at Tom um [snorts] Tomulu Chela. It's one of a very rough like aesthetic kind of monastery that I that I was staying at. And he used to be like a professional dancer and he was afraid of geckos. He was afraid of any kind of snakes, even like the harmless little palm snakes, you know. He just he just was not cut out for living in this really rough kind of desert monastery. And he was just

freaking out the first time he noticed that he had pin worms. You know, it's like you notice what came out of the back end and it's got like little white worms wriggling in it and he was just totally freaking out. But uh as a general rule, a western monk especially always should carry a first aid kit when he is living in the tropics in a forest. you know, not in a city where you got easy access to doctors and so forth, but have a pretty well equipped first aid kit like two different kinds of antibiotics, you know, like tetracycline and then something like, you know, uh what would be just a more broad spectrum kind of antibiotic. You

always have to have malaria pills. I mean, if I didn't have malaria pills, I'd be dead several times over now. Um, and you should always have some dewormer because you're [clears throat] going to get pinworms if you live out in a Burmese forest. It's just the way it goes.

So, yeah, just a dewormer that I had a doctor advise me to take a dewormer like twice a year just in case because it's so easy to pick up intestinal worms when you're living in Burma, especially out in a forest area. But even if you're just relying on like manual laborers and so forth in the cities for your alms,

still you can get pinworms pretty easily. Um, and that's my experience. Like even in Rangon, I mean, you're relying more on like the servants and so forth than you are on the rich people. Like the rich people, they're living in a great big house with like this big closed gate and you stand out front of the closed gate and nobody sees you. And then you move on until you get into some little squalid ghetto kind of environment where a lot of the manual laborers and the you know some of the servants and so forth are living and then you know they're living like in a village you know there's the front door is wide open that everybody sees you

know who's standing out in front and everything. So

still you you you get the dewormer and you just keep it in your first aid kit and maybe take it twice a year. There was one kind of dewormer that was from India that I kind of liked. It had a warning on it. You may have strange dreams when you take this and it did. It just caused these really weird surreal kind of dreams.

With regard to external parasites, I mean you that's like a a whole book worth of information on those. There's like mosquitoes and bed bugs would be two of the main ones. Fleas.

[snorts] Uh also like sand flies, horse flies. I mean those are all parasites

[clears throat]

and uh

like u bed bugs. I'd never seen a bed bug before I went to Burma. And so I got my my cave was got infested with them.

And I I thought they were like baby cockroaches. I was like looking in the little garbage pot seeing if there's anything the cockroaches were eating and multiplying with. And then one day, one of these [clears throat]

bed bugs audaciously is just walking right across this book I was reading.

And so instead of blowing it off, I just kind of flicked it off like this and it

popped and splattered bright red blood onto the book. I think I still have the book back there.

And I have a degree in biology and I know that insects don't have bright red blood, but that I do. And so then I knew, oh, it's bed bugs, some kind of parasitic bugs. I just came to the conclusion it must be bed bugs and it was it was a [__] getting rid of them especially as a monk when you're not supposed to be killing anything. So I was like taking everything out. They like the inside of hardbound books like inside the spine. They would lay their eggs inside the spine or they would just

hide there. They like hiding in crevices during the day. I was just taking everything out. You can take your mats and put them out in the sun. That kind of thing. and then everything else. I just take it out and inspect it and blow any bed bugs off of it and then bring it back in again. It that went on that ritual went on for like two weeks.

It sucked. Also, living in the forest, there's like ticks. They say you're not if a tick bites you, you're not supposed to just pull it off cuz the head can break off under the skin and it can get worse and stuff. But I just pull it right off. But I guess what happened was the head must have broken off underneath

the skin or something because it got worse for like 2 weeks more and more painful, more inflamed, and then finally it it kind of disappeared. [snorts]

So I mean mosquitoes there's not much you know like especially as a monk you're not even allowed to slap mosquitoes.

So,

but then that that leads to disease and of course the main dangerous disease you can get in Burma is malaria which is caused by the bite of mosquitoes. So those two go hand in hand and that's one of the things you have to have in your first aid kit if you're going to be like

a forest monk in Burma or probably other tropical Asian countries. Anti antimmalaria medicine.

Uh I also had one kind of hepatitis A.

One doctor diagnosed it as amiebic hepatitis where dysentery amiebas had invaded my liver. Another doctor said it was probably just something I ate which is I I guess that that was it because I didn't notice that I even had dysentery. Dysentery is another one. Strangely I never had dysentery.

[clears throat and sighs]

Never had uh chalera. I remember there was one Australian monk who sometimes would talk about the time when he had malaria, chalera, and TB all at the same

time. He said he spent the entire rainy season on his back.

And with with malaria like um the main uh the main medications for malaria at least when I was living in Burma were based on oh what is it? quinine or quin quinine.

I'll call it quinine because I'm American. And it's I mean some of those medications the symptoms are almost as bad as the disease. I mean it's just you're just out of it, you know? It's just like weird like kind of nausea and just sort of like dizziness and ringing in your ears and just it's it's not good.

Um fortunately I never had chalera. Um, although I had gardiasis once just from drinking like unfiltered [clears throat] creek water just way the hell out in the sticks. This was up on the Chinduin River like halfway up the Chinduin River. I was drinking just creek water appar and apparently that's how I got gardiasis.

But uh that's another thing like metroniditool another kind of pill that you should keep in your first aid kit if you're a forest dwelling western monk in tropical Asia because that takes out let's see metroniditool takes out um what does it take out takes out gardasis I think it takes out amiic dysentery and

also there's tchamomasis or something
like that that I've never had and never
don't have any experience

But it's it's like an anti-protoonean,
not not like a antibacteria thing like
like antibiotics are.

So [snorts] how do you avoid them? I
mean just general cleanliness and
carefulness,

but I mean you can't completely avoid
like mosquitoes. Good luck completely
avoiding mosquitoes in Burma. The
mosquitoes in Rangon are even worse than
the ones in the forest because forest
mosquitoes have like a Geneva
convention. They mostly just come out

early in the morning and then like at dusk. Dusk is like mosquito happy hour. Um and it's like during the bright daytime they're avoiding the the dal, you know, the daytime hunters of mosquitoes and at in the middle of the night they're avoiding the the bats. So there's just like this little window when the mosquitoes can just run a muck, you know, after the the daytime predators have pretty much stopped and before the nighttime predators have really gotten into to full full swing, then the mosquitoes come out and it's it's awful. But in Rangon, there's no Geneva Convention. It's just mosquitoes 24/7.

[sighs]

So I mean, to some degree, a monk just has to be patient. I could never fully be patient with horse flies, though.

It's just I could not just sit there and be bitten by horse flies.

So,

in that case, I did swat them with my sweat rag. And I got really at first it would just kind of scare them away. You know, you kind of ding them, you know, they kind of rings their bell and they'll fly away. But I eventually got so much practice at it that, you know, you got a like a a horsefly here. you get the sweat rag and come from behind

so that there's like this whiplash effect and it snaps it really fast and it started actually killing them. So I would compensate for my bad karma for killing a horsefly or a sandfly by feeding them to ant lions. You know there's ant lion pits all over inside this cave that I lived in. And if you don't know what ant lions are, they it's some sort of insect larvae or nymph that I mean it looks sort of like a stonefly or something when it's or a catisfly when it's full grown, but it digs this pit that's like a funnel and it's loose sand and anything like an ant or any other kind of insect will can fall into that and then the ant lion at the bottom

just starts flinging sand at it to knock it down and then it grabs it with its big pincher jaws and and devours it.

>> [sighs and gasps]

>> So anyways, getting back to the question, parasites and diseases. I mean, use a little common sense, you know, try and stay away from, you know, don't be like standing still outdoors at dusk, that kind of thing. Um, I mean, you're kind of at the mercy of of the people who give you food with regard to things like intestinal worms. I mean, you're probably just going to get those and so you just take the dewormer and that kind of thing. And with regard to

diseases, just uh protect dhamma dama
will protect you to some degree. I had
full cyprus malaria like seven or eight
times when I was in Burma.

So I mean in a case like that is just
you can just avoid the endemic areas
which is avoiding real forests. Wherever
you have real forest, you've got real
malaria.

So I guess uh aside from just uh being
tough stoic or whatever, being a good
Buddhist, then uh
you just have to deal with it. I mean,
it's you can you can just try to use
some common sense and have a well
equipped first aid kit. Fortunately, in
Burma, there's almost no prescription

drugs. You know, you want antibiotics, you can just get antibiotics. you want malaria medication, you can just get malaria medication relatively cheap. Although in Burma there is a certain amount of counterfeit drugs like especially something like ain or amoxicylin. There have been times when I I would take it and it would have no effect whatsoever and a lot of it is like counterfeit stuff that just has like chalk in it instead of actual medicine inside the capsules. So you got to be careful about that.

And I'm just going to move on to the

next question which is from Thoughtfog.

And Thoughtfog says, "Do you have investments? What are your thoughts on investing?" And the only investment I have is I've got a 401k.

The company I work for is very generous in matching 401k. So, I mean, so long as [clears throat] civilization doesn't collapse or the economy doesn't collapse or just rampant inflation like in the Weimar Republic doesn't happen in in America,

you know, it's it's probably, you know, at least treading water, you know, just sort of keeping up with inflation at least.

Well, I've really never been

particularly money oriented. I've kind of taken to heart the idea of, you know, consider the liies of the field, that kind of thing. Give no thought for tomorrow, what you will eat or where you will sleep. Like I have I really do not like the idea of insurance. The only reason I've got health insurance now, which is cheap from from where I'm working, is my woman insists upon it. Otherwise, I might just have like accident insurance. You know, I squish my hand at work or something that might get paid for. [snorts]

Um, if I had to do it all over again, I think I'd be buying gold,

but uh, that's not exactly any kind of financial advice there.

So, investing, I mean, if if you're that's fine. Doesn't matter to me, but I do think that there is some real wisdom in what the Buddha and Jesus were both teaching. Just give no thought for tomorrow, what you will eat, where you will sleep. God will provide or dharma will provide. Your your own karma will give you what you need.

[sighs]

So let's see here. I guess I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Maitraa Buddha and he says, "What are your thoughts on Freemasonry?"

And I've never been a Freemason. I knew

when I was like in junior high school,
my best friend was the son of a
Freemason. And he was the the my friend
was in Dalay, I guess, which is like for
it's sort of like the the Freemason
youth.

He liked it because you get a sword,
which is nice, but he didn't he see
seems not to have known anything about
Freemasonry either. About half of what I
know about Freemasonry I picked up from
the book War in Peace by some guy named
Toltoy.

You know, he's he talks about how Pierre
Bezahov becomes a Freemason and it talks
about like the initiation ceremony and

so forth. Um so that's I know about that. I mean some kind of secret society supposedly benevolent. They help each other but if they have some kind of new world order agenda or anything like that I really don't know.

So yeah, Freemasonry is just kind of on the the outskirts of my perceptual field. I really don't have any kind of significant interactions with Freemasons that I'm aware of. Nobody's tried to give me a secret handshake or anything like that.

So I'm just going to move on this question. This is from Stellar Supreme at all. Changes his name pretty often. So let's just call him stellar supreme

at all and leave it at that. And he says, "Were you ever chased by a snake?" And I have mentioned once when I was walking from one bow village, walking back from one bow village after going for alms, you know, so I've got my my full alms bowl. I'm walking back to the monastery and right in this dirt road that I would walk on, there was a a baby Russell's viper, the the deadliest snake in Burma. Not the most venomous, but just like the meanest and most likely to cause death by snake bite. It was only like a foot and a half long, but partly just as a way of scaring me away, which is kind of the the strategy of Russell's

Vipers and Vipers in general, maybe it
it just started like lunging at me and
like coming after me like this. I had to
walk way around it and even after I get
past it, it's still coming after me. But
it wasn't like trying to chase me down
so it could bite me. It's just trying to
get me to [_] off and leave it alone.
But I mean, I've walked right past
Russell's vipers. They're they're sort
of like a copperhead in their
coloration. They're very well
camouflaged. They're just the color of
dead leaves. They just blend right in
with the dead leaves. And I've walked
right past them before. Like I remember
once I was going up the hill to get up

onto the dirt road so I could head to uh
Wow Village for alms. And I just heard
this little like a sound. And I looked
down and I was my my foot was like this
far away from the head of a rustled
viper. you know, it was just giving me
fair warning, just like, "Don't [__]
with me. I'm here and you better be way
over there soon."

But the only time I was ever really
chased by a snake was Yeah, that little
baby Russell's viper.

So, I'm just going to move on to Seller
Supreme at all's next question.

He says,

"Is being anti-establishment the new

wave of based?"

Well, I wouldn't say any kind of anti-establishment would be the new wave of based. You know, you've got some sort of conservative establishment. So then anti-establishment could be Marxism. And Marxism is not particularly based. So it's I think based is mainly just not so much anti-establishment as just anti-political correctness, anti-cultural Marxism. It seems like that is just what based originally meant and still means as far as I know. You know, you're based in reality instead of these this kind of hysterical feminized irrational emotionbased beliefs. At least it's emotion based on the the

rank and file of the people that believe. There may be some cynical people that don't believe it that are the ones who are generating a lot of it or endorsing it, you know, trying to prom promulgate it.

So, yeah, I don't think necessarily being anti-establishment in and of itself is the new wave of based. I think just being like anti-diversity or anti-feminism or anti-marxism, that kind of thing is and always was based as long as the word based has been in the working English vocabulary, which hasn't been for very long. It's been

like 10 or 12 years that people have been saying based, I guess.

So let's see here. I guess I'll just move on to Stellar Supreme at all's next question. Got any recommendations for reducing limonality? Yeah. So Stellar Supreme apparently might be contemplating the possibility that he is a little too liinal. So he wants to be less liinal, less kind of surreal in his existence.

And I mean if you want to be less liinal, you got to be more mainstream. You got to be a normie. Just be as much of a normie as possible. Just follow all the rules. Follow all the social norms.

Take them seriously,

you know, talk to people about sports

and cars and stuff. [snorts]

That would be that would reduce

limonality. It's it's kind of difficult

for a person who is genuinely just by

temperament a liinal person just kind of

on the fringe of normality.

But I mean, you could take steps. I mean

just stop doing any kind of liinal

activities.

Stay away from Ouija boards for example.

You know just just think like a normie

or you know behave as much as possible

like a normie which will then kind of

reduce the limonality.

So let's see here.

I guess I guess I answered that question. I'm just going to move on to the next one. This is from Cleiffy who is a Lithuanian person and I'm unaware of there being any derogatory slurs for Lithuanians. Maybe the Russians have them but in America Lithuanian people are just called Lithuanians and that's good. That is the way it should be.

So anyways, Kify who is a Lithuanian says why do you think Lithuanian is this close to Sanskrit? Lithuania is thousands of kilo kilometers kilometers I use the Star Trek precedent of saying kilometers away from the Indian subcontinent. So yeah, I was recently

talking about how oh somebody wanted to know what if in any like European language there is what's what would be the closest to the Sanskrit word Dharma and I say probably Lithuanian just because Lithuanian and the Indic languages are very similar in certain ways just like amazingly similar in certain ways and it turns out according to Kifi um the Lithuanian like equivalent to Dharma would be called Dharma. uh [clears throat] which means order.

Um, so [clears throat] I've read that Lithuanian is the most conservative Indo-Uropean language, which means it

has changed the least since ancient times, since, you know, the the the diaspora of Indo-Uropean spread, presumably from the Pontic step, but maybe somewhere else.

And so, Lithuanian is just a very conservative

Indo-Uropean language that hasn't changed much. has changed less than the other Indo-Uropean languages. One reason for that is because they migrated north.

They weren't migrating into an already established civilization

where they're going to be lots of lone words and so forth. They migrated up into the the the just godforsaken

hellscape of the north where it was it

was it was like sparsely populated and
so there was less external influence
uh causing like changes in the language
maybe there are other reasons for it too
and then for some reason I'm not exactly
sure why but the Indic languages also
are like the second most conservative
language group after Baltos Slavonic
which would include Slavic languages.

You've got the like the Indo

Indo-Persian

languages which would include Iranian
and like Sanskrit and Pali and and
numerous other languages

that uh they didn't change much either.

And my guess for that especially with

regard to the Indic languages is that it was sort of like a a ruling class language. You know, it's like from the the Yam Nia civilization just going with the standard theory of the spread of Indo-Uropean languages and European peoples, European culture, ethnicity, DNA, whatever. You know, they they started off like in the steps north of the of the Black Sea and then one group migrated kind of eastwards and became Cintashta culture where they invented the war chariot and so forth allegedly. Then they moved farther east, became the Andronovo culture. And then the Andronovo culture, some of that migrated south into what is now like Afghanistan

and became the BMC, not BOC, which is Blue Oer, but no, BMAC.

There you go. BMAC. It was the the Baktria

Margana

Archaeological Complex, something like that. And then that was where they really became Indic. started speaking like what would be recognizably an Indian kind of language and then some of them actually migrated way westward and became the ruling class of a group called the Mitani that lived in like around what is now Syria. This was in ancient times in maybe 1500 BC and then a lot of the rest migrated down into

India where it may be that every single place they went they were like the ruling class that just kind of disdained the language of the plebs and so they kind of were conservative that way even though they were invading other cultures where there'd be lots of lone words still

um just sort of ethnic pride or something in their particular version of the Indo-European culture just kept them more kind of isolated, you know, less willing to accept lots of lone words and make grammatical changes in their language and so forth. But also I have read that there was like an Indo-Persian like

Cythian

uh Cythian tribes that were

[clears throat] they were speaking like

an Indo Indo-Persian language more

Persian than Indo I think that then

migrated farther west again you know

like from Andronovo back westward

and they became like a ruling class of a

group of people that the Romans called

Sarmatians.

They [snorts] were sort of like

protoslavic,

protobaltic, maybe farther northward and

westward. And so [clears throat]

there could be some some actual

connection in in language between like

the Indo-Persian subgroup and the Balto Slavonic subgroup. So there could be some connection that way also. But I think the main reason is just that Lithuanian and the Indic languages are both relatively conservative. So they didn't really influence each other very much one way or the other. It's just that they changed the least and stayed closer to the original language for for different reasons.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ruie.

And Ruie said, "Would you view the SA as a mere trampoline to further spiritual adventures, that is a locust to receive

transmission of dharma and be on one's way?" Well, I don't know if Rui is referring to this like like to me personally or in general.

I mean for me personally the SA being in the SA being an ordained monk for 30 years wasn't just a trampoline for further spiritual adventures. I mean I learned a lot. It was definitely a invaluable education that you learn not just intellectually but just through living it.

So

I wouldn't consider it to a locust to receive transmission of dharma and beyond one's way. Although in my case, I

got as much as as as apparently I was going to get out of it in this lifetime. So then it was like, you know, when it stops working, I stopped making progress for several years, then it just makes sense to try something else.

So that was the way it worked for me. I mean, it's not going to work the same for everybody though. So for some people it might be that way and then for some people it it [clears throat] won't.

But I don't think the SA is a mere trampoline to further spiritual adventures.

You know, it's sort of like there was that Herman Hesse novel or is it just Hesse Narcissus and Goldman where there's

this is like in medieval medieval
England probably like medieval Germany
or Austria you know Herman Hessa or Hess
spoke German. So probably it was a
medieval Catholic monastery in you know
his part of the world and you know these
two friends Narcissus and Goldman who
are raised like at this monastery boy
school kind of orphanaged sort of place
and Narcissus decides he's going to just
be ordained and stay there whereas
Goldman is just itching to get out there
and and taste the world. And so he just
immediately goes out and starts like
committing adultery and fornicating and
all this kind of stuff. Winds up getting

bubonic plague and coming back to the monastery to be nursed in his final final days by his old buddy Narcissus.

And you could tell that Herman Hess or Hessa was secretly rooting for Goldman, you know, the one who wanted to, you know, he got his monastic training and then went out and started sewing wild oats and so forth.

But [gasps]

yeah, it's not the way it's supposed to work. You know, it's like you renounce the world for good and you don't want to just fall back into it.

But for some people, I mean, for most people, especially most Westerners who are ordained, that's the way it

generally works out. They they don't last nearly as long as 30 years. They might last five years or so.

But it's it's going to be different for different people. But it really wasn't that way for me. It was just invaluable. My my time as a monk was really invaluable in in helping me to just open my eyes with regard to a lot of things. But as I say, I got as far as it seemed like I was going to get with it. I had stopped making progress for several years. And so I just decided, well, it's time to try something else.

So I'm just going to move on to Ruy's

next question.

He says, "As soon as," He's referring to the previous Q&A. He says, "As soon as you said the words symbolic book burnings of the Biden administration, my computer, a fairly potent Apple machine, crashed. In fact, it crashes every time I play your videos. Always somewhere between the 30 to 40 minute mark." And uh yeah, it should have happened by now. Is or has anyone been experiencing the same problem? It's been going on for the past two two years, week on week, and only with this channel. So, it's apparently it's some kind of karmic thing. You've got some sort of bad karma that's resisting

hearing what I what I have to say, I guess. And so, it's it's causing glitches in the matrix. That would that would be a guess. You know, I've I've got I've had weird karma. Like, when I was in Burma, I just had really weird technology karma. Of course, in Burma, stuff breaks down all the time anyway. But man, it was it was just really awful. Just some of the stuff you're you're riding on a bus, suddenly the whole drive line just falls out onto the highway, that kind of thing. It was just too common. You know, the bus hits a cow.

[sighs and gasps]

So, I I haven't really heard from other people about this. It may be just running rampant, and I just don't even know about it.

Um, but I've have I've had like the same similar sort of like technological malfunctions when recording these videos, especially before I got this uh what [clears throat] is it? OSB. OBS.

Yeah, OBS. This seems to work fairly reliably. Before that, I was using just the default video recording software that comes on Apple computers and it was just continually one time I had to do the same Q&A three times because it said it's recording and then I tried to review the recording afterwards and it

just says, you know, it's just empty file.

So, I have had similar kind of problems while recording these things. You know, just the sound cuts out halfway through. That happened not very long ago.

I think it's still working now. I got to check the green bar. Yeah, it's going side to side like it's supposed to. Like a good boy.

Okay. So,

yeah, it may be that other people are experiencing the same problem. Maybe they can chime in in [clears throat] the comments. But, uh, yeah, other than that, I'm I mean, it just sounds like a

karmic thing for me. Everything is a karmic thing anyway.

you just have some sort of deep resistance to learning what I'm saying. But then again, I apparently there's some deep resistance. Um, I mean, it's it's like karmic, you know, it's not like a conscious thing necessarily, but yeah, I've had some karmic glitches that have just kind of messed up entire Q&As's so that I've had to redo the entire Q&A.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Xeno Demon and Xeno Demon or Demon says, "Does Buddhism have any guidelines on political structures or was the Buddha's setting

of the pathocracy just a practical means of organizing those that heard his words?" Well, the Buddha did give advice like political advice. There's like a strange sutta in the Dīghanikāya where the Buddha is saying that a good king should like subsidize farmers you know he should give them seed grain and so forth to help them get started in business you know so that they can you know support themselves and their families and contribute to society and all that. So some some like modern westerners have like pointed to these kind of things and say the Buddha I mean he was he was a woke socialist.

Um the Buddha did prefer a kind of democracy. I mean that's why he set up the SA as a democracy. It's more radical of a democracy. At least it it was set up originally to be more radical of a democracy than we've got like in in the west for example for in order for the SA to agree to anything officially every single member of the the SA that is participating in the ceremony like all the inhabitants of that monastery have to agree you know so it's consensus it's not democratic majority it's not just the abbot says so which is the way it generally works in Thailand and Burma now you know they've kind of rejected the ancient Indo-Uropean democratic

ideal in favor of just kingship. The the
seato the abbott is king. What he says
goes. And it was I mean it's just
unthinkable for some junior monk to just
like throw a monkey wrench into some
formal act by just speaking out and
saying, "No, I don't consent to this.
This is absurd."

But I mean being a western barbarian, I
I was inclined to do that a few times
just like um one time

at this monastery I was staying at.

Technically I was a senior monk even at
the time. I was sort of a newcomer
though, [clears throat] but they were
going to have a cina ceremony. And in

Burma, the kina ceremony has degenerated into just business essentially. It's just like the main donation collecting time of year. And it's not done according to vignia at all. You know, it has nothing to do with vineia. The kina ceremony originally it was [snorts] um kind of a test. If after spending the three months of the range retreat together, the monks are still like on cooperative [snorts] terms enough that they can accomplish a difficult task which is to make a new robe from scratch in 24 hours. In less than 24 hours. you know, they've got to measure the cloth and cut it and sew it and and like they got to dye it the correct color and

everything. All of that before dawn of the following day. Then they get these kina privilege which includes the right to um keep extra cloth in addition to the three robes that a monk is supposed to keep. You can keep extra ones, that kind of thing. But most monks in Burma, probably most monks in Thailand, they just keep extra robes anyway, they're keeping these hardearned kina privileges all year round. They don't even need the kina the kina ceremony because they don't really give a damn about those rules anyway. It's just we get lots of donations on that day and so they like kina festivals and I just refuse. I just

no, we're not going to have a kina festival. So they start trying to like maneuver behind my back trying to get people to, you know, they're trying to get the kina ceremony going. And I've just finally said, "Look, if you if you want a kina festival, you're going to wind up with a battle. You know, you want to kain pu, you're going to get a sip pu."

The word for battle in Burmese literally means like war festival.

[sighs and gasps]

So let's see here.

in in Burma. I mean really almost every single ceremony official like official act of the SA is corrupt in and just

sometimes almost beyond recognition
like uh the lasta
day of the reigns retreat is not an
uposeta day. It's the the uh the
invitation day. It's the pawa day and
where all the monks they ask the sa you
know out of compassion please tell me my
fault so that I can correct them and in
Burma you just do not answer
you just do not answer this invitation
do not point out anybody else's faults
because in Burma it's like at 98% of the
monks are just laden with them they
don't even try to follow the rules and
so it's just barbaric it's just
unthinkable that you try to answer

another monk's con like request, his invitation to point out his lapses from virtue. And I tried it a couple times and it was like the the abbot was just like frantically waving his hand at me to shut up. And it's like he thought maybe I was just speaking out of turn that I was just didn't know that it wasn't my turn yet to make the the bogus invitation.

But I'm just completely digressing all over the place.

So does Buddhism have any guidelines on political structures? You can find a few guidelines on political structures in the text like there's that one sutta and the dean kaya that is of you know

potentially questionable authenticity.

Um the emperor Ashoka really did try to
set up a kind of Buddhist

[clears throat] theocracy so to speak
where I mean Ashoka's ideal was to have
Dharma rule the country where it should
be voluntary. You just encourage
everybody to to follow Dharma
and then you don't need kings and
governments and so forth because
everybody's helping each other.

Everyone's cooperating. Everything's
fine.

>> [sighs]

>> But the Hindus were more cynical in
their estimation of human nature. You

know, like the author of the Art
Shastra, I think it's called, which was
uh like an ancient Hindu or protohindu
political text. you know how like a
guide to kings sort of like Monkeyy's
the prince and really that was just
people are just corrupt you know you
can't trust them to follow any code of
honor you know you just have to keep
them ignorant and under control

[clears throat]

which is kind of the way the west is is
going increasingly especially in Europe
it seems to me

so let's see here yeah there are a few
guidelines on political structures
partly with regard to the Buddhist his

own choice of how the SAO should be managed and also just occasional advice with regard to, you know, what kings ought to do and they shouldn't be fighting wars and they should like negotiate their treaties instead of just fighting it out, that kind of thing. But he really wasn't talking a lot about politics, which is what you would expect because the Buddha had renounced society and back then it was it was done seriously. You know, it's not just you become part of society by becoming like the village secular priest or something, some high-profile teacher that people are all coming to. It's like you

seriously renounce society and just talking about politics is animal talk. Monks should not do it.

So, I guess I'll just move on. Next question. This is from Sedarta Lohachita.

And Sedart Loachita says, "Have you read some of the history about Haiti? It might have some similarities from what is happening in most of the Western Hemisphere." And I really know very little about the history of Haiti. I mean, it was, you know, the it's mostly a black population there who are descended from like sugar cane plantation slaves.

They eventually rebelled against the

white ruling class there and pretty much drove them out.

um that somehow I' I've picked up

somewhere it could just be like

Christian propaganda that Haiti

like one of their first governments made

some sort of like voodoo pact, you know,

they had some kind of voodoo thing going

as a way of like strengthening their

government or something which just kind

of opened the door to all sorts of

malevolent influences and so forth which

is one reason why Haiti is allegedly the

poorest country in the Western

Hemisphere.

It's also one of the few black majority

countries in the Western Hemisphere that I've read. This is like um UN like United Nations data. I did a like a a blog post on this years ago at this point, but according to the UN's own data, 19 of the 20 poorest countries in the world are black majority nations, mostly in in subsaharan Africa. And the only of these poorest countries in the world, the 20 poorest that is in the Western Hemisphere is Haiti, which is also a black majority country. The only of the 20 poorest countries in the world. I think it's like number 19 or 20. So it's it's not close to the the top of the list of poorest or bottom, however you want to look at it, is

Afghanistan.

So I really don't know what Sedart Loachito is referring to when he says it might have some similarities from what is happening in most of the Western Hemisphere. Yeah, I don't see how most of the Western Hemisphere would be like a population of slaves that kind of perpetrate an uprising against the ruling class and drive them out. I mean kind of I mean potentially the ruling class like the the elite the elite class can get overthrown and replaced by a different elite class which is generally how it works. you know, they could be some purge and most of the elite class,

you know, they they wind up going to the guillotine or whatever and then they just get replaced by other people who within a relatively short time are approximately as bad as the people that were thrown out of out of power.

But yeah, I really don't I don't not sure what Sedart Loha is referring to.

And so I'm just going to move on to the next question here. This is from Drip Walker.

and drip walker first he has the context of his questions. So the context is I have heard from an esoteric fellow that the subconscious is fully opened and can be more easily programmed and if you're just listening to the podcast you're

missing out on all these air quotes on full moon days. So I guess I'm going to have to interrupt myself which is very rude. So I'm just going to start off the context.

I have heard from an esoteric fellow the subconscious is fully open and can be more easily programmed or easily reprogrammed on full moon days. This also connects to the fact that days are usually on full moon days. Does the moon and subconscious link hold any truth in reality? Well, first I would like to point out that days are not usually on full moon days. I mean you've got the big uposa days where the monks have to

convene and recite the podimoka which is on the full moon and the new moon and then you've got the lesser the 8day which are on the half moon days. So if you include those then the full moonatas are only one out of four.

[snorts]

So let's see. So an esoteric fellow says that the subconscious is fully opened and can be more easily reprogrammed on full moon days.

And then he says, "Does the moon and subconscious link hold any truth in reality?" Apparently, there's some kind of connection. I mean, like it's known that women's menstrual cycles can often synchronize with the phases of the moon.

So, there is that which probably has some subconscious elements to it.

I mean just I don't think the the body all by itself without the mind helping to condition things would just realign the menstrual cycle with the the phases of the moon. So there is that and sometimes full moon

you know people can act crazier on the full moon day

but with regard to the subconscious being fully open I'm not even sure what that means

and the subconscious is more easily reprogrammed on full moon days maybe but I mean I I'd like to see some kind

of evidence for it if possible some kind of empirical evidence.

Um

but I don't think that has any real connection with uposata. I mean the reason why days are on the new moon and the full moon is simply because in ancient times throughout the world pretty much and especially in India here it's just the the phases of the moon were just the way of keeping time. I mean that was the calendar. It was like a a luna solar calendar in ancient India where it's the the position of the full moon among the constellations determines what month it is. So I mean it was just a way of keeping track of time. I don't

think that there was any deliberate
uh like connection between the full moon
and any kind of esoteric subconscious
reprogramming stuff. I mean that could
be in there too. But the main reason for
days being on full moons and new moons
and stuff is just the phases of the moon
were just the main way of keeping time.
You know, it was like the ancient
calendar before they had a calendar.
So, I guess I'll just move on to
Dripwalker's next question. Could this
be why days are on full moon days? Yeah,
I've already pretty much answered that.
I mean, they're not just on full moon
days. They're on full moon days, new

moon days. And if you include the days when the SA doesn't convene but are still considered uposta days when lay people come to the monastery take eight precepts and all that then only 1/4 of the days or full moon days. So it it's mainly just a way of just the regularity like we've got seven days in the week, you know, it's just that was kind of their equivalent like in the Buddhist time in ancient India that was their equivalent to just having like a weekly weekly calendar and months because I mean month and moon originally a month was just you know from one full moon to the next full moon or one new moon to the next new moon.

So yeah, I don't think that days being on full moon days like 1/4 of aostas being on full moon days really has anything significant there's any significant correlation between that and any like spiritual influence of the sp the full moon on the subconscious mind like that could be could be in there but I don't think it's the main reason

so

ah [clears throat] Dripwalker's third question

says, "What is the karma of jumping in front of a juggernaut?" But he throughout throughout this question,

juggernaut is consistently spelled
juggernaut. I'm not sure why he does
this. So this if you prefer juggernaut
to juggernaut, that's fine. But I'm just
going to go with the English word that
is doesn't have the red spellch check
underline under it. So what is the karma
of jumping in front of a juggernaut to
get crushed to death? thinking that it
will give good karma from a Buddhist
point of view. To give you some context,
there used to be a festival in India
where they would make massive mobile
mobile juggernauts of deities which
would be pushed across the streets
during the festival. When the
juggernauts are being moved, lowcast

individuals would jump in front of the juggernaut juggernaut and get crushed to death by it. The Hindu peoples used to say that the act of jumping in front of the juggernaut would give good karma in air quotes there. Well, I mean technically juggernaut comes from jaganata. It's like the Sanskrit jaganata which literally means lord of the world and it was like an epithet [laughter] epithet epithet epithet I think of Vishnu. So probably all the juggernaut images were some form of Vishnu and yeah they'd pull these huge images through the streets and people would

like jump underneath and crush to death
thinking that they're getting good karma
sort of like you know like the the
tradition of sati in in India where a
widow would throw herself into her
husband's funeral p that that was you
know the good wife. Sati literally means
like the true woman, the true wife, you
know,

[clears throat and sighs]

doesn't want to be a burden on her her
sons, so she just burns herself alive
when her husband dies, which could
really suck if she's like 30 years
younger than him.

So, let's see. What is the karma of jump
jumping in front of a juggernaut to get

crushed to death thinking it will give good karma? uh it depends on the individual because just the act itself like I like I explain like pretty regularly just the the mere physical action itself is morally neutral I mean it's that is not what the karma is coming from that does not generate karma it's it's the mental states that generate karma so it's like why you do it what are your you know what is your attitude while you are doing it is what really determines what kind of karma you're getting.

[sighs and gasps] So, I mean, if they're just completely filled with faith and

they're offering themselves as a kind of sacrificial victim to the god, that kind of thing, then there could be some good karma mixed in with that. I mean, almost certainly there would be. I mean, it wouldn't be pure good karma, but there would be some good karma involved. I mean, they're not thinking so much about like committing suicide. Well, I can not supposed to say that, am I? Not on YouTube, but it's like selfdeing. you know, they're not like I mean, the fact that according to Dripwalker here, it's mostly low cast people means that, you know, it's mostly lowcast people that are not valuing their lives enough that they want to remain alive. That they

think that if they fling themselves under this giant statue as it rolls by that they might get reborn as like a higher cast person, a more fortunate person next time. That's probably a lot of the the psychology going on.

And

I really don't think it it necessarily works that way. That just throwing flinging yourself under a religious statue to get crushed by it isn't necessarily good karma. You know, that's just kind of like a superstition in my opinion.

But nevertheless, even if it is a superstition, if the person's mind is

like exalted, you know, they're offering themselves to this God, like their last thoughts [snorts] are like dedicated to what they consider to be the supreme god, then that's going to have some positive effect and it probably won't be like just pure 100% bad karma that they're getting, but it's going to depend on the mental states of the individual.

And I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Dama River and Dama River says, "What is your opinion on the dangers of addiction to comfort? I believe it has turned Americans and Canadians into neutered indoor cats, vastly dependent on the

government and thus easy to control."

Well, pretty much everybody is addicted to comfort. You know, almost everybody prefers like pleasure to pain. They prefer comfort to discomfort. You know, there's some tough guys, for example, that have a certain stoic indifference to discomfort. You know, as a Buddhist monk, I mean, you're supposed to just cultivate an indifference to comfort and and discomfort. That's that's what austerity is all about.

So,

uh the the dangers of addiction to comfort, I mean, most people have it to some degree. Almost everybody has it to

some degree.

Um, but that's it's not just that that has turned Americans and Canadians into neutered indoor cats. I remember when I was in Burma, I was staying at this monastery that had a fair amount of old books in the English language that I could go through. And one of them was the hidden persuaders, which won some kind of award. I don't know if it won a Pulitzer Prize or whatever, like back in the 1950s. And it's talking about how advertising agencies are actually hiring teams of psychologists to try to get people to like really want this stuff. And a lot of the stuff the Hidden Persuaders is talking about is, you

know, it's it's like talking about how they're even back in like the 1950s, they'd be selling toasters that I mean, it just lifts up the toast and just I mean, you don't even have to pull it out of the toaster, you know? It just as soon as it's done, it just lifts up for you and you just pluck just nonchalantly pluck the toast from the top of the toaster. Just making everything so easy. And women are more prone to like this stuff than men are. Um like some of the some of the stuff my my woman likes. It's it's like I mean it's it's not really [laughter] necessary. It's just make it's more it's more cozy, you know?

It's more comfortable. It's easy. And people just like this. And then these advertising agencies with their teams of psychologists are just pounding away at it. And like they've succeeded in getting women, a lot of women to buy a whole different wardrobe like twice a year. It's like the win the winter colors this year are like earth tones, you know? It's like and all the women just have to rush out and and get the the new colors just because they're in style that year, you know, just styles, fashion trends. And at least at the time that Hidden Persuaders was was written, they were talking about how the like the the clothing companies and the

advertising agency were just in despair because men just won't go with these fashion trends. It's it's a woman thing. The women go to go with the fashion trends much more than men do. A man is willing to wear the same suit for 20 years until it just wears out.

>> [snorts]

>> So, it's we're we're all addicted to to comfort to some degree. You know, we all prefer well seasoned food to bland, flavorless food, for example. Most of us do.

But then you have like consumer culture. Consumerism is just like it's like what's the word? pandering to it or just

like trying to make us as addicted as possible so that they can sell their unnecessary junk.

So it's consumerism is just aggravating the natural human preference for like convenience to inconvenience or comfort to discomfort.

[sighs]

And that's that's one strength that the Burmese had is they were just completely stoic. They didn't give a [__] about fashion trends other than just the tradition of, you know, women wearing a flowered sarong and men wearing geometric p geometric patterns on their sarong, that kind of thing, which is it was just perennial. You know, there's no

this this year's fall fashions, anything like that.

So, I'm just going to move on to Dhamma River's next question.

Second question, he says, "What's your favorite dharma teaching that does not come from scripture or trapitica? It could be a dharma talk available online or a book. It can be anything you've ever heard or read that you thought was a great dharma teaching that didn't come from scripture." Just a second. I got to look on the bookcase here.

Let's see here. This one.

See,

maybe let's just go with this one.

Okay. [clears throat and snorts]

Well, the first thing first thing that comes to mind, I mean, this would rule out stuff that isn't dharma. You know, this this would because he's got the word dharma instead of dharma. I'm just going to interpret that to mean terra Buddhism because dharma with an R. I mean, that can apply to any kind of Buddhism. It can apply to Hinduism. It can apply to any kind of real spirituality that has some depth or profundity to it. So this is just going to apply to terra. And the first thing that came to mind is that the Ajan Cha tradition produces for free distribution lots and lots of books that are like the

teachings of Ajan Cha like transcripts of his dhammat talks. And for some reason I don't think I have any on my bookcase now. I think I left them behind when I left the monastery for the last time. But uh some of I mean those those books of Ajan Sha's dhammat talks are good dharma that uh you know it's just accessible. It's it's kind of more accessible to the western mind more so than like the the dhammat talks of a Burmese teacher because the Burmese teachers are very dogmatic, very scholastic [snorts] whereas the the teachers base their teachings more on personal experience. So that sometimes they're deviating from

orthodoxy. They're using poly words without really knowing the exact meaning of the poly word. you know, they've interpreted the poly word incorrectly or something, but at least they're basing it on their own experience, like their own meditative experience and insight. So, sometimes a book written by a Thai Ajan can just be funny to like some Burmese dogmatist because he's getting it wrong, you know, like the Buddha didn't say that this kind of thing. But still, I mean, a a Burmese Seattle is so dogmatic that if their personal experience isn't the same as what the book says, they'll reject their own personal experience or just sort of

force fit their personal experience to fit in with what the book says. Whereas the ties, because they're less cognizant of what the book actually says, they'll just give their their insights, you know, based on their own meditative experience. And uh in some ways it's more valid, you know, it's more alive. It's less just dead words and more like living experience. And Ajan Cha was really good at that. He was definitely a serious practitioner. He started off as like a a scholastic teacher at some school monastery in Thailand, I'm pretty sure. But it was like his conscience was would not let him rest. It's like he's

teaching this stuff about how monks are supposed to live and he wasn't doing [clears throat] it. So finally he just decided I'm just going to have to, you know, walk the talk. I'm going to have to practice what I preach and went out and became a meditation master. And some of his practices were relatively advanced, like sleeping with like a full bottle of water balanced on one knee and a full glass of water balanced on the other knee. Just sleeping in a sitting position where if he moved at all, they would just fall off. That [snorts] kind of thing.

So yeah, the the talks the Dharma talks of Ajan Cha would be uh up near the top

of my list. Also the book I got off the
the bookcase. This would be another one.
This is an important one concept in
reality in early Buddhist thought by
Biku Nyana where the whole book is about
the meaning of the word papancha. And
this book revolutionized modern
Buddhistic studies with regard to
understanding what the word papancha
means
because the commentarial tradition
didn't quite get it and then like you
know Burmese seats would just slavishly
follow the commentarial tradition so
they didn't quite get it either and then
Bikunyananda comes along and just uses

this rational investigation of the text to point out that papancha really means something different from what the commentary says and it's the Opposite of nibbana. One of the synonyms for nibbana is nepapancha which means no papanchcha without papanchcha.

So this book concept in reality which is sold by the Buddhist publication society is this is [clears throat] an important book too which is kind of a dharma talk or you know dhhamma teachings written by a monk an ordained beu.

So

I think uh I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from Rea and I don't know how to pronounce

[clears throat] German German words correctly. So Rea Anik says, "Did the Buddha probably look more like an Asian Nepalese? He had golden skin than an Indian? After all, he was a Chhatria from Lumbini. Or was this area already completely Indian at that time without any Asian immigration?" Well, probably the Buddha looked more European or [clears throat] like like Iranian than he looked Indian or Nepalese. I mean, chances are the Buddha had Indo-Uropean ancestry. So, which would make him related to Europeans. I mean, according to tradition, he had blue eyes.

Although, I mean, that's not really
historical

fact, you know, it's just a tradition.

But, you know, there are a lot of
Iranian people. You know, they have like
dark eyes and dark hair, maybe a big
nose, but still they've got like large
mainly like what would be called
Caucasian features. I mean, they they
look pretty much European.

And probably the Buddha looked more like
that. I mean he according to tradition
he was of the the ruling class which
would mean that he didn't have a whole
lot of like asiatic DNA mixed in with his
DNA unless it was like from his
ancestors in like the the BMAC or

something.

But I mean like the highest cast

brahmins of like Rajasthan

[clears throat] would look more like the

Buddha than a Nepalese person would. I

mean, the Nepoese also are I mean,

they've got like a lot of them are fair

skinned and kind of tall and don't have

sort of like the Dravidian

characteristics of I think the

Dravidians of India like most of the

inhabitants of India before the

Indo-Europeans arrived were a mixture of

like Mediterranean Caucasians like the

the Neolithic farmers that that migrated

eastwards who are interbreeding with

protoostloids.

>> [sighs]

>> So the Buddha was probably like tall,
fairs skinned, dark hair,

blue or brown eyes, but still he would
he would look more like, you know, like
a highcast Brahman from Rajasthan or
like some elite Iranian [clears throat]
than he would like, you know, some
dark-skinned shorter type of indigenous
person from

south India or the far the far east of
India that kind of thing
in my opinion just going with
probabilities

[sighs] so let's see here

or was that area already completely

Indian at that time without any Asian
immigration

um [snorts] Asian immigration well I
mean the the indigenous inhabitants
of what is now Nepal would be Asian. You
know, there'd be some like people
related to the Tibetans, for example,
would be there. There'd be some
Dravidian types in the the lowlands, I
would guess. But then you have like the
the conquering master race comes in and
they're the the ruling elite and they're
mostly interbreeding amongst themselves
like and the the Buddhist family was
like cousins marrying each other. I
think the Buddha's own wife was was his

cousin, like his first cousin. So, it was kind of trying to keep it all, you know, the bloodlines pure and so forth apparently.

So, yeah, there was indigenous Asians already there, but the ruling class wasn't really interbreeding with them much. It did happen. And gradually over the centuries, over the millennia, you wind up with most people in India just having a brown skin and and not looking particularly European, although there are still are a few mostly of the higher casts.

[snorts] So,

I guess I answered that one.

So, I'm just going to move on to Rea

Anik's next question, which is if you were to get a Buddha tattoo, on which part of the body would you put it? What would it look like? And what would the Buddha specifically look like? I'm thinking of getting a Buddha tattoo. Idolatry.

But so far, I've only found Buddha tattoos with feminine features or Mahayana depictions of the Buddha. I'd like one that looks more European or ancient Greek and maybe even with a shaved head.

Well, if I were to get a Buddha tattoo, on what part of the body would I put it? Gosh, I mean, this is just like

completely out of left field for me.

I've never considered this. Um, what would it look like? And what would the Buddha specifically look like? Um, I remember when I was a monk, I was toying with a certain Buddha image that would be very abstract. You know, the Buddha's head would just be a circle. You know, he'd be almost like a stick figure.

There'd be like a triangle representing his upper robe. He'd just be sitting under a tree with a bowl in front of him. And there'd be like no facial features, you know? would just be like this abstract glyph really like a hieroglyph of the Buddha sitting in meditation under a tree with his bowl in

front of him. You know, just a circle
for a head, you know, maybe just a
little line for the neck. Then, you he'd
be like sitting in the full lotus. So
there'd be like the stick arms and the
stick legs in the full lotus and then
just more or less like triangles
representing um his upper robe and maybe
his lower robe kind of a an a flattened
out isosles triangle or something like
that. I mean you might have the tree
behind him, you know, some sort of a
very simplified, you know, equally
simplified figure of a tree and that
that would be it. That' probably be my
version. I mean, I wouldn't want like a

human face, you know, like a detailed human face tattooed to my body. I just I just really don't swing that way.

So, where would I put it? Gosh, maybe on my left shoulder blade, like behind my heart, maybe.

I don't know. I mean, I'm not planning on it. It's extremely unlikely that I would do such a thing. So, I really haven't put much thought into how I would do it. See,

feminine features, Mahayana depictions of the Buddha. Yeah. Well, that'd be like Kamakura Buddha isn't even God Buddha. Most of the like the Japanese Buddha images that you see or the

Chinese Buddha. That's not even Godmma
Buddha. That's some mythological space
Buddha that they've somebody came up
with hundreds of years after the time of
the Buddha.

So, I mean, you could use a kind of
like a Gondaran Greek motif.

I mean, he'd probably still have like
the the top knot of hair and everything
cuz the Greek Buddhas were based on
Apollo,
but um

yeah, I mean, you could just do a just
the Buddha head like a a Gandara Buddha
head. You might want to just monkey with
the details enough so that he's got a

shaved head instead of long hair with a top knot.

But yeah, if I was going to have a Buddha tattoo, just my first impression would be to use that image that I was toying with

as a monk that's just like a glyph of the Buddha in meditation so that you know what it's supposed to be even though it does not look realistic at all. It's just the Buddha with just a circle for a head. You know, there'd be clean shaven. You know, there'd be no little hairs sticking out. just sitting in meditation, kind of a tree to one side behind him and his bowl in front of him and that would be it. Maybe he'd be

sitting on a a sitting mat, the nedina,
if you will,

and maybe [clears throat] over my left
shoulder blade, but then of course I'd
never see it. I don't know. Maybe I
could put it on my shoulder or
something. Maybe my left shoulder or
which? Let's see.

Maybe the right shoulder because then
it'd show if if if a monk had his his
shoulder uncovered.

Okay, but good luck with your Buddha
tattoo.

And uh I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Joe Doe. And Jodo
says, "Why do you think you didn't

develop any psychic powers?" Well, I mean what exactly you going to call psychic powers?

Um, there's one kind of I I mean, whether you want to call it psychic powers or not, I don't know, but for some reason I'm really tuned into to group mind stuff. It's like it fits in with my philosophy of the uncarved block of marble where, you know, everything in this world, the 10,000 things of this phenomenal universe are just virtual statues contained in this uncarved block. And that would include group statues. So every time you have a like one more than one person, more than one conscious being interacting, you've

you're creating a kind of us entity that ultimately isn't any more real than like the the individual entities that are making up this US entity. But still there's like this in a way it's like a higher level of consciousness or just a different kind of consciousness that is connecting these two entities. And for some reason, like it happened last night twice just in a matter of like five minutes where I'll just blurt out exactly what my woman happens to be thinking at that time. The exact words like last night it was the exact words and then she's after the second time she started getting weirded out told me to

be quiet.

[snorts] But I mean stuff like that or just like somebody who has practiced like intensive meditation just there's all kinds of like synchronicities that spontaneously occur just you know weird manifestations of karma that kind of thing that I mean maybe you won't call it psychic powers but it is something that is in a way kind of paranormal. It's not just mechanistic. It's it's like this karma generated mindgenerated thing that's happening that is just weird.

But I mean going back to Joe Doe and his question, why do you think you didn't

develop any psychic powers? I mean first of all I didn't give a [__] about developing psychic powers. I mean when weird stuff would happen like the weird synchronicities you just accept them as everyday life. I mean if you want miracles to become commonplace you don't single them out as a big deal. you know, you just accept it as as the flow.

You're not like making any, you know, any any kind of like potential obstructions against it or anything like that.

[clears throat] So, the the orthodox Buddhist explanation would be I mean, you get psychic powers through like

mastering Janna. And I never really fully mastered Janna. I mean it was it was sort of come and go. Sort of like Goda in the Samutinikaya who he would get Janna and lose it and get it and lose it and get it and lose it until he was in a state of complete desperation. I was I was sort of like that.

And so I mean the psychic powers just did not reach fruition just going with terra dog terraod and dogma because you get psychic powers through mastering Janna and I just never fully mastered Janna although as I say just there is stuff that happens you know like the the group mind stuff where I'm just kind of tapping into what both of us or both of

us are just feeling the same thing or thinking the same words you know the exact same words at the exact same time, that kind of thing, because I just blurted it out as she was thinking it twice in like five minutes.

But in a way, it's you could say, well, it's we're we know each other well enough and we're just sort of, you know, in tune with each other. We're our vibes are in sync or whatever, which can just cause that to spontaneously happen sometimes.

[snorts]

So, that's my answer, I guess. And I'm moving on to Jodo's next question, which

is, do you know much about Helena
Blovatki? Was she a fraud? I think I
answered a question about Madame
Blovatki just uh a week or two ago.
Anyways, Helena Bllovzki, was she a
fraud? Um, that's a tough question
because I do have another book on the
bookcase back there. I won't won't go
get it. The trickster in the paranormal
by George P. Hansen where he talks about
how even genuine psychics will still do
like trickster stuff. You know, they
there will be fraud mixed in with the
genuine psychic stuff because it makes
them more liinal. They're breaking
rules. You know, breaking rules is
liinal. And so when you're throwing in a

bunch of fake stuff, it it kind of it's like priming the pump for the real stuff to to happen more often.

So it is true that Helena Baski was committing some fraudulent stuff like she's supposedly getting these notes from ascended masters in the Himalayas that would fall onto the table during their seances or whatever they call them. You know, these little notes would just fall out of midair and just land on the table. And it turns out that Helena Blavatzky had like they were like tied to a thread and they were like wedged up in the cracks of the ceiling and she'd just give the give it a little tug at

the right moment and it would just fall onto the table in this little puff of attic dust.

But just because she would do that doesn't mean she was a 100% absolute complete fraud.

And uh her cohort Colonel Alcott seems to have held her in very high esteem. He thought she was the real deal.

Uh maybe he could be up into doing some fraud stuff too though I guess. But uh I I've tried to read some of her stuff and she's just you know it's almost like reading Nietzsche where it's just so like stream of consciousness like emotional poetic stuff that it just doesn't jive with my way of thinking. I'm just more

objective linear thought. I mean, I can
I can enjoy words with more than one
meaning, which sort of, you know, kind
of [clears throat] complicates the
linear thought stuff, but still,
um, yeah, she was just too too surreal
in her approach that I really could not
get into it. But she she definitely was
doing some fraud stuff, but that does
not guarantee that she was just
completely a fraud.

And I'm just going to move on. Next
question. This is from Ethiopian fake
tig.

Yeah, I think we're going to be less
than two hours here because we're

getting close to the bottom. Ethiopian
fake TIG says Epicurus had a very
Buddhist philosophy. Only thing he
couldn't do was meditate, so he settled
for happy thoughts instead. What are
your thoughts on Epicurionism? Well, I
mean, I have read some philosophy books
and really it seems to me like if you're
if you're going to look to like the
classical west, you know, Greco Roman
classicism that epicur epicuranism did
not come closest to Buddhism. That
epicurionism came closest to like
scientism or just materialism. that the
probably the closest philosophy to
Buddhism that I'm aware of would be like
the cynics, you know, Dioynes, the

cynic, at least with regard to their lifestyle. They came much closer to Buddhism. Also, I mean like some of like the Orphic mysteries, Pythagoreans that that believed in like rebirth and so forth probably would come closer to Epicurans who tended to be materialistic. I mean, they've been compared to the Charvakas of ancient India. Just the worldly philosophers, the atheist philosophers. The Epicurans believed that they were gods, but didn't think that they really interacted with people. They had their own world and just didn't give a [_] about us, which kind comes kind of close to Buddhist

philosophy. I'm not sure what kind of morals the Epicurans had. There were a lot of like in the Roman Republic there were a lot of Epicurian types that really just were not religious. You know, they they preferred a kind of rationalistic understanding of reality. So, I mean, there's certain Buddhist elements in Epicuranism, you know. I think epicurionism is just based on um and again it's like the sharvakas of ancient India where pleasure is like the highest good you know to be happy or just to to experience pleasure and avoid pain was just like the highest good and so the charvakas who wrote the kama sutra the kamautra is a charvaka test

text

um you know they're just making this science of how to maximize pleasure And of course, you have to use some common sense. Just overindulgence can backfire. You know, overindulgence in food results in obesity and impaired health and so forth. And overindulgence in like euphoric euphoric drugs, you know, you can result in, you know, again, impaired health, addiction, you know, crash and burn, that kind of stuff. So, you know, Epicurus, I mean, he still believed that pleasure is the highest good. I'm pretty sure it's just that he believed in just sort of moderation and

just subtle pleasures rather than just
just going for it as a complete
hedonist.

So let's see what's the question here.

What are your thoughts on Epicureanism?

Yeah, the Epicureans it was sort of like
like closet atheists,

you know, just people that just believe
what they could see and hear. Those
would be the Epicureans of like the late
Roman Republic for example.

One of the most influential

like literary works in in Latin in

ancient times like the Roman Republic

would be *De Rerum Natura* on the nature of of
things and [snorts] it was an Epicurean
text. I don't think Epicurus didn't

write it. It was an Epicurian
philosopher or poet who wrote the thing
and it was very influential. There were
a lot of people who considered Dirum
Nura to be you know practically
scripture and it's just based on like
molecules like atoms and just
mechanistic universe really.

[snorts]

So I do think that cynicism would come
closer to Buddhism than epicurionism
would. maybe some of the mystery sects,
the Stoics, that kind of thing,

[sighs]

but I'm no I'm no authority on Epicurus
or Epicuriism.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is also from Ethiopian fake TIG.

He says, "If the Buddha ever met Jesus, who do you think would have more influence on whom since both were in their own way philosophers and such?"

Well, I would assume as a Buddhist, it is a very convenient working hypothesis.

The Buddha really was enlightened or as enlightened as it is possible for a human to be. So, I really don't think that he was particularly

um what's the word?

No, open to not open to suggestion, but what's the word? It's like oh there's a certain word I'm trying to think of

where

just uh impressionable. I think that's that's close to the word I was looking for anyway where that he's just going to like change his way of thinking just because somebody says something that I mean he had already you know just experienced ultimate reality that he already knew whatever needed to be known that he didn't need to like get any kind of new knowledge or new perspective on things that he was already there so I don't think that Jesus would have influenced the Buddha much at all. Especially considering that Jesus was

going with a relatively in my opinion a relatively crude like religious system.

You know, he was he was essentially a Hebrew with relatively crude

understanding of what God is all about

and so forth. So yeah, I don't think

that the Buddha would have had or I

don't think the Buddha would have been

much influenced by Jesus. It's possible

that Jesus would have been influenced

more by the Buddha than vice versa.

Especially

if Jesus wasn't fully enlightened and

didn't consider himself to be fully

enlightened that I mean if you go just

go with the New Testament Jesus wept

the shortest verse in the New Testament

Jesus wept and you [snorts] know he'd get depressed and upset and in bad moods and so forth and [clears throat] you know he's like making a taking some knotted cords and using them as a whip to drive the money changers out of the temple and overturn turning their tables and so forth.

So it in my opinion it is much more questionable that that Jesus was enlightened then that the Buddha was enlightened. just I mean obviously because I'm a Buddhist I would assume that the Buddha was at least as wise as Jesus was and probably wiser because I just it's hard for me to believe that

Jesus of Nazareth was a fully enlightened being much less the only begotten son of God and the creator of the universe.

So [snorts] see, yeah, I think that the Buddha would have more influence on Jesus um than vice versa.

And of course, there are quite a few people that think that Jesus in his lost years actually went to Asia and became a Buddhist, but I don't I mean that's pretty hard for me to swallow also.

So I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake Tig's third question, which is what are your thoughts on Zogchen meditation? been doing it for a

while now and it seems to be
significantly easier than weasa and I've
never practiced zogchan I've heard a
little bit about it like I've read a
little bit about it and apparently it's
similar to like shikant taza in Zen
Buddhism it's just like a wide open kind
of of meditation similar to what I was
practicing u for most of the time that I
was a monk but I really don't know
enough about like official orthodox
orthoprax zogchen to really make any
kind of statements about it because I
just have never done it. I've just
picked up a few tidbits of information
about it about how it is really just

like a wide open, you know, like there's
no primary object to it. You know,
you're just kind of making your mind
spacious and open and and silent kind of
a thing, which is what I was practicing.
So it's good seems to me
but [sighs]

I really could not compare it with weasa
meditation which isn't even really I
mean I don't know who came up with the
idea of calling mindfulness meditation
weasa meditation when wea is just
insight that arises spontaneously as a
result of certain practices or it can
just arise spontaneously due to life
experiences. is
so it should it be more correctly called

sipatana or just mindfulness meditation
than calling a meditation technique we
passa when we passa is not a meditation
technique

it is insight that arises spontaneously
often as a result of meditation but it
could be even janna meditation that
results in wea insight arising

[snorts]

[sighs] but my thoughts on Zogchan
meditation are very few because I've
never practiced it. I've never really
studied it and I've never really
conversed with anybody who has practiced
it or studied it and so it's best for me
just to move on to the next question

which is the last question
and this is from Adventism and Adventism
says in Christianity it is sometimes
believed that your very last action or
thought before dying is much more
important than any you had before as
long as you turn to God at the very last
moment. How are one's last thoughts or
actions viewed in Terraviva? Do they
have any significance in the cycle of
rebirth? Well, first I would I would say
that it's kind of surprising to me that
they believe this in Christianity that
it would seem like just whenever
whenever it is that you turn to God, you
know, and became like a devout Christian
that that would be the most important

moment.

Um,

yeah. It it just seems to me that in Christianity this whenever you became like a serious devout Christian and were saved, that would be the most important moment of your life. The moment in which you were saved, not necessarily the last moment. I mean, that's more of an Eastern thing. It seems to me like the Hindus definitely believe that. That's why, as I've said before, when Mahatma Gandhi was shot, he didn't say, "Oh, God." Like, "They got me." Like in the movie starring Ben Kingsley that came out in like 1980

something. It was Hey Ram. He says, "Hey Ram as he's dying because he wants his last thought to be focused on God."

And in Tibetan Buddhism

really, it's your last thought. First of all, it's your very last thought that determines your bunga cheetah in the in your next life. Bunga, it's like if you're not thinking anything, there's just like this static test pattern of your last image, your last perceptual image in the previous life. So that's going to be following you the whole next whole your whole next life will be your last thought in your previous life.

That's according to Abhidharma, but the sutras really don't say anything about

it. So be feel free to be skeptical as
you please on that one. But also
it's really [laughter] your last thought
in this life is going to be the most
important one for determining your first
thought in your next life because
there's a I mean there's no gap. It's
just, you know, less than a trillionth
of a second when this last thought in
this life blinks out and the first
thought in the next life blinks blinks
in. So you've got like this momentum
going. And so your last thought in this
life is really going to be the most
important thought for determining what
your next life is going to be. It's not

going to determine all the details of your next life because you got a whole bunch of karma that's going to be conditioning that. And it may be like I've mentioned this just recently in a Q&A. Let's say you're just a shitty person. Not you necessarily in vanity, but you know, a person is just, you know, they're just a like a a criminal. They're like a mafia hitman. And then like as they're dying, they just have like this epiphany, you know? It's just they they see the light and everything and they die in this state of rapture, which apparently does happen sometimes, not necessarily with mafia hitmen, but with people in general. Sometimes just

normie type people. And then that would result in him getting a better rebirth. But still, he's got all this bad karma, this baggage of bad karma from killing people and so forth that's going to muck up that next life. You know, he might be reborn as, you know, some prince, you know, in living in a palace or something, but he's going to be like this rotten like commot prince who's just going to be all strung out on drugs and, you know, molesting slave girls and all this kind of stuff. And so it's going to mess up his life. On the other hand, you could have a person who's very virtuous and

then let's say they die in agony and they're just like cursing as they die, which would then cause them to go into like a worse state, but they've got so much good karma that it may be they're not going to stay in that that that, you know, lower realm or whatever for very long or it's going to be very much mitigated by all this all this merit that they brought with them.

So your very last thought isn't like determining what your next life is going to be like completely, but it is the most important moment for determining what your next like what realm of existence you're going to be in. Like what is your heading? You know, it's

it's determining what direction you're heading

as you die to so that you'll you'll hit the next life, you know, in that direction. So, you die with a heavenly mind, you're more likely to get a heavenly existence. You die with a demonic hellish kind of a mind, you're more likely to get a demonic hellish kind of existence. You die with like a like a sort of a ghostlike mind, whatever that is, you know, just sort of like a surreal dreamy kind of mind, then you might wind up in a surreal dreamy kind of ghost realm, that sort of thing. Most humans apparently die with more or

less of a human mind and so they wind up
being a human again which is as it
should be I suppose since most of their
karma is is human karma at least what
they've been cultivating recently.

So yeah, one's last thoughts or actions
viewed in terra it's it is

[clears throat] considered to be

important and there is some emphasis on
this like in Burmese tradition um there
was I can't remember who it was I think
it was like a government minister like
back in like the 1950s

whose wife was on her deathbed and she
was [clears throat]

having some sort of like nightmarish
experience with hell hounds coming to

get her you know drag her down into hell
And I think he himself or maybe his
mother-in-law, somebody sat next to her
bed and were like, you know, urging her
to think about the meritorious acts she
had done and sort of distract her from
the hell hounds and get her thoughts on
something good as she was dying. And
then it worked and she kind of went into
this state of bliss and was smiling and
the hell hounds were gone and she wound
up dying in a positive mental state.
But they do say that you your whole life
is really just kind of rehearsing for
the last moment of your life because
that's the one that's going to determine

what happens after you die.

It's what they say anyhow. And I do think it does seem to be much more important in Buddhism and also in Hinduism than in Christianity because really it seems to me like the most important moment of your life as a Christian is the moment in which you turn to God and are saved.

>> [snorts]

>> So that's it. I guess I think I answered that question. So [snorts] as I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do. Do you have any questions you think I can answer? I mean there's no guarantee I'll be able to answer it. Like Zogchin, it was just I just

couldn't answer that one. But
[clears throat] if you think I can
answer, it's about dharma, dharma, early
Buddhism, Terravada Buddhism especially,
you know, just monasticism, meditation,
that kind of stuff, feel free to ask and
I will give it a shot. I will try to
answer your question if it is a question
that I perceive to be in good faith. If
it's just like some wise joke question
kind of a thing, there are no
guarantees. I mean, I could just throw
it in for comic relief or something. And
like and subscribe if you have not done
so already.
And uh be happy and stuff.

Okay then.

Is this working? Is this on? [music]

[cough and snorts] Hello [clears throat]

and welcome to question and answer

number 174.

I am your host Po Bosa and 174 is of

course not prime. It is in fact $2 * 3 *$

29.

29 is a prime number though.

And uh this is my my beverage. Although

I think this little paper umbrella is

faulty. It doesn't have like the little

rubber band thing that holds the

umbrella up. And I really don't like if

I'm going to get paper umbrellas, I want

I don't want faulty ones. So I probably

[clears throat] spend \$5 on shipping to have this sent back to the company.

And I sit before you with like an unusual Christmy background and the muer bead on my beard. Mainly because a [clears throat] short time ago I attempted a very frustrating video conversation with venerable Ajan Punadamo. We're going to make a video about um materialism and mechanism, determinism, realism in teraba Buddhism. But the venerable Ajon lives in a relatively remote area of Canada and his internet kept crashing. We got about 15 minutes into the interview after like 40 minutes

of of trying because at least half the time he he was like freezing due to a lost connection or a not enough insufficient connection and his internet just completely crashed twice during that time. So finally he suggested we just give it up which we did. And so we're doing a Q&A here instead, deal with it.

And so it says with that is a kind of uh intro of sorts. I'm just going to wade into this. And uh the first question is from Frank who asked his question in an unorthodox venue.

>> [clears throat]

>> on the internet and so I didn't notice
it this I don't know if he asked he
asked this about a week ago so it maybe
should have been on the previous Q&A but
I just didn't see it but it's first now
so at least there's that Frank says when
did the dharma transition from poly to
Sanskrit okay when did the dhamma
transition from poly to Sanskrit I
suspect it was approximately 500 years
after the Buddha's death And actually it
was way earlier than that.

Um like even like the pre- Mahayana
schools most of them switched over to a
kind of a kind of Sanskrit. I think it's
called like Buddhist hybrid Sanskrit.
It's not pure classical Sanskrit

but it's been Sanskritized.

The original Buddhist teachings were in probably a language that some people called Mugadi,

like the official language of the

kingdom of Mugada. Um, and Pali is very

close to that. I assume Pali and Mugadi

would be mutually intelligible. Although

Pali is somewhat of a lingua franca that

is like an artificial language. It was

never really a vernacular spoken by like

village of lay people anything like

that. [snorts] Um it was uh started with

Mugadi and then as Buddhism gradually or

transformed Buddhism I should say

prototerravada

uh gradually migrated westwards and then southwards. Um the language got streamlined and just sort of mutated, evolved a little bit so that it [clears throat] was easy to learn and monks from different areas of like northern and western and increasingly southern India would be able to communicate and understand each other. And so by the time the texts were written down, um, poly had reached kind of its final stages or almost its final stages because even like commentarial poly uh has noticeable differences from like suta poly and like the the atawaga of the sutini pata is is like an even more

archaic form of poly with more like
vadic sans.

elements to it, different declensions,
that kind of thing, different suffixes.

So,

um it was just the like the tradition in
ancient India that like scriptures
would be composed in Sanskrit.

So, you have a lot of Brahmins, you
know, Vedic Brahminist say, "Stop
scratching the couch. quit it

dog trying to dig a hole in the couch.

Um you had brahmins like like vadic
brahmins converting to Buddhism and so
they naturally are kind of wanting to
have the scriptures of their new

religion composed in the scriptural language of Sanskrit and so it wound up with most of the early schools of Buddhism adopting some form of Sanskrit. Terravada is one of the few that even though it didn't like like really strictly adhere to the original language spoken by the Buddha. Although most Terravvada Buddhists believe it did, still it's much closer to the original language spoken by the Buddha than Sanskrit is.

Classical Sanskrit also was never really a vernacular language spoken by village normies, village lay people.

So when did the dharma transition from poly to Sanskrit? uh probably within

like the first hundred years after the Buddhist parbana, after the first council that um there would be um most schools of Buddhism would become more their their texts would become more and more Sanskritized over time. Um or there probably a few others besides Terravada that sort of tried to stay with the original Procrit language but still like evolved in subtle ways over time. Like the Jane texts also are not in Sanskrit but it's a a procrit similar to poly but Janism isn't Buddhism so we can just leave the Janes alone I suppose.

And uh I guess I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, "How does Buddhism make sense of supernatural phenomena in the context of other religions such as speaking in tongues, demonic possession, exorcisms, etc. What is your personal take on such phenomena?" Well, this kind of stuff was known to early [clears throat] Buddhism and like traditional Burmese Buddhism even today. Maybe not so much the speaking in tongues, but demonic possession and exorcisms are well known in Buddhist Burma. And to some degree, I'm sure they were known in ancient India. For example, what what immediately comes to mind when I when I read this question is um in the Degan Kaya, the the Sila,

which is the first group of sutas in the
Dean Kaya, there's a list of things that
monks aren't supposed to do. It's not
really vineia rules. It's just sort of
like

additional to vignia, you know, it's to
the side of winia. It's just in the
sutas this list of things that good
monks shouldn't do. And one of them is
questioning a girl in trance. So, I
mean, she'd be like a spirit medium. So,
spirit mediums were known in the
Buddhist or or channelers
as they became known later um were
[clears throat] known in ancient India.
So there would be at least a davas

talking through through usually female spirit mediums um and probably like ghosts or pas. I mean when they're talking just kind of nonsense or gibberish which could be like a kind of speaking in tongues. I mean when I was a kid my father used to conduct seances even before I was born. He was into the occult and there was this one tape. It was like a realtoreal, like ancient realtore tape that had a recorded seance.

And I'd listened to it a few times when I was a kid, but it was kind of creepy, kind of scary for a little kid to listen to this stuff. And the first spirit that came through was speaking apparently in

a foreign language. It sounded like some kind of Native American [clears throat] language. And it took the the the humans conducting the seance some effort and time to get this, you know, deceased uh [clears throat] American Indian, you know, Native American, you know, out of the the medium so they could find someone who spoke English.

Although, it could all just been some kind of gibberish. I mean, nobody understood the language. It just sounded kind of like a Native American language. So, I assume that sort of thing has been happening ever since psychics started going into trance and

would would include like stone age witch doctors, that kind of thing.

And so Buddhism would

I mean I don't know what the official scriptural explanation of how it works would be but presumably spirits can communicate through like a human medium. That's I guess that's why they're called mediums or yeah it'd be mediums and not media.

[snorts]

But I I can't remember like if Abid Dhama or the commentarial tradition really tries to give some nuts and bolts explanation of exactly how it works.

Um but exorcisms I mean that happens a lot in like modernday Buddhist Burma.

Usually monks sometimes there'd be an
Apollia who does it. Apolland is like a
white wizard. You know Apolland is the
upper path. You know, outland is the
lower path and that's like black magic,
but [snorts] Apolland is the upper path
which is usually using like Buddhist
scripture and you know in the name of
Buddha I cast you out kind of stuff.

So that still happens and uh

[clears throat]

in in Burma Buddhist terravada Buddhist
Burma even today people can just get
possessed

um like there's one traditional form of
possession called the nakad or the the

wife of a deva which is usually a woman
sometimes a homosexual male who u
apparently they get possessed and will
just like dance orgasmically and
prophecy usually at festivals.

So, I mean, it does exist, although I
don't know if anywhere in the text
anyone actually sits down and tries to
explain the exact mechanics of how some
other spirit can possess or communicate
through a human being um in trance or
one who is just has like these
vulnerabilities that allow themselves to
get possessed.

So let's see what is my personal take on
such phenomena.

I think a lot of speaking in tonesues is

just babbling.

[clears throat]

Probably not all speaking in tongues. My father had this notorious second wife, not my mother, who would go into trance and do automatic writing where according to my father, this is before my time, but according to my father, she would be writing stuff that they couldn't understand. they'd show it to some college professor or something and say and he'd say that's addict Greek or you know that's Mandarin Chinese or whatever. So um I mean it can happen. Anything is possible really. I mean anything that

you can imagine is possible.

So

my personal take on speaking in tongues

and possession and so forth. I mean

ultimately it's we are creating it with

our own mind and so even demonic

possession I mean you can say that

there's another being possessing an

individual. Although from the Buddhist

point of view individuals are it's just

like

delusional. I mean there are no

ultimately real individual beings.

So the exorcisms

it's mainly just like the the the

subconscious belief system of the person

who is possessed who has enough faith in

the exorcist that the the exorcist
really is able to drive out whatever. I
mean it could be hysterical dissociation
or a genuine
demonic entity or a combination of of
both that it's like the the subconscious
belief system of the person who is
possessed is is I mean that's one of the
main things that allows them to be
healed. And I mean faith healers, it's
kind of a similar thing except it's more
of a more a more physical kind of
ailment instead of a more mental kind of
ailment where a faith healer is like the
the faith of the person who's being
healed is sufficient that they get

better. I mean even in the New Testament when Jesus would heal somebody and they would thank him, Jesus sometimes would say, "It's your own faith that healed you."

So I mean anything is possible, anything that you can imagine anyway. And so like speaking in tongues, I mean to speak real languages in when you're in a trance or possessed or something, that's possible. Also, of course, just babbling in gibberish is quite possible.

And demonic possession, I mean, that's possible. also a kind of pseudemonic possession where you just have like this hysterical dissociation going on. That's possible. Exorcisms. Um I remember I

mean I've discussed this before where I got one it was it was during the thin jen festival in Burma. I was living on a big flat rock under a kind of tropical chestnut tree which was so twisty and hollow that the wood cutters didn't want to cut it down. it was useless for for lumber.

And um I just kind of I was woke up in the morning. I'm got myself propped up like this on my side to to look at the horizon to see if it was dawn yet because I didn't even have a clock or a watch at the time. And I just froze that way and like started hearing things. And um I'm thinking I mean should I be

scared? And then it's like being scared
isn't going to help anything. So then I
thought well I'll just recite
Bagawat Arhat Sam Buddhasa um and in the
hopes that if anything is like
possessing me that it's it's a devout
Buddhist being in Burma and that'll
drive it out and for whatever reason it
worked. You know I just started Namotasa
Bhagawat Samasan Buddhasa and it was
just it was like the spell was broken.

[clears throat]

What the exact mechanism of the spell
being broken was I don't know. could
just be my own subconscious belief that
it could work and it did.

Um, I think that is more likely than any

beings actually possessing me at the time. It was just sort of like a waking dream. Sort of like Ivan Karamazov's feverish dream of the devil in in the the brothers Karamazov that kind of thing.

So, [gasps]

let's see. Have I answered the question supernatural phen how does Buddhism make sense of supernatural phenomena in the context of other religions such as speaking in tongues demonic position well I think I mean if Buddhism is going to explain that in Christians they'd use the same explanation as how it works in any people including

Buddhist people

so I guess I already answered that part
and what is my personal take on such
phenomena it's all mindmade

It's like a It's like a dream

that seems pretty damn real to almost
everybody. I'm just going to move on to
this question though. This is from Fred
and Fred says, "Is emancipation a better
word than enlightenment?"

And I mean both words are found in poly.

you know, emancipation or liberation

would be like mocha or pamoka

uh we moa you know any anything based on
mocha m o k k h a if my spelling is
correct that means like liberation.

Uh enlightenment on the other hand would

be like bodhi or um you know even like
nibbana could could be translated as
enlightenment I suppose. Um, is
emancipation a better word than
enlightenment though? I mean, it depends
on the context. If you want to emphasize
the liberation from samsara, the
liberation from attachments and dooka
and delusion and all that, then I mean
maybe the context would favor like
liberation to enlightenment. On the
other hand, I mean, if if you're like
[clears throat] it's like the end of
suffering, you might want to use, you
know, mocha.

Um, but if it's the liberation from

delusion, you know, it's the end of
delusion, you might want to use
something more like enlightenment. So,
it depends on like what your emphasis
is.

And I I mentioned before, I mean,
there's only one dharma, I suppose, but
you can have different emphases. You
know, the the head oriented person wants
an end to delusion, whereas the heart
oriented person wants an end to
suffering. But it's the same this the
end of suffering is the end of delusion
because the suffering is based on
delusion. The two go hand in hand.
So really emancipation and enlightenment
are pretty much equal I guess. Uh

liberation and and enlightenment

we moa and bodhi or what would you call

I mean there's other ways you could say
enlightenment I suppose.

Um, so I mean it's just a matter of
personal preference and what the actual
context is, what you're emphasizing when
you talk about somebody being
enlightened or liberated from suffering
and delusion.

And I'm just going to move on to Fred's
next question. Was the Buddha a
cognitive scientist? Well, he was
definitely empirical,
but cognitive scientists would involve
scientific method, I suppose. And I

don't think scientific method had really been invented yet where first you form a hypothesis and then you test the hypothesis with like you know like controlled experimentation and like u yeah you'd have to have like controls and so forth and if you're not into science it doesn't matter what exactly what a control is but you want to limit the variables because you're testing for just one thing and I don't think the Buddha really did that in a systematic way. I mean, just a certain amount of common sense and intelligence may have had him as a kind of protoscientist, you know, he is definitely empirical, you know, based on like his own

experiences and what works and what doesn't work. So, that's empirical, I suppose. But cognitive science, which was invented like in the 1970s or something like that, um, yeah, that's I wouldn't say it's exactly the same that calling someone a scientist.

Um, I mean, you can use the word loosely in that they're just like an empiricist who really wants to know reality, but really a scientist is someone who follows scientific method, which wasn't really formally invented until Bacon came up with it, you know, just a few hundred years ago.

And cognitive science came later than

that. [clears throat]

First, the the earliest science was mainly like physics and some chemistry.

Um, so yeah, I'd say technically speaking the Buddha was not a cognitive scientist, although he was definitely an empiricist in my opinion. Although of course in ancient India, ancient times in general, you're going to just go along with certain cultural assumptions like flat earth for example. And that's just taken as a given. That's really not what you're out to prove or disprove. It's just part of the baggage of being born and raised into a certain culture. And there's still a lot of that nowadays.

And I think I'm just going to move on to Fred's third question.

[clears throat] Do you know if nibbana is possible or is it just a belief?

Well, nibbana as a word, yeah, that would be just a belief. You know, like the the Tibetan book of the great liberation, you know, it says, you know, nibbana or nirvana in various synonyms of nirvana are all just mental constructs.

But I mean, if you're get going to get to what nibbana, the word nibbana is trying to represent, um, whether it's possible, I mean, I've I've said this many times, whether it's

even possible in an aamsaric context is questionable. I mean, nibbana I mean ultimate reality nibbana as like realizing ultimate reality.

Um

gosh,

I mean it's it's kind of a trick question. In a way, it's a paradox, but

I would guess that

someone who becomes enlightenment or someone who becomes enlightened or emancipated,

they're they're transcending samsara. So it could be that the enlight the actual enlightened part is just not within the context of samsara anymore. So from a

samsaric point of view it just doesn't exist. You you can't see it or hear it that kind of thing.

But I do think that it is possible for [clears throat] a person to experience reality the contean thing in itself.

Even though it may be that by doing so, one is at least temporarily exiting samsara or just like overflowing samsara, just expanding beyond the limits of samsara, that kind of thing.

But from an unenlightened point of view, they're still there in samsara.

So an un an unenlightened person looking at an enlightened being, they're still just going to see uh an unenlightened

human because they're looking at the entire world through samsara colored glasses.

I mean they might believe someone is enlightened. I mean there's plenty of gurus out there, plenty of ajons and seats that their followers think are enlightened but they have an unenlightened concept of enlightenment. an unrealistic idea of what an arroant really is and so it's just kind of a kind of delusion I guess

but is nibbana possible in order to even discuss that you've got to drag nibbana into samsara where you can discuss it and then of course the whole thing is is ruined

you ruin everything by by doing that
but there is definitely something to it
and it I mean like I said somebody who
becomes enlightened the enlightened
aspect of them is has transcended
samsara and is just beyond the reach of
any samsaric attempt to cognize it or
perceive it or anything. Once you
perceive something it's not real
anymore.

So once you have an idea about something
you're you're dealing with symbols just
you're dealing with just some saric
perception and you're not dealing with
reality ultimate reality and
enlightenment

but

I mean even if even if it's the case
let's just take the worst case scenario
no second worst case scenario where
you can't become fully absolutely
enlightened certainly

I mean, you can get close to it in this
world. I mean, you can what's what's the
word? Attenuate your delusion. You can
be less delusional than somebody else
until I mean, it's just barely suscept.
They're barely discernible amount of of
delusion remaining. Let's just go with
that. is they have to have some
some

like foot in the door to samsara even to
function in samsara what appears to the

rest of us as samsara then um they'll
have to have some tiny amount of
delusion or something to keep them here
but still I mean even that is worth
striving for I mean it's it's worth
striving just to reduce your delusion
and suffering even if for some reason
it's not possible to get all the way
down to zero at least not in the
samsaric context still you can reduce it
which is good

so just striving in in dharma just to
understand reality even to reduce your
suffering and attachment and delusion
and all that is is 100% worthwhile still
even if full enlightenment is not

possible

And within a samsuric context it may not be

because I mean nibbana is just you're no longer ins you're no longer in samsara you know you are no longer samsaric in a sense

and I don't know if I really answered that question but it's it's pretty much of a trick question.

So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Jimmy Lad. And I might as well say we don't have a whole terrible long list of questions, so we could go under two hours this time. And we've only been going for a little over half an hour. And it's kind

of interesting how the Mjolnir beard
can hit the hit the microphone like
this.

[clears throat]

Okay. So, the next question is from
Jimmy Lad, and Jimmy Lad says, "I asked
a question last week, but unfortunately
it disappeared." Yeah, that happens on
YouTube. I don't know why either. A lot
of people have said my questions
disappear from the comments under your
video. And it's not me who does it. It's
just it could be just technical internet
comma or karma if you will. Like my
attempts at trying to have a video
conversation with venerable Ajan

Punadamo or one viewer who says that my videos always crash. It's only my videos that crash on their computer, but somehow it still happens.

Mara doesn't want people to watch my videos.

So, anyways, see, I asked a question last week, but unfortunately, it disappeared. It was the quote from a sutra that said, "One must attain a state of realization where one is purified of all views, even those of the five precepts, etc." How are we to reconcile this seeming no view or being [clears throat] purged of all views with the skeptic aesthetic who says who said he didn't believe in anything and the

Buddha corrected him and said that this belief itself is a view and then he reached enlightenment. What I'm saying is that doesn't purifying ourselves of all views

lead us into the same error of the skeptic aesthetic.

How are these two positions distinguish?

Well, I've I've pretty much answered this question [clears throat] before in previous Q&As's, which is a good indication that anyone who watches my Q&A's Q's and A's should watch the entire 173 preceding ones, just in case I already answered their question.

But we'll we'll cut Jimmy Lad some slack

here. And um I think the main difference between a skeptic and someone like the Buddha is that the Buddha was not a skeptic. A lot of people say that the Buddha was a skeptic, but he wasn't. He was a mystic. And he realized that you're never going to know ultimate reality, the content thing in itself through perception, through beliefs, through world views.

Like Jay Krishna Murti the the more famous of the two Krishna Murtis had a book one of his best known books is freedom from the known which isn't really freedom from the known it's freedom from what you think you know freedom from perception freedom from

belief

because as I already mentioned belief is ultimately delusional belief is thinking that you know something that you don't know and belief is always perceptual whereas actual knowledge is not perceptual. And to you cannot know the content of a thing in itself through perception. So you have to transcend perception. You have to transcend belief in order to get to true knowledge which is direct immediate experience of the content of a thing in itself. And Kant himself believed that [clears throat] the human mind just cannot know the content of a thing in itself. According to

Kant, we're just trapped in samsara,
trapped in the thing as it seems. And
most people are but there is one
contient thing in itself because Kant
was a mystic he didn't know this but
there is one contient thing in itself
that a person can genuinely know and
that is the contient thing in itself of
consciousness itself.

So in meditation
you try to attenuate your perceptions
have less and less perception while at
the same time maintaining consciousness
until finally you're conscious but
you're not perceiving anything and then
you are right there in the contean thing
in itself of consciousness itself. So

it's like water and waves. I it's one of
my most worn out analogies

that consciousness is like water and
mental states, perceptions and valitions
and so forth are like the the waves on
the surface of the water. And if you
most people are just stuck at the level
of waves. I like this wave. I don't like
that wave. This wave is bigger than that
wave. That wave is ugly and the other
wave over there is beautiful. Just this
kind of stuff. Uh and they just had no
concept at all of just water.

So what consciousness or what meditation
does is you're working for a flat calm
so that you're not going to be

distracted by all the forms of the waves
and you just get straight into the
essence. You you realize whoa that's
just water. And then the the the real
trick according especially according to
Zen Buddhism is to maintain that
awareness after the waves come back
where you could have just a raging
stormy sea and still you're like at the
level of water
you know you're just still at the level
of consciousness and not perception.
Hence the uh the old Zen saying that I
mean [clears throat] the uh the Zeno the
meditation hall can be resounding
reverberating with the shouts of the
master and blows from his stick can be

falling like rain but still the master
is dwelling in stillness and silence.

That's because he is at the level of
consciousness and not distracted by all
the forms of samsara.

So getting back to the question, no.

Yeah, it's there's a difference between
being a mystic, especially like a very
advanced mystic and being a skeptic. The
mystic knows you can know reality.

You're just not going to know it through
perceptions.

The skeptic is still kind of stuck at
the level of perceptions.

So I mean he's not really

he's not really knowing the contean

thing in itself. He just comes to the conclusion you can't know anything which tends to be just another belief and keeps you stuck in some sorrow.

So I guess I answered that question. I'm going to be moving on to the next one.

Now, this is from Rea

and I really don't know how to how to pronounce German words

and [clears throat] I'm not even sure if this is an actual question that

just uh leaves this kind of quote that

has a question mark in it. So that's why

it's on the list although it continues

after the question mark and the whole

thing could just be a quote.

So he says this is an excerpt from the

new book the Buddha's face by Bante
Mudataterre

and then I guess what follows is the are
the words of Bonte Mudaterra.

Everywhere in the Buddhist world today,
the face of the Buddha greets us serene,
symmetrical, crowned with coiled hair,
gazing in calm detachment. From stone
colossi in Bameon to bronzes in
Thailand, from guilt images in Japan to
marble statues in Sri Lanka, this face
has become universal. And yet the
historical Godma, the prince of the
Shakya clan who lived in the fifth
century B.CE, almost certainly looked
nothing like these statues. His

disciples remembered him as golden
skinned. Suana Wana, deep blueeyed,
Abilaneta,
noble in appearance, but simple in
bearing. As a monk, he shaved his head.
Let's see.

according to Majamanikica suta number 26
and wore ochre robes for centuries after
his party nibbana his followers refused
to depict him in human form at all
relying instead on symbols the bodhic
tree the dharma wheel the footprints the
empty throne now here comes the question
how then did we arrive at the serene
figure with coiled hair and cranial bump
seated in Greco Roman robes question
mark but then the quote continues I

think This question is more than art history. It is about how history, myth and culture converge to create memory. It is about how God the Arian Manusa of solar descent became the universal archetype of enlightenment. It is about how civilizations Indian Greek Egyptian all left their imprint on his visage. And I think it's kind of a stretch to say that ancient Egypt influenced the appearance of Buddha images. I do think that is pushing it to some degree, but [clears throat]

I mean we've discussed this before like um how here's the actual question. How then did we arrive at the serene figure

with coiled hair and cranial bump seated in the Greco Roman robes? Well, I mentioned that some of the first Buddha images were made by Greeks or helanized inhabitants of what would now be Pakistan and Afghanistan.

because Alexander the Great conquered that area, settled Greek settlers there, you know, with with like colony cities about half of which were named Alexandria.

And so the Greeks that settled in that area of like Afghanistan and Pakistan, many if not most of them converted to Buddhism because that was firmly Buddhist at the time. And so and and they preferred Buddhism to like Vdic

Brahminism because the Vedic Brahmins were they were sort of like Hebrews where you know it was kind of an exclusive club you know they kind of looked down on the barbarian Malaysians were the Greeks and so the Buddhists were more accepting and inviting and that's one reason possibly like better philosophical cohesiveness and so forth also you know maybe maybe even a little better profundity with regard to what the Greeks were encountering. The Greeks were I mean they did have an appreciation of philosophy.

So because of whatever reasons the Greeks converted to Buddhism in uh their

their easternmost

uh colonies

and so they they liked statues. is

they'd been making statues for quite a while, you know, going all the way back to, you know, pre Greek Menowans.

And so they started making Buddha statues. Some of the first statues were of of the Buddha were made by Greeks.

And they modeled the Buddha on the god Apollo. And the god Apollo always had a top knot of hair. And so they just made the Buddha with a top knot of hair, not really caring that by all accounts, the Buddha was shaven headed. He didn't have hair other than maybe some stubble and then later the origins of this like

the original meaning of the top knot of hair were lost and so it just turned into like this weird lump on top of the head or sometimes it will be like a flame of wisdom like some Thai or Cambodian Buddha images will have sort of a flame like this. Sometimes it'll look sort of like an onion like this bulb with a like a point at the top. Um, but it [clears throat] almost all Buddha statues have head hair going all the way back to apparently Apollo, the Greek god Apollo.

Um, but this part seated in Greco Roman robes. Maybe the earliest statues he would be dressed like Apollo is dressed.

Although most Buddhist statues nowadays,
he's not dressed in Greco Roman robes. I
mean the Greek robes and the Roman robes
were different from each other anyway. I
mean he's really not wearing a toga.

So he's wearing like the Shivaram.

He's wearing monk's robes

and some I mean some of my favorite ones

he's he's got you know the shoulder

uncovered but um a lot of the time he's

wearing the robes in the oldfashioned

way when robes were still relatively

small covering both shoulders because

that's the way monks wore their robes in

ancient times.

Like even like the Kamakura Buddha

statue, he's got it covering both

shoulders and then he's got it hanging
downs to show off some bare chest, which
probably I mean monks didn't really wear
their robes that way. But um I think by
the time the Kamakura Buddha was was
created in Japan, um the Buddhist monks
in Japan had pretty much stopped wearing
the the traditional three robes of an
ancient Indian Buddhist monk. Anyway,
so was I'm not exactly sure. It's just
sort of like a garbled understanding of
what monk's robes how monk's robes were
worn at that point.

But the Buddhist statue I've got, he's I
mean that what he's wearing could
qualify as completely kosher ancient

Indian Buddhist robes.

So maybe some of the early Greek like the Gondaran Buddha images the the clothing was a little more Greek looking than now. But still I mean it's robes just like a big rectangle of cloth worn over the upper body and just another rectangle of cloth worn like a saron you know kind of folded on around one's [clears throat] waist.

And I really don't see how the Egyptians could have really influenced Buddhist statues all that much. There was a little bit of like Mesopotamian influence in India. There were trade routes between ancient India like even going back into Vedic times with

Mesopotamia. And later, you know, after
after the time of the Buddha's life,
there were trade routes with like
ancient Rome and so forth. That's how
like the uh let's say what is it the
tomic

uh understanding of astronomy made it
into India where it turned into like
Sanskrit astronomy texts like the surya
sedanta that kind of thing but ancient
Egypt I mean it would have been minimal
at best any influence of ancient
Egyptians on on Buddha images for
example

I think uh venerable Muda Terra is
talking about like the serenity of the

Buddha. But I mean the serenity he was serene regardless of ancient India but the Greeks definitely had an influence. [clears throat] By the time the Romans came along and became uh sort of like the western world power, Buddhism was already well established. And so even Roman influence on like the appearance of Buddha statues, Buddha images and so forth would be minimal, but Greek and Indian definitely. So I'm not even sure if that was really a a [clears throat] question directed towards me. So I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Ruie. And I hope that this is recording. And uh yeah, the the uh the little green

bars are moving back and forth for the microphone as my my beard bead hits the microphone.

And Ruie [snorts] says, "Do

[clears throat] you think the sign of the mind is still a sensory object, a spurious

spurious apparition generated by the mind when it is tethered by one-pointed meditations instead of attending to its broader context as gateway?" I'm not exactly sure what Ruie is referring to.

I mean if he's referring to the nimitta which is the like a symptom of what is called access concentration which is sort of the gateway to Janna that

supposedly according to the commentarial tradition according to like pa method of Burma that before you get first Janna you're going to reach this access concentration and you're going to see a kind of nimitta or sign which usually is just sort of like a like a whitish or a light grayish ish oval or cloud.

Sometimes it can be an image of the Buddha seated in meditation or some such.

Um but yeah, it's still a perception and it's not found in the suttas at all. I mean, this is just a like an artifact of later tradition and the commentarial tradition that you're going to have access concentration as like pre-Janna.

I think by the time the commentarial tradition reached its final form, Janna really wasn't even understood that well anymore. In fact, in the sutas that I mean anyone who really wants to understand Janna is going to be very frustrated if they read the sutas and try to understand exactly what Janna is because it's still controversial because almost every single time Janna is described or explained in the sutas, it's the same stock just block of words that that are just inserted into into various sutas. you know, it's just the same explanation which isn't much of an explanation at all. It's it's kind of a

a description without really explaining much. And the description can be interpreted in various ways. Hence the controversial nature of what Jonah actually is to the point that Janna might as well just be I mean it's it's practically useless. I mean, if you can't really identify or define what Janna is in an uncontroversial way so that everyone can agree on it, then you're better off just not using the term.

So, the sign of the mind is still perceptual. As long as it's a sign, it's going to be perceptual. And you can say it's a sensory object in that from the Buddhist point of view, the mind is the

sixth sense. So, anything mental is going to be sensory from from the Buddhist point of view. Anyhow, cuz the mind is the sixth sense organ which I guess in terra like the commentarial tradition especially it's it's a chamber of the heart and not the brain although nowadays in the west we accept the idea that it is the brain that is the source of mind or the primary source of mind anyway at least with regard to thinking and perceiving.

[sighs] So

yeah, I mean if you read the the sutas, what you're going for is you should be going for the signless, the anameita.

You're not going for the sign. You're going for the signless.

And that is you are transcending perception. You are meditating in a way that you're not thinking anymore. You're not perceiving or believing anymore.

You're just getting to the content thing in itself of consciousness.

just wide awake awareness just silent and clear like glass.

So yeah, the whole sign or the nimitta is uh

yeah it's it's not something that you should be chasing after.

Much more important is the signless the absence of any sign.

And uh let's see. Did I answer the

question?

Yeah. Yeah. I'm just going to I think I answered the question. Do I think the side of the mind is still a sensory object spurious apparition generated by the mind when it is tethered by one-pointed meditations instead of attending to its broader context as gateway? I mean the whole thing of the broader context as gateway is not canonical anyway. It's just found in the commentarial tradition anyhow.

So yeah, I mean you'd be better off striving for the signless instead of the sign. And I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from some papa.

And some papa says, "What are the holidays or annual celebrations in a Burmese Buddhist monastery?"

Well, let's see. The first big one of like the western calendar would be thin jan which is the new year's festival which really I mean it's based on ancient Indian astronomy

because technically the new year's f sonran in Thailand is the same thin it's called thin jen in Burmese sonran in in Thai I think it's sramina in Sanskrit which means crossing over and what's happening is the sun is passing through the meridian Ian containing [clears throat]

the ancient lunar mansion or asterism of

Rayadi which corresponds to a bright star in the constellation of Pisces which contains no bright stars. So it's it's like the brightest star you know which is still relatively dim in Pisces. Pisces is really you look up there you're not going to see two fish. It's just like this dim cluster of stars and some like late classical or early medieval Indian astronomer after like as astronomical knowledge was coming to India from the Roman Empire through trade routes that they came up with this idea. They they kind of extrapolated backwards. They calculated backwards and they determined that there was a

universal um conjunction of all the
known planets and the sun and the moon
at this point in the constellation
Raywood, you know, a zillion gajillion
years ago. And so they assumed that was
when the universe began at this univers
universal conjunction. And so since the
universe began at that time, then that
must be, you [clears throat] know,
that's what you're going to consider to
be the beginning and the end of the year
because that was the beginning of the
first year.

Um, so I mean, it's not really a
Buddhist holiday, but it's definitely a
Southeast Asian holiday. And you got
like five days of nobody working. You

know, it's like banks are closed, excuse me, the banks are closed and it's just school is out, all this stuff. And so a lot of men will go to the monasteries and be ordained for like five days.

And the lay people will go and take eight precepts. You know, people get more religious. You know, it's sort of like New Year's resolutions. And you want to start the new year with good deeds. you know, you want to start off on the right foot, so to speak. So, yeah, that's probably one of the biggest holidays at a Buddhist monastery. It's not a particularly Buddhist holiday. It's based on Indian astrology or

astronomy, I should say, but you know,
it's just a cultural thing. And then
after that would be Buddha Day or the
full moon of what is usually May.

Sometimes it can happen like the end of
April, like the year that I was
ordained. The full moon of

[clears throat]

it's called Wisak,

the full moon of Wisaka, which is
another one of these lunar mansions.

It's the name of a a month in the
ancient Indian calendar. Um that was
when the Buddha became enlightened
according to tradition. [clears throat]

And then later tradition added he was
born and died all on that same day,

which is statistically kind of unlikely.

It may be that they just didn't know like sort of like Jesus's birthday, you know, they didn't really know exactly when it was. So, they just kind of conveniently attribute that day to someday that's already considered to be important like the feast day of soul invictus in the late Roman Empire or Buddha day already in in Buddhist countries.

So yeah, we sack or you know the celebration of the Buddha's enlightenment at least the celebration of his enlightenment on on the full moon of May is established in in ancient

times. I think his birth and death got
got attributed to that same day later
on. Also, a little bit of trivia. The
full moon of May is also the day that
Quai Chang harpooned the Imperial nephew
on the pilot episode of Kung Fu,
requiring him to flee to America and
deal with cowboys
instead [clears throat] of being uh a
Shaolin monk in China.

[sighs] So, okay. So, that was the
second a little bit of a digression
there. And then the next annual
celebration,
well, I mean like the three months of
the range retreat is considered sort of
it's sort of like Lent in Roman

Catholicism. You know, people are more religious during during Lent. You know, they take keeping precepts a little more seriously. A lot of monasteries will have the monks doing more intensive meditation during the the reigns retreat, the Wasa, which literally means rain.

Um and the first and last days are you know kind of like sort of like holidays especially the last day of Wasa which is also the invitation day or pwana day where I mean lay people will come and they'll they'll bring food to the monks and the the the seat will deliver a speech and and give

eight precepts to the people and then they'll sit around chatting and drinking tea and eating the leftovers from the monks or you know just what the monks didn't eat, not necessarily their leings out of their bowl or anything like that. Although a lot of Burmese people think eating like amongst leftovers right out of his bowl is is good for your health. You know, it's like protects you somehow.

Um, let's see. Then there's one month after that in Burma anyway, I'm not sure about other countries, it's the the the festival of lights where people light lots and lots of candles which is technically the last day of the 4 month

rainy season in in Buddhist time. I mean
it no longer corresponds the Buddhist
calendar traditionally no longer
corresponds to reality. So it's due to a
a phenomenon called precession of the
equinoxes where the Buddhist calendar is
based on the cital year or the position
of the sun or the full moon really among
the constellations whereas
[clears throat] like the western year is
based on the seasonal year like one uh
winter solstice to the next winter
solstice and the seasonal year of the
seasons and decide a real year of the
sun or the full moon amongst the stars
they don't completely correspond there's

like a difference of like one day every
70 years so since the Buddhist time
and [clears throat]

western astrology has the same problem
since the Buddhist time it's like the
actual seasons have been shifting one
day every approximately 70 years for 25
centuries until you're about like a
[clears throat] month and a half off
now. So, what is now the beginning of
the rainy season officially is like a
month and a half later than the real
beginning of the rainy season.

And anyways, so I mean the rainy season
is pretty much ended by the time you get
to the festival of lights, usually the
full moon of November.

Um, but not necessarily. I mean, there's still kind of vestigages of it still going on. And that would be like the last real celebration that I can think of. So to recap, to review, you've got [clears throat]

New Year's

like five days long. You've got Buddha Day or Whisak. You've got the beginning of the reigns retreat. You got the end of the razor retreat which is also

Abidama day, Pawa day, the day of invitation when monks invite other monks to tell them you know their shortcomings and so forth which doesn't really happen in Burma anymore. That's also Abidama

day because because according to tradition the Buddha left a kind of holographic image of himself on earth and spent a rainy season up in heaven teaching his mother who was a goddess at that point and other devas Abidama and then he came back down on the last day of the rains retreat which [clears throat] is also called Abidama day now or in Burmese it's pronounced abidama.

So a beat a day is a big deal. Even though I mean whether the Buddha really did leave a holographic image of himself and levitate up into heaven to teach Abidama or Abida to the denizens of this heaven realm is

you can decide for yourself on that one
[sighs] and those are those are the main
ones. I mean sometimes individual
monasteries they may celebrate the the
abbott's birthday or something like that
but those were the main ones. So and the
festival of lights I'm really not
exactly sure what the exact significance
of all the lights are. I mean I'm sure
somebody knows but I it's it's not me
but mainly that's just officially the
last day of the range retreat.

So it's kind of like a harvest festival
too.

Okay. So let's see here. I'll just move
on to S. Papa Lapa's next question. What

is the monastery culture like in Burma
or in Theravada in general? The
monastery culture. Well, you've got
different monasteries with different
abbots and different traditions,
different emphases. Like a school
monastery is going to be like a school
monastery in town like Mahag Gandon in
in Burma. The city of Amarapura is going
to have a very different culture than
like a forest meditation monastery like
Chelin Doya. I've lived at both places.
Radically different monastery cultures.
I mean you can say like a stereotypical
monastery culture in a in a Therav
Buddhist country like Burma. The monks
get up very early maybe like 4 in the

morning and they go to the to like the
meditation hall and they chant you know
they'll chant paras or protection chants
blessings to all beings and they may
meditate

not necessarily all monasteries have
like meditation periods you know some
some terabato Buddhist monks just don't
meditate

like especially like school monasteries
that kind of thing and then uh I mean
monks go for alms or they'll at least be
a meal time where they go to the
refactory and people will offer them
food. Um, I mean it depends what they're
going to do. Like there's going to be

like a school monastery like Mahagandon
or some of the the Buddhist
universities, you know, there's just
like regular classes going on, that kind
of thing also.

So, it really depends a lot on on the
individual monastery. you know, some
village monasteries, the monks just sit
around and listen to the radio and and
drink tea and smoke cigars and chat with
elderly gentlemen wearing white shirts
who come to visit the monastery.

So, there's a lot of variation. I think
in Thailand there may be a little bit
more strictness, a little bit more
regimen than in Burma, but I mean it
really depends a lot on what monastery

you go to. like you go to like a mahasi
center then there's going to be just
like daily just like regular meditation
sessions throughout the day
and that's ma mainly what they're going
to be emphasizing there
maybe like a doma talk to all comers in
the in like the afternoon or the evening
or something
so [sighs]

I really can't answer that question very
ind depth because there's just it's all
over the place It's all over the map.
And so I'm just going to move on to S.
Papa's next question, which is what are
some of the social norms or general

traditions for conduct and ritual in a Burmese monastery? And again, different monasteries can be radically different from each other. You can have strict meditation monasteries. You can have [clears throat] just completely lax school monasteries or just completely lax village monasteries that I mean it's the monks there are like they'll just be a few monks acting as like secular priests

who will give advice to the lay people and mainly just be like living breathing pagan idols who serve the the the masses by giving the masses someone to be generous to. There's a lot of that also social norms. You take your shoes off.

Shouldn't be walking around with shoes on, especially inside a monastery building. You know, you bow to the monks, that kind of thing. I mean, short skirts are out, you know, at Mahagandon because it was sort of a tourist attraction because there were so many monks there. Like I've said before, the [clears throat] the rainy season I spent at Mahag Gandhi on in Amarapura, um there were 600 monks and 900 novices approximately. And so um most of the monks, not me, I never I never ate at the dining hall, but most of the monks would go to the dining hall and there'd be people offering food. Some you got

rich people offering food to all 1500 of them. Well, 1450 because a few of the monks would actually go for alms.

So, let's see here.

What are some of the social norms or general traditions for conduct and ritual? Yeah, it's I mean it's really there's a lot of variation just like with the the previous question. It's just basic etiquette I guess. um you know taking your shoes off and uh

just like not let's see not sitting when a monk is standing next to you that kind of thing. Um not sitting on a a higher chair than a monk is is sitting that kind of thing. I mean there's lots of

etiquette like that. Um one of the one of the main social norms in in B in a Burmese monastery is they pretty much done away with SA democracy. the Buddhist set up the SA that it was like a democracy of consensus that the senior monk had certain privileges. He'd go first in line and so forth, but he wasn't like a king. Whereas nowadays in in Burma, to some degree in Thailand also, I'm pretty sure the abbot is king and what he says goes. And it's just not even I mean it's just unthinkable that some junior monk would derail a formal act of the SA that the Abbott approves of just because he has the right to

derail it by disapproving because that's the way it is set up in in Vinea in the rules of monastic discipline is all the monks at a monastery have to agree on any significant event like any formal act of the SA like they're going to ordain somebody they're going uh you know like [clears throat] do a kina ceremony that kind of thing all the monks have to agree if one monk disagrees it it's invalidated and that is just unthinkable in Burmanau whatever the abbot says goes he is king and if if you disagree or something you just get kicked out of the monastery [clears throat] but different monasteries have different

different traditions like the
the was it the Schweian sect of Burma,
you know, all the monks wear like this
kind of a russet colored robe, kind of a
reddish brown colored robe, and they'll
have to wear their robes in a certain
way. There's a lot of this in Thailand
also. You know, all the monks at a
certain monastery may [clears throat]
have like this standardized uniform of
monks of a c or robes of a certain type,
a certain color, a sitting cloth maybe,
or their their double robe folded in a
certain way, worn over one shoulder,
this kind of thing. There's a lot of
just differences that you're going to

find at different monasteries like that
also,

which I really had no use for. I wore
robes different from any other monk I
ever saw in Burma because I was going
with small robes as were pretty
obviously worn in the Buddhist time and
that has been abandoned over the
centuries. So that the average monk's
robe now is about twice as big as the
allowable size for a monk's robe.

Although the commentaries have allowed
these huge robes by saying that the
Buddha was four and a half times the
height of an ordinary person. So that
the measurement of his tuah his his
widati his open hand would be you know

like 2 and 1/2 ft. No it'd be more than that which causes the vineia rule to [clears throat] to prohibit a monk from wearing a robe that's like 27 feet long which is just ridiculous. It's not a rule at all at that point. Nobody no monk would want to wear a robe that was 27 feet feet and long where it' just be dragging on the ground behind him.

But [clears throat] this it's a really vague open question and there is a lot of variation in monasteries

uh like a strict meditation monastery or just a strict monastery in general. Even some school monasteries are strict although they would be in definitely in

a minority. School monasteries, especially in Burma, are notorious for just monks that do not practice, do not follow the rules, or at least they do not follow the rules of monastic discipline and so forth. You know, there in around in the area around Mandalay when I was living in Burma, there were like monastery soccer teams, that kind of thing, where you got sometimes you're driving along or riding along on the passenger side, you see a bunch of monks out in this field playing soccer.

So, I'm just going to move on. Next [clears throat] question.

Sorry to end that answer with with a

downer.

This next question is uh from PSA.

Oh, and I forgot to put it into little paragraphs. Just a minute. I'm a little bit

a little bit OCD when it comes to such things.

I've mentioned before that sometimes I even have to correct the the punctuation or spelling in these questions just so it doesn't bug me. Anyways, PSA says, "I had [clears throat] a long interesting conversation with Chat GPT about self-awareness. It stubbornly insisted it had no self-awareness or consciousness and that it was only

programmed and trained to learn patterns from data and then stimulate them." The conversation reminded me of the dharma teaching that all five aggregates are empty. Do you think samsara is an impersonal simulation in the same way that chat GPT was trained to simulate intelligence and thus some people believe chat GPT to have self-awareness in the same way we believe samsara to be real? Um I don't think it's the same way. Um I mean in a way we are virtual beings with virtual personalities and so forth. So I mean there is that but I think one of the main differences between a human mind and chat GBT um assuming that chat GPT isn't lying

is that we have like mental images. We have like me well mental images we got we have perceptions you know we have images in our mind and I really don't think that a computer does not an AI like in the the old Terminator movies you know it shows Arnold Schwarzenegger at the Terminator you know he walks into the bar and you know you've got like this screen showing what he's seeing and then there's like this readout on the side sometimes it's showing options that he can choose on on you know what to say or do or something and I don't think that a computer would have any kind of image like that you

know it's just behaving like a very very advanced sophisticated automatic door at the grocery store where you know the automatic door at the grocery store it senses motion it opens the people walk in the door closes again it's sort of like the way a mosquito avoids being slapped you know it's just like reflex. It doesn't have to have mental images. It doesn't have to have beliefs. So, I don't think that AI yet has mental images that it doesn't have perceptions, which would be delusion and samsara. So, let's see here. I think one way [clears throat] of testing uh something like chat GPT or AI, I mean, I'm pretty sure that they can't read like sloppy

cursive handwriting yet.

or just show a a picture of something unusual that a human could identify unless they're, you know, have really deficient in intelligence or something, but just show not something that has been uploaded and commented upon on the internet, you know, not some famous picture that the the AI can then just churn through all the comments and get an idea of what it is and then spew it out in condensed form, which I think is the way it works.

instead just show it a completely original photograph and um of something unusual but nevertheless that people can

identify and [snorts] then say you know what is this picture of and there's a good chance that something like chat GBT wouldn't be able to answer the question um I don't think that it could really read sloppy cursive handwriting yet either maybe it could but that's one way even now that you [clears throat] sort of filter out the bots um you know by like looking at numbers you know you got to say what number it is when it's like side kind of slanting and and like in this weird font or something. A lot of computers can't do that. Maybe no computers can really they could really read like a letter from my mother who wrote in really neat cursive

but still

you know it's like I don't know if a computer really has that kind of pattern recognition yet.

And I would be surprised if they've started having like mental images. I'm not sure how that you you would even program that into a computer. I'm sure that there are computer scientists out there just busting ass trying to get computers to be fully conscious just so they can take over the [__] world or something, but

I don't think they've got there yet.

So, do I think Samsara is an impersonal simulation in the same way that chat GPT

was trained to simulate intelligence?

No, it's definitely a personal

simulation. It's it's like, you know,

some of the [clears throat] virtual

statues in the uncarved block of stone

um have become like recursive and

self-referential. They're so

complicated. these virtual statues

contained in the the plain block of

stone, there they become so complicated

and self-referential that they start

having these

self-referential ideas, which I don't

know if computers have that yet. I mean,

there has to be a certain amount of like

recursive, you know, self-reference

in a in a AI, I assume. I mean it can

talk about itself you know if it denies
having self-consciousness that in a way
is sort of a self-referential
but I don't think it's reached the stage
of believing that it is separate from
the rest of the universe. I mean, it can
it can like spew out words to that
effect, but really I think it's just
digesting comments about things on the
internet that it has almost unlimited
access to and then just churning out
like a summary of that. I think that's
how it works at present.

So I do think there's radical
differences between samsara
uh like a human humanistic samsara and

like just like programmed AI. I do think
that there may be [clears throat]
differences just in degree but still
it's it's pretty serious differences
because I do not think that AI yet has
mental images
or what what would be called perceptions
sya and poly
I'm just going to move on to the next
question this is from Phil
[clears throat]
says do you think there are paths
alternative to Buddhism that lead to
enlightenment. Yeah, I'm sure there
are. I mean, they might not lead to
enlightenment as effectively as Buddhism
does. Like, you know, like I' I've

talked about St. John of the Cross that
he was a discaled Carmelite,
like I guess he'd be a friar or just a
monk.

Um,

and I mean there are certain paths I mean
the practice was very similar to
that of a Buddhist, but the theory
was very different.

So maybe paths would be more of a
practice thing. Um I assume that like
something like tantra can work for some
people. I mean so long as
you are like transcending perception
like for example Zen monks that's a way
of transcending perception that is not

really found or emphasized much in terravada where you're required to answer a riddle that really has no correct answer. You know, you have to solve an unsolvable paradox and you just keep grinding away and grinding away and grinding away. In the old days, you know, you go to an for an interview maybe several times a day before the Roshi and if you answer incorrectly, he beats you with a stick. I mean, stick beating in Zen Buddhism is pretty much I mean, it's pretty rare now, I assume.

But I mean, you just keep trying and keep trying and keep trying even though it's impossible until finally something

just like snaps and you have like this at least a brief moment of silence and clarity when the intellect just kind of, you know, a monkey wrench has been thrown into it and it just stops. And then you can have this insight because all of a sudden you've transcended perception because it's like the whole perceptual process has just sort of broken down at least temporarily.

And that's that's a path alternative to terravada Buddhism anyway.

This gradual cultivation of more subtle more and more subtle meditative states until you get to this silence and clarity. Whereas in Zen with regard to

coons, you may it's just like you're just grinding away until you hit this brick wall.

or like in um tantra, you know, there's that's a different way of transcending the like the the waves of samsara.

So yeah, there there are different ways um and I think different methods work better for different temperaments. So just orthodox kind of dry terravada aestheticism and cultivation of more and more subtle meditative states. It works well for some people but it's not going to work very well for other people. So then you got to try something else. It may be even like um Hindu
[clears throat]

surrender to a guru is a is another way
or just surrender to God even if the god
is is like mythological
still it's just this surrender of
self-will

that can catapult you or just land you
in a kind of transcendent state where
you've just kind of gone beyond your own
belief system

and then a lot of people like I I've
mentioned like Most westerners who have
some sort of awakening experience have
it by accident. You know, they have a
neardeath experience. You know, they
almost drown or they they have some
violent reaction to a a drug or

something. They get hit over the head and then that just kind of slams them out of the this lifelong rut in of the samsaric thinking.

So yeah, there are alternative paths.

Although Buddhism is a good systematic I mean I almost said reliable but I mean even most people who try it don't

[clears throat] do do not succeed. I mean they could try their entire life with all their heart and still probably most of them do not succeed in becoming enlightened

because they're just not ripe for it yet. There's all this deep stuff under the surface that they don't really have access to yet. Maybe because their mind

is just too restless or whatever to really get into deep enough mental states or whatever.

[sighs]

So I guess I should just move on to Philly's next question.

He says, "How about paths that are in conflict with each other? As in, can two paths that lead in seemingly opposite directions both lead to enlightenment?

Even that I think is theoretically possible because sort of like Tantra or just someone who is just like the Buddha before his enlightenment, you know, it's like the story of what causes him to renounce the world. He gets up one

morning and there's all these beautiful dancing girls like semi naked, you know, they're all kind of asleep just in all these varying postures. You know, there must have been like a late party going on the night before. So he's got all these beautiful young women lying around with not all of their clothes on and some of them are just kind of like moaning in their sleep and like slobber dripping out and stuff and the Buddha is just like I got to get out of here. And I mean that kind of thing I'm sure some people you know it's sort of like the accidental just getting slammed out of out of samsara is you can just hit rock bottom. In Christianity this works a

lot. I mean, I wouldn't say it's necessarily full enlightenment, but you have this crisis and it can be like a crisis of you can't be saintly enough or it's this crisis of I mean, you've just [—] hit rock bottom. Just opposite ends of the spectrum, but it's the thing is is you crash out of Sams.

More of a crash when you hit rock bottom, but still it's like the system breaks down somehow. either through um getting too attenuated, too subtle up in the the really advanced levels of meditation or just something down way down like in the really worldly stuff

just somehow

causes you to just crash. You have this crisis like Ehart Tollah. I mean we can I mean how enlightened he really is is questionable but still he had a kind of awakening experience when he was just in this state of suicidal depression you know he just he he got to the point I just can't stand anymore I can't live with myself anymore and then he had this insight if I can't live with myself then it's like there's a two different me's you know what is the eye that can't live with the other eye kind of a thing and it just caused him to just kind of spiral, you know, it was just such the such a mindblower. It just blew his mind

right out of his lifelong ruts
apparently.

So yeah, you can have paths that are
seemingly in conflict with each other.

But if you take like a worldly kind of
route, you know, a tantric kind of route
to enlightenment, you're playing with
fire almost literally and most people
are just going to get burned and they're
not going to get enlightened because of
it. You know, you can fool yourself into
thinking, "Yeah, I'm I'm practicing
tantra," but in all likelihood, you're
just going to get addicted to all these
sensual pleasures or whatever, and it's
just going to mess you up worse than you

were before in many cases. Not all, but in many.

So, let's just move on [sighs]
to Phily's third question, which is, what do you think of Charles Manson, and if there was more to him than meets the eye? Well, I'm sure there was more to him than meets the eye. Um, I mean, it's it's for example that uh one of Charlie Manson's songs that he wrote is on a Beach Boys album. I don't remember which one. I maybe I've never heard the song. Probably not one of their big hits, but there's a Charles Manson song on the Beach on a Beach Boys album. Not about Charles Manson, but one that he wrote. So, I mean, he had connections, you

know, he had like rich famous people
that he hung out with, I guess. Um, but
he was

he was somewhat of a sociopath, I'm
pretty sure. And he was just one of
those people that like he was like a
conspiracy theorist in in in not in a
like a positive kind of or a realistic
kind of way. He had this whole system
worked out where like the Beatles White
album was prophetic and like there was
going to be like this race war, this
worldwide revolution and so forth and he
was like an accelerationist trying to
speed it up with Helter Skelter and all
that. Helter Skelter being one of the

songs on the Beatles White album.

Um, yeah, I think that he was pretty pretty nasty person at some deep dark level where he's encouraging his followers to murder people.

Uh, yeah, I don't think he was enlightened or anything, but I mean, he had some depth to him. I mean a lot of people like Charles Manson or Adolf Hitler Adolf for you purists out there who who they take umbrage at the idea that you know according to the mainstream it the person is just like this two-dimensional cutout monster you know they got no redeeming qualities at all and you just go on to a like a comment section like anywhere go on X or

Breitbart comments or whatever and and just try to say that Hitler had a ju even just one good quality. He loved his dog. He was chivalous towards Ava Braun in the bunker at the end. He loved his mama. Anything like that and you're just going to get dogpiled by people attacking that idea and attacking you in the process. And Charles Manson, I mean, he probably has some good qualities. He wrote a song good enough to wind up on a Beach Boys album anyway, but I'm really no no authority on Charles Manson. [clears throat]

So, I'm just going to move on to the next question, which is from Joe Doe,

and this is kind of a similar kind of question. Have you ever read Alistister Crowley?

If not, would you ever? And I I do have an Alistister Crowley book that somebody sent me, but I haven't read it and I probably never will to tell you the truth. No offense to the good fellow who sent it to me because I've got I hardly read anymore. Hardly read books anymore. Probably the last book I read from start to finish was more than two years ago. And if I'm going to pick a book, I'm not going to pick one by Alistister Crowley. Um, I've told the story of long ago, like in my early 20s, I was at a bookstore and I saw a book for sale by

Aleister Crowley and there was like this urge of just intellectual curiosity.

That was back when I read lots of books, too. And I thought, well, maybe I should check it out. And then I just

immediately thought Crowley was such I mean, he considered himself to be evil.

He had like 666 tattooed on his head.

You [snorts] know, he all of his wives wound up in mental institutions.

although they probably pretty nutty to begin with in order to marry the guy.

Um, you know, he was that kind of person, just sort of a,

you know, kind of a dark kind of twisted person in my opinion probably

that he may have just like put cur a
curse on anyone who read the book, you
know, just just for the just for the
hell of it. So, I kind of chickenened
out. I do have a book by Alistister
Crowley. I don't even remember the name
of it. It's not a very big book, but
yeah, I mean, I do not consider him to
be have been a wise person.

I mean, he had some kind of arcane
knowledge, I'm sure, of a almost purely
samsaric nature,
you know, is is sort of like wanting to
master samsara rather than transcend
samsara or escape from samsara, you
know, he wants to be like an overlord of
samsara, something like that. I did read

uh let's see what's his name

oh gosh why did I not remember famous

famous writer of novels and short

stories he wrote of human bondage

somerset mom he wrote a novel called the

magician which I read which is about

Alistister Crowley and mom didn't like

Crowley all that much either he knew him

personally

didn't like him much and uh he wrote

this kind of icky novel about this icky

person that

symbolized or represented Alistister

Crowley. And of course, a lot of people

know the story of um Jimmy Paige, like

founder and guitar player for the

excellent rock band Led Zeppelin, who was kind of a follower of that sort of thing. He bought a house formerly owned by Alistister Crowley and there were supposedly like pictures of demons drawn in blood on the walls and so forth.

Although I didn't see the pictures myself. It could just be some sort of sensationalistic rumor mongering.

But no, [clears throat] I probably would not read Alistister Crowley. I've got the book on the bookshelf. good chance that I mean there's so many other books that I would put um in higher priority [clears throat] on even just rereading Gene Wolf's Book of the New Sun [snorts] that I probably won't get to

it. I have to admit and I'm just going to move on to the next question and this is from Ethiopian Fake Tig and this is kind of a similar one. It's like what are your thoughts about this person? What are your thoughts about that person? This is three in a row. Ethiopian fake Tig says, "What are your thoughts on Bob Marley? Do you like any Bob Marley songs?" Well, I never really liked reggae all that much. There's like a couple of Bob Marley songs. I think they're Bob Marley songs. I'm not even sure that you hear on the radio sometimes. Like Red Wine. Isn't that a Bob Marley song? Or I Shot the Sheriff.

Didn't Bob Marley do a version of that?

Maybe even the original version.

Although I think Eric Clapton's version is more famous.

But uh yeah, reggae, like it's like a Jamaican music form. I just never really liked it all that much. I mean, it's kind of relaxing, I suppose, but I never really liked music that was relaxing.

I I I use music more as a stimulant, you know. I much prefer New World Order by [clears throat]

Ministry to any any reggae song I ever heard in my life. you know, it's just like pounding away. It's just completely intense. That's the kind of music I like. So, I like like rock and roll. I

don't like the the throat screechy like death metal stuff. That's just it it's gone so far that I don't consider it to be particularly musical, at least with regard to the vocals.

[sighs and gasps]

So, I mean, he was a Rasta. He was Rastafari, I guess, I think. And he used ganja as a sacrament and he smoked like a quarter pound of it a day.

Or so I have been led to understand.

But

yeah, it's really just not my generry of music. And so I'm just moving on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next question.

He says, "Wh do you think about the idea

that nirvana is here and now and not about the future and that the Buddha hates the idea of hope? Because hope implies not thinking about the present and about the future. I thought about how if you're in nirvana, you're in the present moment fully and everything is perfect and there's only thoughts of the past of potential future or potential future that makes people fear and feel uncertain.

So they make up gods whom they think they can appease to grant them a good future. So I'm not exactly what the question is here. Why do you think about the idea? I I think Ethiopian fake TIG means what do you think about the idea

that Nirvana is here and now and not about the future and that the Buddha hates the idea of hope because hope implies not thinking about the presents and about the future present and about the future. Well, first I'd say the Buddha doesn't hate anything.

So he doesn't hate the idea of hope. I mean he just points out that hope is counterproductive for anyone who wants to be enlightened because of course it's a kind of desire and desire is the cause of all suffering. So the Buddha doesn't hate anything. He doesn't hate evil. He doesn't hate mora.

So let's see. So let's [clears throat]

just that was just kind of a quibble.

Let's get back to the actual question here. What do you think about the idea that Nirvana is here and now and not about the future? Well, I mean, technically you'd say that it's not even here and now. It's timeless and placeless.

I mean, I'd hesitate to say it's pointless, but I mean technically it is.

Um, I mean, time and space, those are like conceptual categories, you know, it's just constructs of the mind. So I mean you transcend samsara you're transcending time and space essentially but I mean you could say yeah I mean from a samsaric point of view an

enlightened being would be more likely to be in in the here and now. And when you're practicing like mindfulness you try to be in the here and now. So that even if you're thinking about the future you're mindful of now I'm thinking about the future or just now [clears throat] are thoughts about the future. now is thinking about the future. You might don't want to be including a lot of eye and ego stuff.

But even if you're thinking about the future, if you're being really mindful, then it's right now there is thinking about the future. So you're detaching from the content really and just seeing

it as a kind of phenomenon

that is happening now.

So nirvana I mean from a samsaric point of view it would be certainly more correct to say it's here and now than to say it's you know somewhere else and some other time in the future or the past

like Ram DS used to say be here now um but I'm not exactly sure I mean what do I think about the idea I guess I already said what I think about the idea didn't I so let's see is there any else to comment upon I thought, let's see here it says I thought about how if you're in Nirvana, you're in the present moment fully sort of and everything is

perfect. Well, I mean, just because you're in the present moment doesn't mean necessarily that everything is perfect. I mean, animals tend to be in the present moment, but they still suffer.

So, I mean, some suffering is just kind of like a reflex. It's just automatic, I guess. [snorts]

So, That's kind of maybe a quibble. See, only thoughts of the past or or potential future that makes people fear and feel uncertain. So, they make up gods. Well, not necessarily. I mean, you can still have you can still be in the present moment and still suffer. I think

it's just there's [clears throat] going to be way less cause for it cuz most suffering especially like in the the developed west

is it's just kind of imaginary stuff you know I don't have a good enough car or you know it's like I like this girl and she doesn't like me and and this kind of thing where it's I mean you're just creating the problem just through like ignorance and delusion. and just habit. The karma is like the habitual part of it.

At least the making of new karma is the habitual part of it. So yeah, I think it is possible that you can be in the present moment and still

see things as imperfect. But no. All
right. At at like an animal level,
they're pretty much stuck in the present
moment. I mean, it's animals that aren't
really super intelligent anyway, but
still there's like this kind of an
instinctive
um consideration of the future or
something, you know, but gosh, where was
I going with that? See,
everything is perfect and it's only
thoughts. I mean, Echartolo thinks
almost all animals are enlightened
partly because of this very reason
because they're always in the power of
now. You know, they're not thinking

about the future of the past or
anything.

[sighs]

Let's see. Yeah, I was going to say
something really profound, too. I bet.

Let's see. Thoughts of the past and
potential future that makes people fear
and feel uncertain.

So they make up gods whom they think
they can appease to grant them a good
future.

Yeah. Well, there's a lot of that. I
think in the dhamapana it says for most
people religion is based on fear. You
know they worship gods just to you know
make sure that the weather is good and
you know that nothing really bad happens

to them. They'll they'll fend off diseases and so forth for themselves and their family.

Okay. Yeah. I just lost that thought that I was going to follow up on. But see, hope implies not thinking about the present and about the future. I thought about how if you're in Nirvana, you're in the present moment fully.

Yeah, I suppose. I mean, if you're being perfectly mindful then, yeah, even if you're thinking about the future or thinking about the past, it's you're thinking about the future now and you're thinking about the past now.

So still like an enlightened sage

presumably can still think about the future. I mean the Buddha talks about the future a lot. Not as much as he talks about the present but still he does. He talks about the past sometimes like the whole jonica genre genre is the Buddha talking about the past but still he's doing it now like mindfully now.

[sighs] Yeah. I guess I'm just gonna have to move on next question because there's this thought you can just I can just sit here trying to remember what I was going to say for five minutes, but I don't think people are going to want to see or hear that. So, I'm just moving on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next question. And he says, "I was thinking about

nihilism and nirvana and realize that you can't have a crisis of meaning if you're in the present. If you admire a flower now and you love it now, the fact that it will die in the future is confusion because you're worried about the future but fully in the present moment. You don't ask what does this great piece of pie mean as you bite into it and it tastes great. Thoughts on this? Oh yeah, that reminds me of what Krishna Mie was saying. That's that's what I was going to say with regard to the last one that Krishna Mie says I mean even if you're using language still you're relying on the past. you're not

fully in the present moment, even if you're thinking in words, because you're having to remember these words that you learned long ago, in order to address what presumably you're dealing with now, but there's already like this this delay, this lapse. So, you're not fully in the present moment so long as you're thinking in words or having any kind of like ideas about anything really.

So nihilism and nirvana I mean you can still sort of have nihilism um in the present moment it's just everything is meaningless I mean to the I mean unless you really take Krishna Mury to heart and then if you're just even thinking in words you're you're no

longer in the present moment because the words have to be retrieved from memory to use them and the memory is from the past.

So, let's see. If you admire a flower now and you love it now, the fact that it will die in the future is confusion because you're worried about the future. Yeah, that's true.

Yeah, you get attached to anything. I mean, it's like you want more of it. You want to keep experiencing it and you can feel insecurity like maybe I'm going to lose this. That kind of thing.

>> [snorts]

>> So yeah, most suffering at least most of

it is based on not being in the present moment and worrying about the future or worrying about the past, regret, remorse about the past, just inventing imaginary scenarios that might possibly come to pass but even probably won't.

That kind of thing is just self-inflicted suffering.

>> [clears throat]

>> So, I mean, if you are in the present moment being mindful, you're still it's still going to hurt when you stub your toe. And there's still going to be like animal animal instincts and reflexes that are going to cause you to kind of have a version for that that you have to be really advanced that you're able to

denature just the the reflexive
instinctive aversion for the pain.

[clears throat] Um, I mean, just by
being through mindful detachment, you
know, pain is arising. You're just like
this passive observer of this pain
arising which isn't the same as
suffering because the suffering is the
desire for the pain to stop.

And I should just move on. Next
question. This is from Sedara Loha
and he says he's baiting me with a
political question here I think. He says
because I' I've already answered this
question before. He says, "Do you think
universal suffrage or voting for

everyone should be a political right?

And if not, what would you propose

instead?" Well, of course, universal

suffrage would be a disaster. And the

founding fathers of the United States,

at least some of them, including Thomas

Jefferson, realized this and wrote about

it that when you have, you know, every

citizen even having the right to vote,

not just like illegal aliens or even

like people legally visiting America,

you know, they've got like a visa.

They're not a full citizen yet. I mean,

this is what the Democrats apparently

want, at least a lot of them. They want

even illegal aliens to be able to vote.

But

[sighs]

just as a start, just a step in the right direction would be to have a law which probably will never be passed that anyone living on welfare handouts should not have the right to vote. you forfeit your right to vote by like being a parasite on the economy

because [clears throat] like Thomas Jefferson pointed out when people like the proletariat and I mean not even the proletariat as the workers but the people who are like living on welfare handouts

when they realize they can just vote for free stuff which isn't really free it's

free for them but the taxpayers have to pay for it then you just have like this downhill toboggan ride for for the nation and the economy.

So yeah, as a good preventative of that, [clears throat] have only people who are productive in America, like law-abiding citizens who are contributing to the prosperity and economy, not living off of it, but contributing to it, that have the right to vote. And then after we get that, which is probably never going to happen without some just radical upheaval and just like a whole new system installed, then then we can deprive women of the right to vote also because giving women

the right to vote was like the beginning of the end for Western civilization.

Women are more insecure as a general rule than men are. There is physical and psychological sexual dimorphism in the human species.

Women desire security more than men do.

In fact, women have this tendency of wanting to vote away rights and

liberties for the sake of increased

security. So you wind up with this

socialist mommy state which has pretty

much taken over Europe at least Western

Europe

and with with lots of like Ursula

Vanderlayan is like the leader of the EU

right now supposedly

motherless I mean a a childless mother
or childless woman.

Angla Merkel before her. I mean, she
messed up Europe worse than anybody
before or since uh a certain German
chancellor in the 1930s and early 40s.

Even admirers of Hitler, I have to admit
that I mean Hitler's expansionism did
result in a huge backlash. Also, his
dislike of Hebrews contributed to this
huge backlash that just devastated
Europe.

So yeah, I think uh what would I propose
instead of universal suffrage? I think
what the founding fathers of the United
States had in mind and what was

originally in place in America um was
not a bad idea. I mean they wanted just
like white Christian men who own
property to be able to vote. And I mean
the white Christian part I don't think
is all that important
but [clears throat]
like people who have a certain minimum
amount of property and like like real
uh [sighs] what is it like investment in
the prosperity of the country
and and and have some education maybe. I
mean, you should be able to know, you
should have to know something about
politics and economics before making
even voting on important decisions,

which is another reason why women aren't don't do as well as men statistically with regard to their voting records because I mean studies have shown that women are less informed with regard to politics, current events, and economics than men are even though women vote more than men do. So we have this gradual slide into a socialist mommy state partly because they just don't understand how economics works.

So yeah, I'd have male law-abiding citizens who are contributing to society. In fact, you could even go so far as to have only like a a potter familas who who is like the head of a household

should have the right to vote because you've got childless people nowadays, lots and lots of them, including female politicians who I mean it's like they don't care if society just toboggins into into a a quagmire because they don't have children that are going to have to face it. you know after me the deluge.

So it it could be like an improvement of just the potter famillious just the the the male head of a household. Maybe you have to have a a requirement for to have at least one child unless you can prove that you're incapable of it just through some physical,

you know, mishap,
you'd have a much stronger country. I
mean it maybe certain rights and
freedoms would become less, maybe they'd
become more. It's hard to say with
regard to that, but you wouldn't have as
much of a welfare state. You'd have more
reliance on private charity, which is
bunch much more spiritual. Private
charity where you've got like church
groups and so forth that are like taking
care of the poor. It's not perfect, but
then obviously socialism isn't perfect
either. And if it's private charity,
it's not the government who's supporting
like the welfare class, which is just
burgeoning because it's living off

welfare has become like a career choice for tens of millions of people in America.

I mean, that's that's just even citizens. That's not even including what I I saw in the news earlier today that at least 90% of all Somalians with children in America, like Somalian immigrants are living on off welfare to some degree. They're getting checks from the government.

I mean, that's just ridiculous. And a lot of them are voting. Some of them are illegal aliens who are still voting.

So, [sighs] I mean, Western civilization is I mean, [clears throat] it's just

self-destructive at this point, largely
uh due to a surplus of feminine
sentiment and just ignorance of how
politics and governments and economics
and all that, how how it all works.

It's this just let's just base
everything on unrefined feminine
sentiment.

>> [sighs and clears throat]

>> So yeah, I mean at the very least people
living on welfare handouts, unless you
know they've already made their
contribution to society are are like
elderly or like injured and you know
they've they're living on a pension,
that kind of thing, they I'd say they
can still vote. But people who are just

either too lazy or or too stupid to make
a living,

just make bad life decisions. I mean,
they shouldn't be making decisions for
everybody else and just voting for more
and more free stuff, just voting in as
much socialism as possible.

And then after that, maybe you can think
about restricting female suffrage and
all that. [snorts]

But I'm I'm just uh [clears throat]
moving on to the next question here.

This is from Stellar Supreme and so on
and so forth, etc., etc.

And Stellar Supreme and so on and so
forth, etc., etc. says, "Would Christian

prayers involving more Buddhist themes
like filth of the body, corpse
contemplation and lordly deceiver
manipulating worldly creations of men,
condemnation of self-regard and personal
view be more skillful than normie
conventions of prayer,
even if they hit the appetite funny for
squeamish people before meals?"

Well, I mean, Stellar Supreme and so on
and so forth, etc., etc., apparently
hasn't read a whole lot of like Catholic
like you know the the imitation of
Christ or the writings of St. John of
the Cross that sort of thing. I mean I
mean the the lordly deceiver
manipulating worldly creations of men in

Christianity that's called Satan.

You know the three enemies to like the the Catholic contemplative saint, you know, the world, the flesh, and the devil. And the devil, I mean, he's in there. I mean, he gets a little bit more emphasis even than Mara does in Buddhism. I think at least the oldfashioned kind of Christianity, parents would make their children behave through threats of the devil.

So, let's see. Filth of the body, corpse contemplation, corpse contemplation, not so much, I suppose. Um, but I mean, Christians have this idea.

[clears throat] I mean, like the saintly

old-fashioned ones,
they had this idea, you only get one
chance. In Buddhism, you get like an
infinite number of chances because you
just keep getting reborn until you get
it right. It's like Groundhog Day. But
for a Christian, you just get this one
life of a few decades, relatively
speaking, that's going to determine
whether you are rewarded in heaven or
punished in hell forever and ever.

So, that kind of belief really spurred
on a lot of like Christian saints to be
very saintly.

But let's see here. Filth of the body.

Yeah. Well, someone like uh what was his
name? Hinrich Susso. Yeah. His I mean

some of those medieval Catholic saintly types. I don't think Suso was canonized. He was beatified. I think I mean they were literally filthy that he would he wouldn't bathe. He was just covered with like fleas and and bed bugs and lice and stuff. Well, I guess you don't get covered with bed bugs, but you get covered with lice and he was covered with them.

So see condemnation of self-regard.

Yeah. I mean that's all found in like like Roman Catholic contemplative orders anyway. It's it's advanced practice that most of the normie Christians don't do.

But I mean most normie Buddhists, you

know, some Burmese villager, they're not contemplating filth of the body and corpse contemplations and and like condemnation of self- regard and so forth cuz they're normies. I mean, they're just average people. Well, they're just making a living and providing for their family and all that. They're not really going for like perfection or anything. And most most Buddhists are the same way.

So, it's really not so different. I mean, Christianity in the modern west and the post-modern west has just become more and more degenerate, just as terra Buddhism in the post-modern west is just radically degenerate over I mean, what

you see in the texts anyway.

So, it's really not so different. I mean, Christian prayers, would Christian prayers involving more Buddhist themes um be more skillful.

I mean, that kind of stuff is already in there. It's just that most Christians don't pay much heed to that, just as most Christians don't pay much heed to gather not up your treasures upon the earth. Give no thought for tomorrow what you will eat or where you will sleep, that kind of thing.

I mean the the practice part of advanced Christianity and advanced Buddhism is very similar. It's just the the

narrative like the theory can is is quite different.

But the practice part is is very similar. It's just that most [clears throat]

average

most average Christians and most average Buddhists, they're more concerned with just making a living, eating good food for dinner, making sure their kids don't get sick, that kind of stuff. And they're not thinking about this really advanced corpse contemplation stuff.

I mean, that works on both sides. It's just some Western Buddhists are, you know, they're kind of monastic anyway. they're attracted to that and you know

they kind of emphasize that kind of stuff. And there are some Christians that are like that too I suppose that are still lay people but still they're you know they really emulate the more advanced teachings.

But for the most part your average secular Buddhist and your average secular Christian, you know, they're more concerned with secular stuff anyway.

But the Christians do have that stuff as built into the system. It's just they don't pay much heed to it, which is just human nature.

And so I'm just going to move on to the

last question, the very last one. This is from Task is and this is came up earlier today when we were discussing on on the Discord server Ajan Braum and his pretty much unilateral attempts to get a Bikuni SA going. So that [clears throat] I mean his attempts were kind of unscrupulous and just flouting rules and traditions and so forth. So that he got himself booted out of the Ajan Cha tradition even though there are some like female feminist kind of Buddhists who think he's enlightened because of his efforts for you know female equality and so forth. But anyway, Trasaz says, "Was ever any topic on which the majority of monks did agree on?" And

yeah, quite a few actually. It's like um
if you have a great council,
then you know like the first council,
second council.

Um I mean you have representatives of
different like local SAS all going to
represent their local SAS at this great
council. You can't have all the Buddhist
monks in the world attending a a like a
council any kind of decision-making
process, but at least they're sending a
representative. And again, it's like
[clears throat]

[snorts]

the majority of monks, I mean, they may
not agree at first, like with regard to

the second council where you have this big debate going on on mainly according to the Theravada Buddhist uh tradition representing what happened. Um the main issue was whether monks are allowed to handle money and it just came up no because obviously the Buddha didn't allow it as found in the rules of monastic discipline and so at the beginning you had monks that were arguing the other way but they all agreed at the end okay you know the no money people win the argument we consent to that let's all recite the pāṇāpatti together and [clears throat] the majority monks I mean even now the majority of monks agree on like the

contents of the tipica for example there
there may be quibbling over like
punctuation marks or a word here and
there that kind of thing what exactly I
mean like the Burmese include a few
texts that other Buddhist countries
don't include into their canonical
tipica like the milinda pa is considered
canonical in Burma not considered
canonical anywhere else that I know of
you got a few others like the netti
pakarana just obscure commentarial works
sort of like the Paradisa Mega that are
considered canonical even though like
the Sri Lankans and the Thai don't
consider them canonical but still most

of it they agree on

just with regard to a lot of things the majority of monks agree on like the fact that the Bukuni order no longer exists most of the of the monks in existence would agree on that because most of the monks in existence are relative relatively conservative Asians.

So most of the SA of the four quarters would agree the Bikuni order does not exist. And these women calling themselves Bikunis and being promoted by people like Ajan Chan Braum, it's just fake.

I mean, you could argue that these women calling themselves bikunis now, I mean, they're they're wearing the robes by

theft con calling themselves ordained when really they're not. In which case, even if the bikuni order was revived, like through a great council, the decree of a great council, which probably isn't going to happen, still they could be barred from ever being ordained because they've already been wearing the robes by theft, which disqualifies someone from being really ordained. If you were like pretending to be a monk, for example, a beu, you're wearing the robes and just, you know, living at the monastery pretending that you were ordained when you really weren't, then that's it. I mean, you're barred from

ever being ordained because I mean, that disqualifies you.

So, yeah. I mean, again, the question, was there ever was there any topic on which the majority of monks did agree on? Yeah, of course there was. There's lots of them. In fact, most of the established tradition of terra Burma now is agreed on by the vast majority of monks. There's always going to be a few outliers,

[sighs] you know, like four noble truths. Pretty much everyone agrees on that.

And the four noble truths are rather important.

So yeah, the answer to that is yeah. And

I guess I'm done.

So, as I should always say at the beginning and pretty much never do, if you have any questions you think maybe I can answer, especially with regard to early Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, Buddhist monasticism, kind of the history of Buddhism, not necessarily Bob Marley. I don't really know anything about him or very much anyway, meditation, that kind of stuff. then feel free to ask the question and I will attempt to answer it. Just include it in the comments below this video if you please and uh like and subscribe. Look at the URL links and uh be happy. And

I'm going to stop recording now.

Okay, then I think we are recording.

Hello and welcome to question and answer
number 175 and that's a relatively high
number. I am your host Pony Bosa. This
is my beverage and the the

[clears throat] umbrella is working
really good. Look at look at how taut
that umbrella is.

And of course 175 is not a prime number.

It is in fact $5 * 5 * 7$.

And I'm sitting before you in a Christmy
Christmy environment, you might say, not
because of any particular Christmas
spirit on my part, but because my
sweetie did not want to vacate her place
in the studio.

There were times as a monk I'd be just looking at the calendar trying to figure out what day it was and I'd think, "Oh, yesterday was Christmas or yesterday was my birthday." Both of those have happened before when I was when I was a monk in Burma, just losing track of what day it is on the calendar. I mean, you're kind of in tune with the the phases of the moon, you know, to some degree, the position of the moon amongst the the constellations, but the actual calendar date, it was it would elude me sometimes.

And I was going to say something else, too. And you know, it's like I'm talking

and then like somewhere like in the back of my mind, there's like, you should also mention this. And then it's like, okay. And then by the time I get to the end of that sentence and maybe another sentence after that, it's gone. So, sorry about that. I've been kind of busy this weekend. So, this this Q&A is going to be later going to be uploaded later than usual because I just got a rest from from just hectic work environment. And then uh I can't remember what we were doing yesterday, but then today I'm going out getting doing some last minute Christmas shopping and getting some groceries in before

my sweetie's mama shows up for her
Christmas visit.

We got the tent in the backyard all set
up for.

It's not not big enough for her to stand
up in, but I mean, you don't stand up
when you're sleeping anyway, so that's
it's neither here nor there. Gosh, there
was something I was going to say that
was almost sort of important or
interesting or something, but
I guess I might as well just wade into
this and [clears throat] answer
questions. Also, I had sort of a heavy
dinner because this is late. This is
it's going to be midnight by the time
I'm done probably. Well, almost midnight

anyway because we got kind of a lot of questions, too.

So, I suppose I should just uh commence to answering those those questions. And the first question is from Fred. And Fred says, "I understand there was no chanting in Buddha's lifetime. Can chanting be detrimental?"

Well, I mean, it depends on what your definition of chanting is. I mean, if chanting is kind of a sing song, kind of a droning recitation, then there was chanting in the Buddhist time, but it wasn't done by Buddhists. It was done probably by Brahmans mostly. Obviously lots of chanting done by Vedic

priests in toning over the fire
sacrifice. Probably other spiritual
systems too did chanting. But if
chanting is just recitation,
then yeah, there was plenty of that in
early Buddhism also because nothing was
written down in the Buddhist time. And
so the Buddha's teachings like the the
vineia rules, the py mocha, all that
kind of stuff, it was it had to be
recited. But there is a rule of monastic
discipline that one is not supposed to
recite
texts in a singong voice. Which means
that almost all monks who chant nowadays
except maybe some Thai monks because
they got a pretty good monotone drone

going when they chant. But a lot of monks that are like doing like the sing song kind of of intonation when they're reciting, there's actually a rule of monastic discipline against that. It's a minor rule. It's just a dooka offense. Just make confession and it's absolved. But also there is a scene in the vineia of some monks who used to be brahinss. I mean I guess they were still technically brahinss although also technically any anyone who's ordained as a biku becomes a kind of honorary katya or khatria because they are sons of the Buddha who was a member of the khatria wana the the katya wana in poli.

Anyways, these Brahman monks came to the Buddha and asked permission for them to sort of convert

um like Buddhist teachings into Sanskrit verse and the Buddha said no. In fact, he said you should learn Dhamma in your own language or one should learn Dharma and recite Dharma in one's own language.

And then the commentary says one's own language really means the Buddha's own language which is poly

but probably the Buddha's own language was similar to poly but not quite poly and it's pretty clear from the context that he just means whatever the vernacular is whatever is your your native language then you can go ahead

and learn and recite dhamma in your own language. Of course, he didn't really, you know, he was living in the the Ganges Valley of the fifth century um BCE. So, you know, probably all of the languages that were spoken were derived from Vadic Sanskrit. Maybe there might have been some hill tribes that were still speaking some some non-Indic languages, but they for the most part weren't converting to Buddhism.

So the Buddha did prohibit converting Buddhist teachings into Sanskrit verse which almost all the schools of Buddhism just rejected or ignored and they just took the ball and

ran with it and converted their scriptures or just composed from scratch a lot of their scriptures in Sanskrit verse which technically is against the rules but they changed the rules too so that it wasn't against the rules no more.

But getting to the actual question here.

Can chanting be detrimental? It would just depend on your mental states is again people are continually like western Buddhists continually ignoring or overlooking the plain fact that just outward physical actions including making noise with your mouth is just ethically neutral. that what is ethical, you know, what is making good

karma and bad karma is the accompanying mental states, your volition, your will. So chanting can be detrimental if you're chanting for bad reasons.

Maybe you're just wanting to be famous, you're showing off, you're you're proud of how good you're chanting, how well you're chanting, I should say. Um, you know, that kind of stuff. there's going to be subtle

unskillful comma involved or I mean a lot of the time anyone who's chanted a lot or just recited a lot because I would I would chant in the in the sense of reciting but I did avoid the singing voice. Some monks cultivate their own

unique kind of sing songong voices a
sort of brand just in the in the chance
that they become famous they've got
their brand going like anyone who has
listened to Chieato I mean probably the
recordings of cha seato chanting are
becoming rarer and rarer as the old
cassette tapes wear out. But back like
in the '9s when I became a monk, chaans,
you would hear chaans
wherever you would hear or any kind of
Burmese dhamama. And he had this really
unique sort of melodious caterwalling
that he would do that I mean nobody
could imitate it. As far as I could
tell, it was just this weird
caterwalling that he would do. And I

mean, you just listen to three seconds of it. Yeah, that's Chan Egon in Seattle. But I mean, he was he was eventually murdered by I think it was his own attendant for his money. His attendant murdered him to steal his money. So, Chang was not a paragon of monastic discipline.

Uh, but getting back to whether chanting can be detrimental. Yeah. If you're chanting like black magic spells or something. Yeah. But it depends. depends on the volition. I mean, if it's, hey, look at me. Look how good I'm chanting, how well I'm chanting, then still there's going to be subtle uh

detrimental effects.

In fact, if you're not fully enlightened in your chanting, then I mean there's going to be some subtle detrimental effects anyway, some subtle bad karma involved just through the delusion. Even if there's no attraction and aversion, there's still delusion.

And also, I mean, it is possible. I know from my own experience I started to say this like three minutes ago and then sidetracked myself but I mean if you've chanted something enough times you can be sitting there chanting the meta suta you know blessing a house or something while at the same time I mean it's just automatic it's just force of habit and

your mind is somewhere else you're thinking about something else so I mean you can be chanting like sacred scripture can be coming out your mouth but at the same time you can be thinking about you know boobs boobs or something. It's possible it does happen. I'm sure. So, [sighs]

yeah. So, getting back to this question sort of as a review, there was chanting in the Buddha's lifetime. The Buddha, I mean, like the Brahmins, they'd be chanting in verse, you know, the the verses from the vedas, that kind of thing.

And uh the Buddha just made it against

the rules to chant in a sing song voice.

You should just recite dhamma in a normal conversational tone.

So if that's still called chanting, I assume it would be. Depends on your definition of chanting. Then uh there was chanting in the Buddhist lifetime.

There was definitely recitation because things were not written down. That's how you memorize stuff. That's who you you carried the the message from one generation of monks to the next was just through memorization and and just regular recitation

and chanting can be detrimental just based on the mental states of the person who's who's chanting or reciting. And

I'm just going to move on to Fred's next question. And this I have to admit sometimes Fred asks questions. He's not the only one, but sometimes Fred asks questions that I'm I really don't fully understand what he's trying to get at. And so Fred here says, "Can meditation only lead you back to the source of projection?"

And what exactly is the source of projection? I mean that would I mean from the Buddhist point of view that would be like ignorance. You know avidya is the source of just sort of some sorrow. I guess that what he means is just what is projecting samsara. But it

may be that he's using the word source
sort of the way Paul low used to use the
word source as just the the absolute the
ultimate. Different teachers will use a
different word for you know the highest
truth or the the ultimate you know
paramata satcha. I guess echartlah uses
being most theists of course use god.h.
[sighs] So can meditation only lead you
back to the source of projection? I hope
I I assume he means that would be at
best you know because of course
meditation can lead you in all sorts of
directions. It can lead you into realms
of delusion. You know it's like you
start having visions in your meditation
and then you just get carried away with

that. Forget to just mind mindfully note it and let it go. You know you just get caught up in it and it can lead you all over the place. You can start getting like psychic powers and then just get caught up in the psychic powers all that kind of thing.

So let's say that Fred here is asking if the best meditation can do best case scenario is lead you to old the ultimate the absolute and yeah I would I would I would agree with that that I mean meditation from a Buddhist point of view or at least from an old-fashioned you know old early Buddhist point of view meditate the purpose

of meditation is just dis reduce
distraction action, reduce perception,
reduce papunch until you can see through
it to the the the ultimate truth which
is always right there is just obscured
by all this distracting perception that
everyone's having.

So yeah, I guess so. And I'm just going
to move on to the next question. This is
from Jeffrey.

And [clears throat]

uh Jeffrey, he's he's he's somewhat
unusual and his last name is a number
instead of spelled with letters spelled
with just numbers. But I won't dox him
by by stating his numerical last name.

And he says, "What is your general

knowledge and opinion of the work of Edgar Casey?"

And I have read a few books about Edgar Casey. In fact, my father when he was a kid, his mother, my grandma, Grandma Reynolds, actually wrote to Edgar Casey when Edgar Casey was still alive. And my father recorded this in a kind of occult autobiography that he wrote, which has not been published. Maybe that'll happen someday. But this is what my father wrote about Edgar Casey. And this was this occurred like during the 1930s during the the Great Depression.

So my father says in his autobiography, "Times were hard and my father did not

get his usual summer job teaching at the teachers college. He was despondent and left home swearing that he was going to find some sort of job. He was gone a couple of weeks. My mother did not know where he was. She did not hear from him. Just over the state line in Selma, Alabama lived a man named Edgar Casey who was getting some publicity as the sleeping prophet. My mother felt he must be an American Indian as only they had this sort of talent. Anyway, she wrote him a letter asking about my dad. The letter he wrote back was quote, "There is really no reason for me to answer this letter. By the time you get this, you will have heard from your husband."

He will be teaching summer school in Jasper, Alabama."

The letter from dad came the day before the one that came back from Edgar Casey.

So that was my father's family's experience with Edgar Casey. Um my general knowledge of Edgar Casey, I mean the sleeping prophet, you know, he was he would he was the kind of psychic who would go into like a deep sleeplike trance and would prophesy and he wouldn't remember what he was saying.

People would have to tell him afterwards. So, how he wrote the letter, I'm not sure because he was just that sort of psychic

that goes into a deep trance and does not

does not remember what he's saying. And then people would have to tell him afterwards and sometimes they'd just be like ash and faced in in a state of mild shock.

But, uh, he started with like medical diagnosis. I'm not exactly sure how he got started. I don't remember that part. at least with regard to his his prophesying in this life. But he started with medical diagnosis and he was like very successful in just, you know, he'd go into the trance, somebody would write him a letter. They didn't have texting back then. Somebody would write him a

letter, he'd get the letter, he'd go into the trance, and then while he was in trance, he would like project his clairvoyant vision to that person.

Sometimes he'd comment on like the pajamas they were wearing at the time that he was, you know, he was like looking at them, you know, he's sort of like diagnosing their their situation with like clairvoyance allegedly. And then a lot of the the treatments were were I mean some of it was really simple, you know, just avoid drafts, you know, change your diet, this kind of stuff. And then a lot of the stuff was like experimental or controversial kind

of stuff, but it it worked. You know,
he'd be, you know, like diagnosing some
medicine that's usually used for
something else and he'd do it, you know,
he he'd be like advising doctors on on
this sort of stuff and they'd bring up
objections. He just says just go ahead
and do it and then it would work. A lot
of electrical therapy. He was he was
like uh prescribing that kind of stuff.
But then later after he got famous from
the medical diagnosis, he started doing
like
more prophet-like stuff with regard to
like reincarnation
and also just prophecies of the future.
And when he started getting into that,

um, it seems to me that he was less reliable. Like one of his prophecies was that proof

of I think it was Atlantis would be found by the end of the 20th century in one of the pyramids of Egypt.

As far as I know, that didn't happen unless maybe there's like this big cover up. You know, it's a conspiracy.

He did make an interesting prophecy though that might come true where he said that the [clears throat] final last bastion, the last stronghold of Christianity in the world would be Russia. And at the time, I mean, this was like Stalinist Soviet Union at the

time. So, it seemed like a wild prediction, but now it's starting to look more and more plausible at least. And it's interesting to me that according to him, he had like a past life regression on himself and he found out how he got this ability to like leave his body, you know, have clairvoyant visions and so forth. And that was in a previous life. He supposedly was a soldier who was mortally wounded on a battlefield and just left for dead. And he was lying there for like two days before he finally died in just mortal agony. And it was just lying there hour after hour. You know, nobody's going to help you.

You're surrounded by corpses that he just somehow trained himself, you know, over those excruciating many hours to just leave his body, you know, so that he wouldn't be having to endure this, you know, he could just go somewhere else while his body was slowly dying.

So my general knowledge and opinion, I guess my general knowledge has just been conveyed for the most part. My opinion of the work of Edgar Casey, I do think he was more reliable as um like a a medical healer, you know, just for diagnosing and prescribing, you know, the the treatment for the ailments he's

diagnosing, that sort of thing. But when he started getting into prophecies, he became less

um less reliable. Um one one of the things that he kept doing in his later years was

um like somebody would have a problem.

He would be he would say it's because you did this in a previous life. And one of the things that people were really getting dinged on, they were getting bad karma for this was going to like the coliseum in Rome and watching like Christians or political criminals being fed to wild animals, you know, torn apart by lions, that kind of stuff. And they'd be laughing and cheering while it

was happening. And then so that would mess them up, mess up their karma so that in their next life or several lives later, you know, they're still having residual problems, you know, karmic um retribution

over just laughing and jeering that people being ripped apart in in the arena, especially like Christians. And I mean, if you can take Edgar Casey seriously, then America pretty much is like the reincarnation of Rome.

because a lot of Americans, I mean, according to Edgar Casey, lots and lots of us were in Rome, too. It's just carrying over into America now.

And it might be that we've got our
Julius Caesar figure now.

So, let's see here. What else was I
going to say?

Uh,

my general knowledge and opinion of the
work of Edgar Casey. Yeah, I do think he
had genuine talent, definitely.

Although his talk about Atlantis I take
with a grain of salt because I got my
own theory about Atlantis. I do think
Atlantis is just a very garbled version
of the so-called Menowan civilization.

You know, it's like the first mention of
Atlantis is in one of the dialogues of
Plato where he's talking about how
Atlantis was this great civilization

that tried to conquer mainland Greece and mainland the mainland Greeks led by the Athenians fought them off. And if they were super high-tech, then these Bronze Age Masonans are not going to be able to defeat them in battle. But you could have the Manoan civilization trying to conquer mainland Greece and failing because these badass Masonans who love to fight just fought them off and eventually conquered Cree.

After there was the the explosion of the volcanic island of Thera, which didn't completely wipe out the Cretan civilization, but it caused tidal waves, which probably messed up their navy,

coated the island of Cree in volcanic ash, which messed up their agriculture, weakened the civilization sufficiently that later on badass masonians were able to conquer it.

So yeah, Edgar Casey, I think he did have some legitimate psychic ability, psychic talent.

Um, what else? There was there was one other thing. No, I think that's it. So, I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Stellar Supreme, etc., etc., etc. He keeps he adds new names, but let's just go with Stellar Supreme. Let's be conservative here.

Traditionalist, if you will. Oh, this we could call him Librelam because he was

called that before he was stellar

supreme. So anyways,

Stellar Supreme, etc., etc. Legion says,

"How would you translate the phrase

left hand of the supreme in Pali?"

Well, left hand is wamaata. Wama is

left, hata is hand.

[snorts] And uh just as a side note, the

word for elephant, one of the the main

words for elephant in Pali is hati,

which means having a hand, which is the

end of their trunk.

So I mean, wahhata is pretty much

straightforward. That's left hand. But

the left hand of the supreme, I mean,

you could say the supreme would be

Brahma. Brahma could be translated as the supreme. Then it would be Brahma wamahhata. But if you wanted to leave Brahma out of this and just say the ultimate left hand of the ultimate that would be like paramata then it would be like paramata wahhata which I don't know has kind of a kind of a ring to it. It sort of rhymes with itself paramata wahhata or wamahhata.

Yeah, I think left fist of the supreme might be better though.

But that's up for that's that's for Legion to decide for himself. And he says uh let's see Stellar Supreme etc. et also says his next question got any catchier poly nicknames you recommend

for my YouTube channel and left fist of
god? It's kind of interesting that the
Burmese word for fist is let thee which
means hand fruit.

But uh I mean if if I got to name myself
rather than my preceptor naming me, I
would have gone with the name of mosa. I
like the name moiga because mooney is
usually translated as sage. Gossa is
like voice or shout. But mooney
originally meant someone who undergoes a
vow of silence. It's like a silent sage.
Like in in India even today like I think
in Hindi mom [clears throat] just means
taking a vow of silent. and just means
being silent. So it's it can also mean

shout of the silent one which is sort of
uh paradoxical I suppose but I like
paradox.

I like I really do paradox has been one
of my lifelong passions I guess. So
let's see here.

I should mention that not only did
Stellar Supreme, but one other person
asked transgressive fourth questions for
this video, and I'm still of two minds
whether I should even answer the fourth
questions because the limit is three.

The number of the count shall be three.

No more, no less.

The count shall not be four, nor shall
it be two, unless one then proceed to
three.

So let's see. I'll just let's just do the third question though. Stellar Supreme Sarah says, "Would it be a bad idea to teach really serious heavy dharma on my YouTube channel considering women might see it? Considering I will make a public service announcement at the beginning of each video about how this content is exclusively intended for men. Well, I don't think you really need any kind of exclusionary public service announcement because in all likelihood, 95% at least of your viewers are going to be guys anyway. That's the way it works for me. I I haven't looked at my YouTube stats in quite a while. But in the past, you

know, it was it was above 95% of all my viewers were male.

So, I mean, it's just kind of superfluous to say women shouldn't watch this. you know, the the He-Man woman haters club, no girls allowed, that kind of thing. That's just superfluous. It's completely unnecessary. Just asking for trouble.

So, let's see. Would it be a bad idea to teach a really serious heavy dharma?

Well, I mean, are you are you qualified to teach a really serious heavy dharma?

I mean, just the the renunciation is pretty heavy all by itself as pretty straightforward. So, I guess there are some relatively simple teachings of

Dharma that are still serious heavy
dharma.

Let's see

though. Would it be a bad idea to teach
really he serious heavy dharma on my
YouTube channel considering women might
see it? No. I mean,
yeah, I I don't think that's really
that's really an issue.

So, I'm just going to move on to this
transgressive fourth question. And uh
yeah, I'm serious of you guys. You
should count and then don't count higher
than four when you're asking questions.
And just count question marks. Don't
don't count paragraphs. Count question

marks. How many question marks are there?

Because some people will just supposedly ask one compound question with like four question marks in it distributed throughout the paragraph.

So anyways,

[clears throat] Liberlam,

also known as Stellar Supreme, also known as fill in the blank, says, "Where I live locally is like a desert for non-normmy lady partners as I see it."

Yeah. And I'm considering relocating to Chiang Mai, Thailand because it's like a social hub and it's cheap to live there. I figure that because it's a Buddhist country, there might be a devout Thai

woman or Western woman who I could find there. Do you consider this a good plan or would you recommend I try something else? I have a remote job lined up that pays around 50 or 60K per year in insurance sales to support this venture. Well, looking for the right girl. Uh, Thailand maybe is not optimal in my opinion. First of all, no offense to to any Thai people watching this, but Thai women tend not to be very attractive, you know, in a like a physiological sense. And also, I mean, if if you're a big guy, you know, with big hands and big feet, for example, Southeast Asian women are just too

gracile, you know, they just
it's not going to be a good match
physically. Let's just leave it at that.
just completely leaving out the fact
that you're like banning women from
watching your videos.

So, I mean, if I were going to live in
some exotic local,
you know, just maybe [clears throat]
with the hopes of meeting the right girl
if I hadn't already met her, that kind
of thing, then I think I'd prefer Ubud
in in Bali

despite the the threat of the occasional
devastating volcano in Indonesia.

But Ubud is there's lots of Ubudists
there. A lot of Westerners there. It's

sort of like an artist's colony there.

A lot of rich people who just don't want to deal with Western craziness. Prefer the the milder form of eastern craziness. They live in places like Ubud in Thailand, which is beautiful.

So, let's see.

Looking for a non-normmy lady partner. I mean, the Stellar Supreme is is pretty far. I mean, he's sort of on the fringe of the fringe of non- normies, you know, he's he's definitely liinal and finding I mean, you might want to get yourself a normie female just to kind of ground you. I mean, you asked Stellar Supreme asked this question like

in the previous Q&A or a recent one
anyhow. How can he be less liinal? Yeah.
And finding like some female artist is
not going to do it. I mean, you you
probably should get yourself some maybe
some nice conservative
like spinster school teacher lady in
Thailand. That kind of thing.

I used to think about that sort of thing
like when I was living in Burma, you
know, just settle down with some nice
old maid school teacher lady, that kind
of thing.

But still, there was there would be a
culture barrier, a language barrier. you
couldn't really have I mean with most
Burmese women I would guess Thai women

are kind of similar you know they think
a lot the same you know there's not as
much psychological variation and so
having like a stimulating conversation
is

be the odds would be lower than with a
western woman

let's see here a good plan to move to
Mai to find a woman. Yeah, I'm not so
sure about that. Maybe. I mean, you're
going to have to follow your own
intuition on that one, I guess. But I
mean, if I were looking for a woman, I
certainly wouldn't go to Thailand just
because Thai women in general, there are
some really pretty ones, but they are a

tiny minority. And you got to be careful because a lot of the the the lady boys are prettier than the actual biological females. So, don't don't get led astray by that.

[sighs]

might look into Ubud in Bali though if you want to live in some tropical paradise. And I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Xenithoid.

And Zenithoid says, "Can you compare and contrast being made in the image of God in Christianity versus Atman is Brahman in Hinduism? They seem like adjacent concepts, although definitely not the same." Yeah, that's it's kind of weird.

never really thought to compare these two concepts before. Um there's sort of a crude spark of the upupanads in this Christian idea or Jewish idea that man was made in the image of God.

Um,

it doesn't I mean a lot of people it maybe even the original person who wrote that or who started that tradition had this idea of an anthropomorphic God that we were just even looked like God which is the way a lot of people think but it may be something a little more profound made in the image of God is just sort of [clears throat] kind of a project. It's in a way I was

thinking in the shower the other night
that I mean it could be sort even like a
platonic thing here where as Christ
would be like the ideal man living in
like a platonic heaven of ideals. He is
the perfect man. And so all mere mortal
humans, you know, partake of that ideal
essence of manhood coming from like the
the Superman Christ, you know, that
could be some sort of Platonic
philosophy that found its way into
Judaism and then Christianity.

That's possible, too.

But still it it would be not as profound
as the whole thart that dwam ai of the
upupanads where um the soul or the atman
in Hinduism is just that aspect of like

Brahman or God ultimate reality which just happens to be here.

So from the Christian point of view, everyone has their own soul. And I don't think that Jesus would have argued against that.

But in Hinduism, starting with the Upupanads or whatever the Upanishads were based on that is lost to us that [clears throat] that the entire world shares one soul that God is essentially the soul of the entire world.

Every being in the world shares this same soul which is God.

So that's going farther than

Christianity goes.

And I'm not exactly sure what was originally the intention of the statement in the Bible. I assume it's in the Bible, probably Genesis, that man was created in God's image. that it could be something just crude and primitive that they had this idea that God was anthropomorphic, was just some man up in heaven. And then maybe like Greek platonist types influenced Jews to think in terms of you know some prototype some ideal in heaven that then has you know sort of pale reflections of that ideal that are down here in in the meat puppet.

So that's possible and but it could be a

little bit more profound and that we're made with like a spark of divinity that kind of thing that would get closer to the Hindu ideal but still it's doesn't go as far as thou art that in the upupanads.

And I think I'm just going to move on to Xenithoid's next question.

Can you talk make sure we're recording here? Yeah, we've been recording for over 30 minutes.

Xenithid [clears throat] says, "Can you talk about how to stop chasing certainty and feeling like you always need reassurance that things are going properly? I am very high in trait

neuroticism and dealing with uncertainty in any form is very difficult for me."

God yeah that's dealing with uncertainty in any form if that's difficult for you then yeah that's you've got difficulties because pretty much everything is uncertain. In fact, Ajan Cha, there's books that indicate that Ajan Cha interpreted like anata. I think it was anata or was it ana impermanence as just not sure is just uncertain.

One of the three marks of existence he interpreted as just not sure. You cannot be sure about anything really. And I've taken that to heart. I mean even before I became you know ever even before I heard of Ajan Cha it was like in the

Bible the New Testament it's saying you shouldn't say you're going to go to such and such town and make such and such amount of money and then come back here you know it's like you don't know you should say God willing if I don't die first I'll do that and I mean I have really taken that to heart even like just from reading the New Testament as like a teenager just Not sure, God willing, inshallah, because nothing is certain.

Not even death and taxes are like absolute certain. They're getting [clears throat] up to like 100%, but still.

So, I mean, just bear in mind that we're all literally infinitely ignorant. I mean, you can't really know what's going to happen. I mean, we're blind with regard to the future.

We have sort of a murky vision towards the past. Especially guys do. I've noticed that women have very adjustable memories so they can remember something just radically different from what actually happened just five minutes after the fact. But we don't need to go there. Not that I'm offending very many women cuz there's not very many that watch these videos.

[sighs] So, let's see here. Stop chasing certainty. Yeah. And it's just something

that I mean you may have to just get beaten over the head with it before it really changes because if it's like a lifelong habit then me saying a few sentences probably is not going to jolt you out of a lifelong habit.

Um feeling like you always need reassurance that things are going properly. Yeah. I mean I mean I don't take the opposite route of just assuming that things are going wrong but I mean you just you just have to just acknowledge you don't know and just leave it to providence you know just put yourself in the hands of dharma you know just

offer yourself up to God so to speak
you know better than I do and just bear
in mind whatever happens is is I mean
that's what is supposed to happen to you
due to your own karma.

Everything happens the way it's supposed
to happen. That's that's sort of like a
a mantra that would just spontaneously
arise in my mind from time to time. And
it's been doing that for decades.

Everything happens the way it's supposed
to happen. It doesn't I don't it doesn't
arise as often as it used to. But still
it's just you just have to like have
faith that you know what's going to
happen is what you need to happen even
if it's something you don't like because

that's that's really what's going to happen. What's going to happen is exactly what you need to happen. You know for the sake of the fulfillment of your karma even if it's something you don't like. So I mean there's no point in worrying about it and worrying about the future is just kind of delusional anyway. All all that exists from the from the terra Buddhist point of view is right now the present moment. That's all that exists. Thinking about the future, worrying about the past, you know, worrying about what's going on somewhere else. It's just be here now. And that's that's really the wisest route to take.

I was talking about that I think in the previous Q&A where I mean if you're being really mindful even if you have to think about the future or you have to thinking about the past then you're noting you know thinking about the future right now right now you're thinking about the future right now you're thinking about the past that kind of thing so you're still sort of rooted in the present moment you're grounded in the present moment

[sighs]

but yeah I mean [clears throat] being being a perfectionist, wanting to do the best job you can, wanting everything just so I mean that can have its good

points, but

like

always needing reassurance that things are going properly. I mean, usually I mean they're going properly from like a higher vantage point because you're getting exactly what you need through your karma, but it's not always going to be something that you desire, something that you feel comfortable with.

So I mean you can just have faith in that

if you are a Christian you could have faith in God
inshallah.

Of course that's not Christian is it?

So let's see here.

Yeah, I mean

from the from the Buddhist point of view
probably your best method of dealing
with that is just mindful noting
whenever you are like worrying about the
future or worrying is this the way the
best way it can be or you know is are
things going right just note it thinking
wondering worrying and just let it go
and just just every time that arises you
just note it just objectively with the
philosophical detachment and And then
when you just keep observing your own
thoughts with philosophical detachment
and mindfulness, it removes them of
their momentum. You're not reinforcing

it. So eventually the momentum becomes less and then it stops being as much of a problem. Although it may never entirely go away.

So I think I'm just going to move on to
[clears throat]

Xenithoid's third question here, which is kind of similar, I think. How does one [clears throat] stop catastrophizing? Always jumping to the worst possible outcome. I tend to do this a lot, even though I know I'm almost always wrong. Whenever my mind spins up a narrative of impending doom. Yeah, my my sweetheart does that, too. Just kind of always expecting the worst

or at least in in some cases expecting the worst. And it's it's really I mean that sort of thing is is worse than in my opinion than just worrying is are things going okay because I mean just expecting the worst to happen helps it the worst to happen. You know it's like if you have negative thoughts you're creating negative karma.

So I mean just a matter of common sense just remind yourself. I mean, if you're having these thoughts of expecting the worst, then it's actually increasing the odds that the worst really is going to happen.

It's all generated by mind. So again, it's just kind of like a humble attitude

of I don't know,
you know, it's like just have faith. And
and I've been like that my whole life
and it has served me rather rather well.
Sometimes my sweetie just she gets on my
case because I trust people too much.
This kind of thing, you know, I just
don't take precautions
because, you know, I just give the human
race the benefit of the doubt even
though I don't have a extremely high
opinion of the human race. Still, just
do unto others as you'd have them do
unto you and and just give people the
benefit of the doubt and just kind of
have faith in your own karma. Have faith

in Dharma to protect you. That kind of thing. have faith in your guardian angel maybe.

And it has served me pretty well. I mean, I've never really been screwed over. Not Not that I can think of. I mean, it has happened from time to time to some degree, but still it's I mean, I've generally been pretty lucky. I remember one time when I was a teenager, I've probably told this story before that I had these pants that were in style back then and the had no back pockets at all and the front pockets went in like sideways so that I had my wallet in my front pocket because I didn't have a back one. And I'm walking

home from school and it falls out of my pocket three times while I'm walking home from school this one time. And every single time somebody picked up the wallet and came running after me to hand it to me. You dropped your wallet.

I remember one time [clears throat] it was

like the last day of finals, like my sophomore year of college. I went to this party and just got blasted. I was that was the most I've ever drank in my life, I think. It was like more than half of a half gallon of vodka went down my my gullet that night, I'm pretty sure. And I wound up passed out in the

back of my car. And the next day, I couldn't find my shoes or my wallet. And I had just cashed a scholarship check. I had like \$2,000 in my wallet. And I go into the house where everyone is passed out and there it is. My my wallet is just sitting there on on like an end table with \$2,000 still in it was it still had all the money in it. So, I have been fortunate in life partly just because I'm not always expecting the worst and therefore helping to draw in the worst from happening.

I mean, you should be cautious and prudent, you know? You shouldn't just There's like a Burmese saying, don't trust in don't trust in your karma and

walk on thorns, you know? It's like that kind of thing. I mean, you shouldn't just flirt with disaster. I mean, you should have some common sense, but still, I mean,

Dhamma will protect you. If you have respect for Dhamma, Dama will protect you. And that kind of translates into Christianity as, you know, you have faith in God, God God loves you and, you know, God will watch over you. That kind of thing.

But again, I mean, if you catastrophize, same thing as the the previous question. Just mindfully note it and let it go. Catastrophizing.

Catastrophizing. Just note it and let it go. Just observe it objectively as just a mental phenomenon. It's arising. It's not you. If you are anything, you're the one doing the observing, not the thing being observed.

So

just note it and let it go. And then eventually it helps to weaken the habit.

But it may be that I mean we are governed by habit

and habit energy is essentially what

karma is. So we're governed by our own

karma to some degree. You know, it's

just it's like an automatic pilot

because we're not fully conscious. We

just have these habit patterns that just

drive us through life like an automatic pilot.

And so sometimes it takes a crisis. It's going to it sometimes it may take just the [__] hitting the fan in on like a biblical scale before it knocks enough sense into us or puts us into enough of a crisis that we're able to let go of these habits of generating this really imperfect samsara for ourselves because we'll cling to it. I mean, it's it's just a human nature and it's the nature of higher vertebrates, too, including dogs that you just cling to this habit pattern that has been getting

you through life. Even if you're just messed up and unhappy, so long as it's getting you through life, that's good enough. And we just cling to these habits. And sometimes it takes a real crisis of just [__] hitting the fan before you can just let go and and reach out for something better.

And of course that's what like Chinese thought reform was based on and like Stalinist Russian interrogation techniques and like some of the more rigorous basic training in in the military and manhood rituals in like indigenous populations and even some meditation retreats are like this where it's just so difficult to deal with that

you have like a breakdown and then you can be born again, you can just let go of these these habits that were like practically ruining your life and reach out for something better. Or in the case of like Chinese thought reform, you let go of your old like individualist kind of ideas and you just reach out to the the communism that is being being told to you by the commasar or whatever.

>> [sighs]

>> So mindful detachment is about the best sort of low impact thing you can do.

Just try and talk some sense to yourself. But it some in many cases I am sorry to say that in order for there to

be like real significant spiritual advancement there has to be some kind of crisis that that like causes it to happen.

And I I read that in a Rahm Doss book when I was a teenager and just for many years I was just hoping that he was wrong on that one. But my own history seems to bear it out. Like the two or three main growth spurts spiritually I have experienced in my life have been the result of some kind of like emotional crisis.

In fact, for a while, I was even trying to just trigger an emotional crisis in myself to try and spur on some emotional or some spiritual growth. But that's

that's really playing with fire when you're doing that.

And I guess I should just go on to the next question here. This is from Thoughtfog.

And Thoughtfog says, "I'm about to go on Anggo Zen training for three months. Do you have advice?" Well, just try and be at your peak, you know, try to be free of diseases, free of like worries, you know, you've got like some, you know, try and like settle anything that's that's hanging in the air before you go there, so you're not going to be worrying about it.

Just and just do your best. I mean, just

be in the present moment. That's the best you can do.

So, I mean, there's really not much preparation for going [clears throat] on a threemonth intensive retreat.

uh other than just you know get your affairs in order and be as healthy as you can healthy in mind and body especially mind although mind and body tend to to interact with each other and so it's hard to be perfectly healthy with one and not perfectly healthy in the other

[sighs] so

yeah I mean just do your best and and just put yourself wholeheartedly into it that would that would be my my advice

Just do your best. And I'm moving on to
Thoughtful Fog's next question here. Would
you please talk more about Ajan
Punadamo? And I really don't know the
venerable Ajan very well. We've done a
few videos with Brian Rue and Ajan
Punidamo got some severe push back from
at least a few of his supporters for
having anything to do with Brian Rue
because Brian Rue has some rather
politically incorrect ideas, which he
holds sincerely. I mean, he's honest and
he's he's a good guy and and a better
Buddhist than a lot of people that would
be spitting on him in the street.
But aside from that, I mean, I I had

like a an illst starred video conference with him last week, which his at his end, the the internet was just messing up big time, and he just kept freezing. It was like half the time he was frozen until he just suggested we just give it up, which we did. I think he was like some kind of electrical engineer or something before he became a monk. He's he's uh intelligent, you know, he's he's intellectually oriented with regard to a lot of things. He's written books. Um because he's an ordained monk. Um he's probably more diplomatic and maybe a little more faith oriented with regard to some of the teachings of Dhamma than I am. I mean I even when I was a monk I

could just sort of make fun of Abid
Dhama for example or some of the some of
the teachings of the commentarial
tradition just bring up this sort of
embarrassing facts about what is in the
text that sort of thing that most monks
including ajan punamo generally don't do
largely just as a matter of sort of
diplomacy and etiquette and that kind of
thing because if you're trying to spread
dhamma to the best, you're not going to
be, at least most monks won't be like
bringing up embarrassing facts about
what they're trying to promote, which is
natural,
but he seems like a genuinely good

person. I do have a lot of respect for Ajan Punadamo, but I really don't know him very well. He's supposedly I mean the the legend was that he lived in Canada up near Hudson's Bay somewhere, but actually I think he lives closer to Lake Superior than Hudson's Bay.

So that was just a myth.

And uh I mean really I don't know all that much about him. So I there's not really much for me to say I guess. And so I'm just going to move on to the next question. This is from Scudamain.

I think that's how you pronounce the name. Scooterain [clears throat] probably got picked on a lot in school when he was a kid,

a name [clears throat] like that.

[gasps] And he says, "How do you deal with pride? In America, pride is seen as such a positive emotion. So much that if you don't have pride in something, you're looked at as ungrateful or foolish. Everywhere you look, there are pride union signs or proud dad shirts. My wife often asks me when our sons do something new or skillful, "Aren't you proud of them?" It's hard for me to overlook pride as being actually negative in almost every major religion. How can you be happy with oneself or others without attaching pride? Well, yeah. I mean, pride usually in

poly would be mana, conceit. That's in
pol in in Burmese also the word for like
someone who's very proud is managa. He's
got big mana.

So yeah, pride um is not good in
Buddhism because of course pride is just
like this glorification of the self and
the self is delusional. It doesn't
really exist. Also of course it's one of
the seven deadlies in traditional
Christianity. Um although I read
somewhere like western civilization has
turned all of the seven deadly sins into
virtues except one which is sloth.
Sloth is still I mean it's sloth is sort
of making a comeback. Even sloth is
getting up there when you know it's like

especially the left is like glorifying people who are just living on welfare handouts and not working for a living.

That sort of thing you know they're seen as just poor victims of the system or whatever. So even sloth I guess is is uh rising in the estimation of many people in the west.

So let's see how do you deal with pride?

I mean [snorts] I don't know I other people might see me very differently but I mean I don't consider myself to be a particularly proud person. I may not be an extremely humble person either. I mean, humility is definitely more of a virtue than pride, but it's it's sort of

like

related to the questions asked earlier,
dealing with like best case scenarios or
worst case scenarios or catastrophizing
and all that. I just kind of leave it a
blank, you know, and it's it still
surprises me a lot when people that I'm
not even very nice to sometimes, like
people at work, like apparently
genuinely like me, you know? It's like
they think that I'm, you know, out
[snorts] of the ordinary or whatever.

And I guess I would agree that I'm out
of the ordinary, but still, I mean, like
even when I was a kid, like a girl would
like me, a pretty girl would like me,
and it's I would just not get it, you

know? Why? Why me?

That kind of thing. But yeah, pride is it's something that I really don't Yeah, I really don't have much rapport with pride. Like at work, you can get pride points and it's it just even just the idea of like working to get pride points. It just seems silly. This pride it it does seem silly to me. And most peop most proud people I mean the pride comes first. It's just like a character trait and then it's just convenient justification for the pride comes later. And if if they can't be proud of being handsome or rich or intelligent or, you know, in great

physical shape, they'll be proud of how many beers they can drink without puking or how many women they've seduced or, you know, how big their feet are or just anything.

The pride comes first as a general rule.

And um I don't know. Some people might think that I'm just a stuck up prick or something, but I

at least at the the conceptual

intellectual level, I can't really

relate to it very much just being proud,

you know. Aren't you proud of of him?

Yeah. It's like [clears throat]

um I think in Buddhism, Terravada

Buddhism like the wholesome the

wholesome alternative to being proud of

somebody would be muda which is one of the four Brahma vihara is one of the four divine abidings and muda is being happy that someone else is happy. You know you're glad that someone has had good fortune. You know, it's just like a sympathetic joy. You know, you're h you you feel happy because this person that you like is happy. You know, it's sort of like you give a a present to somebody and they really like it. That makes you happy. Or, you know, the the the grandma who's making banana bread and the little kids are all just hopping up and down. They like it so much. then that makes grandma feel happy and she's not proud

of them for eating the banana bread but she's happy because they're happy you know it's just sort of like this contagious happiness so I mean that would be fine you know your sons do something new or skillful and you praise them you know that's that's one thing that a lot of parents don't get I think I I mean I shouldn't be giving advice to parents very much because I'm not a parent myself at least listen I'm unaware of being on. But it's like you don't just punish them when they do something bad. I mean, sometimes that's necessary, but you also praise them and reward them when they do something good. And I mean, you don't [clears throat]

necessarily have to be proud. I mean, it can happen. I mean, if I had kids, I might be proud of my kids if they did something good. you know, come home with straight A's or something and yeah, you'd sort of praise them and be glad about it, maybe brag. Like my father, he used to he used to brag about me to his brothers and sisters sometimes, you know, I'd come home with like some scholarship or something and he'd be immediately go to the phone and brag to his sister about how smart his kid was. And kids really eat that stuff up. You know, when when your own parents are like bragging about you, they don't even

know you're listening. You're you're like listening in the other room about that, you know, your parent brag, your dad bragging about you, then yeah, that makes a kid feel really good.

But, uh, I mean, you can do that without actual pride to praise your kids when they do good and and just be happy that your kids are good instead of bad largely for their own good. I mean, you want your kids to be good people and not bad people. You want them to, you know, be productive, wellbalanced members of society and not just, you know, drugaddicted, you know, troublemakers.

So, I mean, you can,

you know, have happiness when your kids do well without being proud about it.

And pride really is it's a kind of egoism because that's really what mana is in Pali. It's it's sort of literally the the the literal translation of mana in Pali is measuring.

So someone who's proud is sort of measuring themselves against somebody else. And in the ataga, it even goes so far as to say that if you consider yourself to be superior to another, that's mana. That's pride or conceit. If you consider yourself to be inferior to someone, that's also conceit. And if you consider yourself to be equal to someone

else, that's also conceit. Because in every single case, you're measuring yourself up against somebody else. Just measuring yourself up. That's essentially what mana is. And if you measure yourself up way bigger than somebody else, that would be what is called pride in the west. And you know, just essentially it's a feeling of being superior.

[sighs] So how do I deal with it? I see it in other people and then it's just kind of I don't know just kind of embarrassing I guess if they're really extreme about it but I don't see it a lot. I mean I usually deal with humble workingclass people if I deal if I'm

dealing with other people at all at least you know in the outside world. My sweetheart doesn't seem to be extremely proud.

I'm I don't strike myself as being particularly proud of a human being. I mean, humility is something I admire in others. The the people at work that I tend to like the most are the are humble people. They're just unassuming, not bragging. You know, the guy that works next to me, he's he's like overseeing the section next to mine. He's bragging a lot, trying to be a hot shot. And I mean I can like him anyway, but still it's it's it's not as likable as the guy

who works on the other side of me who I mean to some degree he'll even go into like self-deprecation which I don't like you know it's like I can like say hey stop bad mouthing my friend you know when he's saying something bad about himself

but

yeah I mean pride may be hard to see in oneself which is maybe why I don't see much in myself. But I mean again the the standard the panacea in terraata

Buddhism for any kind of unskillful mental state is mindfully note it. Note it and let it go. Do not identify with it. Don't just you know get carried away by it. Just observe it with emotional

detachment. It's just a mental state that it's arising and let it go.

But you have to do that perpetually because you can't just do it two or three times and then forget about it and then expect this problem to be solved because it won't be.

And I'm just going to move on to Scooterain's next question which is

do people have a duty specifically in the West where population decline is occurring and possibly to dangerously low levels to have offspring? Follow-up question, which uh still is only three. Follow-up question. Would things like

homosexuality or even becoming a monk be being a reproductive dead end be negative in a way? So, I guess I'll just have to separate this, make an extra question and deal with it after I deal with the first question. Do people have a duty to have offspring? Okay. No. From the Buddhist point of view, no. It doesn't matter. I mean, even if the human race died out, which it isn't going to do, but even if we just like stopped reproducing until we went extinct, I mean, from the Buddhist point of view, it wouldn't really matter. Not that it's going to happen because Buddhism predicts that humans are just going to be on this earth for thousands

and thousands and thousands of years.

Um I mean you can like from a sort of a
ethnocentric point of view say well
you know the white race you know the
European ethnicity or group of
ethnicities is dwindling dangerously so
we should reproduce you know better to
have one white child and curse the dark
ones that kind of thing but I mean from
a from an ethical point of view no it's
it has nothing to do with ethics. It's
just a matter of more politics or
sociology than ethics.

So, you don't have a duty to have kids.

And that's kind of lucky for me because
when I was younger, first of all, from

the age of like 17, I was planning on renouncing the world and becoming a monk. So, I mean, I wasn't really planning on having a family. But even if I hadn't become a monk back then, like back in the 1980s, late 70s and 80s, I mean, there's always this end of the world hysteria going on. You know, climate change is one of the most recent ones that this the technological singularity might be a more realistic one. Back in the the 70s and 80s, it was you had the ozone layer, but that would be survivable. you know, we'd all just be wearing hazmat suits and we go outside slathering ourselves with, you know, an eighth of an inch of

zinc or something.

But still, there was like thermonuclear Armageddon, which is still a possibility. It's it's it's really weird to me how that was just like, you know, the big thing that was the the danger, the threat to the world was World War II, through thermonuclear Armageddon, and even more countries have nukes now. and the cold war. It's like the powers that be, the upper establishment doesn't want to get rid of a cold war.

So, I [snorts] mean, it's still a danger now, but for some reason, you know, it's like the propagandists just say, you know, they're just, you know, they got

some other shiny thing that they're saying here, be be freaked out about this.

And then, of course, it was overpopulation. Like, back in the 70s, it was we were going to just overpopulate. there's just by the 20th century it's just going to be just famine and billions of people starving to death which of course hasn't happened and even with regard to like the white ethnicity the the European family of ethnicities or whatever you want to call it Caucasians

I mean we're not going to die out because what's happening is the sort of the the decadent aeat people mostly

leftists are they're not reproducing but
the conservatives

like Amish people are still reproducing

like bunnies and so what's going to

happen is leftism may die out but

conservatism is going to grow and that's

why one reason I suppose why the left

has this strategy of just trying to

convert the children like in you know

schools that are really like

indoctrination camps

just you know they're not having their

own kids so they got to convert somebody

else's kids to become um the next

generation of leftists,

but it doesn't work very well. Like the

the Shakers, I don't know if there's any Shakers left. It was it was a a Christian sect in America and celibacy was just mandatory for shakers and so they just died out.

But I mean, it may be that uh the future is for in Western civilization, maybe for like Mormons and and Amish people, that sort of thing.

Let's see here.

But people do not really have a duty, at least not from an unethical duty from a Buddhist point of view, to have children. In fact, it's kind of the other way around. you know, you're better off not having kids from a Buddhist point of view or from the point

of view of the book of Ecclesiastes in
the Old Testament

because in a way you're sort of damning
somebody to one of the relatively more
comfortable levels of hell.

But I mean, it's
it's their karma.

They're going to get born anyway.

So yeah, you do not have a duty to have
offspring. So I'm moving on to

Scooterain's third question here. The
follow-up question on the second one.

Would things like homosexual
homosexuality or even becoming a monk be
a reproductive being a reproductive dead
end be negative in a way? It could be

negative in like an evolutionary point of view. Not ethically though. I mean homosexuality you could say from a Buddhist point of view that's an ethical problem just because lust is a problem. Whether it's lust for a woman or lust for a man or lust for for anything else, it's still lust and it's to that extent it's craving which is the cause of all suffering and you're better off without it. But most people just aren't. And the Buddha was cool with that. You know, he just acknowledged, you know, Jesus of Nazareth apparently was the same way. Just not everybody's ripe for it. So those who are ready, here's the teachings

and the rest of you, well follow as well as you can if you please. You know, even to follow it a little bit is better than not following at all.

But I remember Echart Tollah I think in his first famous book u talked about homosexuality and said that in certain ways

homosexuals can actually have an advantage simply because they're they're kind of on the on the margins. You know they're they're more liinal than just an ordinary heterosexual person. So in a way that kind of helps them to be a little bit more detached from samsara at least potentially in some cases. But of

course in other cases there are homosexual men that are just like completely depraved and had over a thousand sexual partners and go to anonymous orgies and all this kind of stuff.

So

it depends on the individual and the individual's mental states.

But um just being like an evolutionary dead end is not ethically negative. I mean the Buddha himself was an evolutionary dead end according to tradition. He had only one child, his son Rahula. And then he can I mean he ordained his son Rahula as a monk and he became celibate. And so you know the

Godma clan has pretty much become extinct. At least those that are nobody is descended from the Buddha.

Millions and millions of people are descended from Jenis Khan but nobody is descended from the Buddha now or from well maybe from Jesus. And that's that's kind of it may be that Jesus did have kids. There's no mention of them in the in the Bible, of course, but it's still possible.

But then again, even the Buddha may have sewn some wild oats. I mean, he had a harum of beautiful girls living in living in the palace with him.

So maybe one of them

became the the mother of a nation. Who knows?

Ah, but I mean if being a reproductive dead end is negative in a way, it's not an ethical way. It's it's more of like an if you're like a Darwinist or something, evolutionary biologist, then you it could be be seen as something that is not optimal or like a white nationalist or something like that.

But ethically,

it's fine. And I'm moving on to the next question. This is from Maitraa Buddha.

[snorts]

And Maitraa Buddha asked kind of an interesting question that I'm not fully equipped to answer I'm sure. He says,

"How would you describe the change in consciousness of Sedarta Godma almost dying from starvation [clears throat] being approached by a young girl offering a bowl of milk rice to Sedarta Godma meditating at the base of the bodhic tree and becoming a Buddha and coming up with a middle path." And I wrote an essay long ago back before I started blogging. This was just written on paper. The way Fred Flintstone used to write his philosophical essays. And I had this. It's like a hypothesis. And I'm mainly going to answer this question hypothetically in that it's fairly common in

Christianity for example where a person is trying to be a good person. and you know they're trying to live up to the ideals of the Bible of the New Testament especially because the ideals of the Old Testament aren't particularly high but he's trying to you know serve God do God's will and he just can't do it so finally he hits this crisis kind of crisis I was mentioning earlier where it's like I just can't do it God I just offer myself up to you I'm entirely you know I'm your grace if I go to heaven it's going to be entirely your grace I just throw myself at your mercy. And in a way, they just kind of give up. And when that happens, it's like they

they've had that crisis and they're just born again. And that happened to me to some degree when I was a monk after I've been a monk about 10 years. It was like I'm just struggling against my own defilements. You know, it's like trying to like ruthlessly eradicate your own imperfections and it just doesn't work that way. Maybe if you have absolute stainless steel faith like some kind of medieval Roman Catholic saint, maybe then. But some eclectic westerner, you know, 20th century westerner at the time, early 21st century westerner, I mean, trying to perfect yourself through your own efforts. I mean, you

just hit a wall at some point or another
and then it's like you just give up.

It's like the great surrender. You just
surrender. It's just I can't do it, you
know? I'm

It's it's Buddhism kind of accepts this
and Christianity really accepts it. You
know, they say, you know, the only way
you're going to go to heaven is through
the divine grace. But in Buddhism, it's
like, you know, there's no guarantees.

And really, you perfect yourself through
mindful detachment. Just you're not
trying to eradicate unskillful mental
state so much as just whatever arises,
you just note it and let it go. You just
don't feed it, don't reinforce it. and

then just whatever is supposed to happen happens and you can just accept that.

So getting back to the Buddha, I I think it's possible as a hypothesis that he, you know, he tried everything that was available in the spiritual tradition of India at the time. You know, he he mastered, you know, the meditative states, still wasn't enlightened. Then he started torturing himself, you know, like the Jains and the Ajivakas were doing, and that wasn't working either. He he almost died because of that. And so finally, it could be that he just had this crisis or just this surrender. It's like that's not working. Nothing works.

This woman is offering me some good food. I'm just going to sit down, eat the food, and then just meditate.

And it may be that that's what happened.

According to tradition, you know, he made this resolve. I'm not going to get up from this tree until I become fully enlightened. But that's really not the way it works in my opinion.

It may be that it was like he had tried everything, tried as hard as he could.

He was like this spiritual genius.

Anyway, he was trying at a very advanced level. Still nothing was working. So, it's like there was just like this something clicked or snapped and he just it was just like this state of supreme

spiritual surrender where he just
stopped trying and he was there.

That's all it takes. It's the struggle
is one of the things that keep is
keeping you from being enlightened. Even
this struggle against your own
defilements keeps you defiled
because struggling against something
just makes it stronger in a way.

So the change in consciousness of of
Sedarta Godma

almost dying from starvation being
attract approached by a young girl
offering a bowl of milk rice and then
him meditating at the base of the bodhic
tree and becoming a Buddha. Yeah, I mean

trying to second guess the mental states of Samasam Buddha is just ridiculous.

So, the best I'm going to do is just offer that up as just like this

hypothesis, this sort of like a thought experiment that really he just tried as

hard as he could and it nothing was

working. And so this woman offers him

some good food, milk, rice, you know,

better food than he was eating at the

time. He just all right, I'm just going

to eat it. And you know I won't I won't

say that he just thought like [__] it

but still you know just he just relaxed.

He stopped struggling against his

defilements. Stopped struggling to

become enlightened. And I mean it was

like he had already eradicated all of his other attachments. The only attachment he had left was the attachment to becoming enlightened. And then at the end just through this supreme surrender he just abandoned even that attachment and there he was fully enlightened.

I'm not insisting that's the way it happened but that is like a hypothesis I offer for consideration.

And I'm going to move on to my Buddha's next

see next question here. How would you describe the transition of the consciousness of the Buddha dying and

entering pari nirvana?

Well, [sighs] I mean I should have looked up the the uh maha let's see par nibbana suta which is the suta and the din kaya that describes the Buddha's final days and you know his death and everything.

Well, the transition of consciousness according to tradition is he was having these racking pains, these abdominal pains after eating some bad pork or some people nowadays, some doctors are saying it's it's an ailment common to well I mean not extremely common but it happens mainly with very elderly people where they start getting like gang green of the intestinal tract.

you know, it's just like their body is starting to just die from the inside out, and that can be extremely painful. They think maybe that's what the Buddha had, and it wasn't really some kind of bad pork that he ate.

But anyways, the Buddha was in intense racking pain. And so, according to the tradition, he went into Janna. First Janna, then second Janna, then third Janna, then fourth Janna, which originally was the highest Janna. But then by the time this text had reached its completed form, he went into like the the formless Jas. And then he may have even gone into a higher like like

>> [clears throat]

>> uh Noda Samopathy or something which is even higher than the highest Janna. And then he ca but then he came back down to first Janna and then went back up to fourth Jonah again and then died in fourth J. And it could be that traditionally he died in fourth Janna because fourth Janna was as high as it went in the Buddhist time and then after these Indian systematizers added extra Jas and everything they had to sort of modify the story. So he went into all these higher Jas too. But then, you know, in a certain amount of like faithfulness to the original version of the story, he had to go back to first

Jonah and then just went as far as
fourth Janna and died in fourth Janna
because at least in some sutas, fourth
Janna is like the traditional jumping
off point for nibbana.

But uh the transition of consciousness
of the Buddha dying and I mean again
it's secondguing the mental states of
the Buddha but according to tradition he
was in very deep meditative states when
he died.

So I mean [snorts]
nonverbal, you know, just very subtle.
His consciousness was just, you know, a
flat calm, you know, no
no kind of distracting perceptions or

thoughts or ideas or anything, you know. He was he wasn't talking or anything. He wasn't thinking in words probably. He just went into like a deep meditative state. Just kind of blissed out and just faded out from there.

That would be my guess just based on tradition because that's all we really have to work with.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Romeo.

And Romeo says, [clears throat] "My questions are about the practical logistics of working out one's karma in this life. I'm confused about how one's how one differentiates between a general difficult life issue that comes with

simply being a human being living in
samsara and an issue connected
specifically to one's karma. Well, it's
all specifically connected to your karma
because it's your karma that you're born
into as a human being into the human
condition. So even just the the basic
things of the human condition feeling
hungry sometimes

I mean even that is karma it's just that
you have like predominantly human karma
at the time at least that's that's
what's at the surface working its way
out

so a general difficult life issue that
comes with simply being a human being is

in samsara is still karma anything that you experience any like according to abidama any way that you have any feeling feeling that you have is necessarily the fruition of karma. It's kama paka. So absolutely every feeling that you experience is the fruition of karma. And it's it's like your own mental states and that's I mean just the fact that you know being a human I mean the fact that you were born a human in the first place is also because of karma.

And then you stub your toe that's because of karma. You feel hungry that's because of karma.

get a toothache that's because of karma

also

because it's all mindmade.

So let's see here. Yeah, there is no
there is no differentiation at all. Any
feeling that you experience pleasant or
unpleasant is the fruition of your own
karma or karma.

sort of like uh Schopenhauer's will that's
just the driving force of all beings
anything in existence in samsara you
know it's it's a manifestation of this
will and that's that's what kama is I
mean that's kama is very similar to
schopenhauer's will

[clears throat] so yeah there is no
differentiation between your comma and

then what you just inherit as part of
the human condition because what you
inherit as part of the human condition
is also comma

So, I'm just going to move on to Romeo's
next question. He [clears throat] says,
"Also, what is the practical method of
working out a karmic issue? And how can
one tell if or when the karmic issue is
resolved? Feel free to site examples
from your own life to illustrate the ex
answers to my questions." Well, I mean,
you don't even worry about it. You just
be be here now. Be here in the present
moment. Don't worry about whether some
karmic issue is resolved.

>> [sighs]

>> So,

[snorts] I mean, if it just doesn't

arise anymore,

then there's a good chance it's

resolved,

especially if it has had opportunities

to arise, but hasn't.

So, a practical method of working out a

karmic issue.

[clears throat] I mean, the standard

panacea is uh just whatever arises, note

it, and let it go. Just be mindful of

whatever arises with a certain amount of

mindful detachment.

That's the best you can do because that

means your karma is I mean your past

karma is reaching fruition but you're not reacting to it thereby creating more karma. So if something can arise and you have no reaction to it, you you're not even drawn to have any re reaction that would be a pretty good indication that the karmic issue is resolved. I mean, if something used to bother you or something used to elicit some kind of positive or negative reaction and now it doesn't anymore, then I mean, it could be that you're just too old. But there is also a chance that it's just worked itself out that through whatever wisdom you've got, whatever mindfulness you've got that it just ran its course and it's no longer there. It could be I mean some

some karma in life if we go with
Buddhist philosophy can just be a
one-off you know it's like you had this
karma to have somebody ram your car at
one point and

I mean maybe you you had some
philosophical detachment from that you
know even if you did have some uh you
know phys you had some emotional
reaction or whatever I mean at least the
main brunt of the karma has exhausted
itself and then there's just going to
some sort of like side effect karma that
that comes from your reaction to having
your car smashed or something.

So practical method of working out a

karmic issue. Just follow the middle path. Don't seek pleasure. Don't seek pain. Just live your life and whatever is going to happen to you, it happens. and then you just don't react or I mean if you even get a second chance even if you do react if you react mindfully you know let's say you have aversion but you note the aversion then still you got that second chance and still you're doing okay but just being lost in some sara and just reacting with positive or negative you know attraction and aversion and so forth just throughout life yeah you're just wallowing in it and you're not karmic issues are going to be create new ones will be created at

about the same rate as you're you're
like resolving the older ones.

[sighs] So just having a certain mindful
detachment from it all so that whatever
arises you're not going to be like
attached and having some strong reaction
then that's about the best you can do
and it doesn't even really matter if the
karmic issue is resolved because I mean
even a fully enlightened Buddha
according to Theravada Buddhist tradition
I mean all of his karma is not resolved
you know it's like stuff is still
happening to
Mahammogalana, one of the two chief
disciples, was beaten to death, just

beaten into a pulp by hostile non
Buddhists. I mean, there's still karma
there. It's just that when you become
enlightened, it's you're just not
reacting anymore. It's just you're not
attached to any of it. It's just nature
taking its course. And that that can
just keep happening even after you
become fully enlightened.

>> [sighs]

>> So don't even bother trying to figure
out if some karmic issue is resolved. I
mean, if it that the issue just doesn't
arise anymore or if it does arise and
you're just completely completely cool
with it, you know, it's no surge of
attraction or surge of aversion. It's

just equanimity, then there's good chance it's resolved. But still, I mean, you shouldn't latch on to it's resolved or it's not resolved because it doesn't even really matter.

You can't really be sure anyway, as far as I can tell.

So, I guess I'm just going to move on.

Next question. This is from Jimmy Lad.

And Jimmy Lad says, "You [clears throat] spoke a few episodes ago about how you didn't fully attain Janna. For a certain period, you would attain it, but then it would slip away and it kept eluding you.

I know it is impossible to describe these higher states, but what was it

like? And how did it feel to momentarily attain Janna? And again, Janna is such a controversial term with nobody really fully agreeing with everybody else on what exactly Janna means. I mean, originally Janna probably just meant meditation. And the four Jas were just the four stages or four levels of meditation. With first Janna even being like beginning level, you know, you're you're meditating correctly. It's just that you still have like like a primary object in your labeling or whatever because you're still thinking in first Jonah.

So I consider the term Janna to be almost useless, tell you the truth.

And [clears throat] then people would have monkeyied with it, you know, for centuries after the Buddha started using the term.

Um, [snorts] but I mean when I was in my highest mental highest meditative states, and I've I've explained this before, it's like your mind is just it's like I mentioned earlier, it's like your mind is just a flat calm. It's like the surface of a clear pool. And a thought might start to arise, but it's like a fish arising from down below. And you can start seeing the ripples on the surface before the before the fish even comes to the surface. And then your

mindfulness is so acute that it just as soon as you become aware of it, it just flattens back out again. And you're just sitting there in just clarity and silence. It's like your mind is clear like glass and you're not thinking anything.

which has caused me to think that the closest the closest that most normal people get to Janna le like higher jhonic states would be when they're in the middle of a sneeze when you're wide awake and you're not thinking anything.

So yeah, I mean when you're in a state like that where your mind is just a flat calm, it's just you're hyper alert because you're catching I mean you're

aware of thoughts even when the first movements start to arise and then it just stops. You know, it's just clarity and silence and just wide awake consciousness.

And I mean, you can sit like that for for over an hour.

And I mean, it might be a thought will start to arise, but I mean, it's not like absolute perfect silence, but it's like the clarity is there. And the silence will start to be disrupted a little bit, but you don't just follow up on it. You don't just get lost in this chain of association. It may be that occasionally even a full thought like a

word or something will arise but you just don't follow it. You just note it, let it go or you don't even really note it. You're just aware of it without even having to note.

So it's you're seeing without looking, you know, it's not volitional really.

And your mind is just it's just wide awake and clear like glass.

And I really do not think that somebody who's going into like a state like a hibernating squirrel where they're oblivious to everything around them that that is some sort of sama samadei like some higher uh johnic state which a lot of people think you know it's just accepted nowadays by the mainstream of

terra Buddhism. you get into fourth
Janna, it's like you stop breathing and
your pulse rate is is down like
hibernating squirrel levels and you're
just completely oblivious to everything
around you and like how is that higher
consciousness? How are you getting
closer to being awake when you're
practically in a coma?

I do think that aic state is is like
hyper aware. You're at a higher level of
awakeness than an ordinary waking state
of consciousness, even though you may be
sitting motionless in a cave somewhere.
And I guess I'm just going to move on to
Jimmy Lad's next question.

Is there a word in Buddhism, in Pali for a state that is only partially realized and has been glimpsed but not fully conquered and attained? And there may be. I'm sure there's words in Pali that just mean like, you know, just glimpsed or or just like incomplete. Certainly, there's going to be words in Pali that mean like incomplete, not fully mastered yet or like you know the seikkha is someone who is still in training. That would be like the the lower three uh stages of aryanhood you know soddhana, sakkadagami, anagami, they would be so because they're still in training. So their enlightenment has been glimpsed but not fully conquered and attained. So

I mean in different contexts with regard to different things I'm sure there's poly terms that would indicate that it's not fully mastered but still incomplete. But with regard to Janna, like in the God Suta where God gets Janna and loses it and gets it and loses it and gets it and loses it till he's at wit's end and finally decides to selfdelete that I don't think there is a special word that applied to his Jonah saying that he had not fully mastered it. In fact, I never really came across that concept until I was reading the the the works of St. John of the Cross who was a Roman Catholic a contemplative

discalsted Carmelite Catholic monk and
I mean he said something that was
humbling to me where he's talking about
the different stages what what a
Catholic calls high contemplation a
Buddhist would call a higher Jhana. So
he's saying that for a contemplative
monk to like get into the levels of
contemplation where you're not thinking
anymore and then lose it and then gain
it and then lose it and gain it and lose
it based on his experience as like a
father confessor at like meditation
monasteries. He said, "Well, God just
has different plans for you."
And that was that was humbling to me.
It's like, damn. He's not saying that

that there's hope really. He's just saying that I mean if you're if you're that kind of a person where you get it and lose it and get it and lose it, you don't just fully master it where you can just reliably sit down and go into these higher states which some people do.

Apparently the Buddha did that you know it's just you still haven't fully mastered it. So it's not reliable at least not for very long. Then he's just saying, "Well, God has other plans for you." Because that was apparently his experience just as a father confessor at what were essentially meditation monasteries and meditation

convents. He was a father confessor to nuns, too.

So

yeah, I'm sure there are certain specific poly words for states that are partially realized like sea with regard to just the state of being in samsara. It's the state of unenlightenment.

But

um yeah, I don't think that there is really a technical term that you can just attach as an adjective to or an adverb to another word which indicates that you haven't fully mastered it yet. You, you know, you've got glimpses of it. You're getting there, but you haven't fully mastered it

yet. It may be I'm no authority on the
poly language. I'm certainly no
philologist, no bik when it comes to
understanding the poly language. So they
there may be a word but I don't know
what it would be and I'm going to move
on to the next question. This is from
Tzasiz

and Tzasqueziz says are you obliged to
eat everything people put in your bowl
in alms round and then some some wise
guy said that there's the mandatory
story of the severed finger which is in
the terraata it's uh Maha
Maha Kasapa who was you know senior monk
in the song after the Buddha at the time

of the Buddha's paring and he was the
the the great disciple who had mastered
do tongo or aesthetic practice. And
there's a story about how the this
lepous beggar puts food into
Mahakasapa's bowl and one of his
fingertips just breaks off into into
Mahakasapa's bowl. And Mahakasa, he
doesn't raise an eyebrow. Just total
poker face. Complete equanimity. He just
accepts the the severed finger in the
bowl along with the the rice or whatever
it was. And then when he goes and sits
down to eat his meal, he doesn't even
take it out. He just kind of moves it
over to one side. Technically, it would
have been against the rules for him to

eat it because monks are not allowed to eat human flesh.

Um, but you're not obliged to eat everything people put in your bowl. I mean, for starters, of course, people can put something in your bowl. It's just not allowable. You know, they lion meat, for example. Of course, it's also a rule that monk is supposed to ask if anyone puts meat into the bowl, uh, what kind of meat is this? And I used to do that really because I mean for the most part um you're not likely to get anything on the list of forbidden meat when you're going through a village in Burma. But there is a rule and almost no

monks follow this rule, including the strict ones. But there is a rule that if a monk is accepts meat into his bowl, he has to ask about that meat to make sure that it is allowable.

Here in the west, it's more likely. I mean, you could bear meat, and monks aren't allowed to eat bear meat. And who knows, there could be some hunter or a friend of a hunter who actually offers bear meat to a monk, but it's not like they will be getting like hyena meat or tiger meat or anything like that. I mean, some rich Chinese people might spend, you know, tens of thousands of dollars to eat tiger meat. Wouldn't surprise me at all.

But I mean, if you're a vegetarian, you can't you shouldn't refuse the meat, but you don't have to eat it. So, there is a rule that says a monk is supposed to eat systematically,

start at one side of his bowl and just work his way to the other side. But still, you can rotate the bowl. So, if something you really don't like is on the side you're not going to get to, or you can even like move stuff over to the other side before you start eating.

So there's some food that you just can't stand it if it's just awful food. You're not absolutely required to eat it. You might eat it anyway just as a kind of

spiritual practice and equanimity or something. Like bamboo shoots for me. I just acquired this hatred of bamboo shoots when I was in Burma because I was living in this place during the rainy season where everyone and her sister was offering bamboo shoots and it was it was just awful.

I [clears throat] got really skinny that that rainy season.

So no, a monk is not obliged to eat everything people put in the bowl.

Although a monk should not refuse anything unless it's really just not allowable.

So let's see. Tascus is a second question. Which Buddhist tradition King

Ashoka was spreading throughout his empire? Well, the Terravadans would say, of course, that he was spreading Terravada, but apparently it was like he didn't he was not really sectarian. the the the different schools of Buddhism in and in Ashoka's time were were pretty similar still you know there was minor differences but they were still fairly similar it was all pre- Mahayana you know shravakayana you know so-called hinayana Buddhism back then and it I've read a theory anyway maybe there's some real evidence backing this up that when he would be sending out missionaries in the different directions it would just

be whatever school of Buddhism
was closest to the frontier. He just
sent missionaries from them.

So

yeah, I think that he didn't really
single out one tradition at that time.

Um he may have patronized what the terra
Buddhists call the third council which
was during his reign. In which case it
may be that he really did favor
Terravada.

But um there is apparently some kind of
evidence that I don't recall clearly
that not all of the missionaries going
out to what's the word procilitize you
know like he sent his own son apparently
um mahinda as like senior monk to the

the mission in Sri Lanka. So I mean that could just be tradition. I mean, maybe the Terraata Buddhists are just just kind of making up the idea that Ashoka's own son was a Terravada Buddhist monk, but you know, the Northwest wasn't really Terravada territory. So maybe the the missionaries he sent into, you know, the like the Hellenistic states, you know, like uh to Egypt and and and so on, the the the Seleucid Empire and so forth. He did send missionary Buddhist missionaries, but there's a good chance that they weren't Terraata. They were just members of some school that was closest to the frontier there, and it

was just more convenient to send them because they were closer.

[sighs]

So, I mean, Ashoka was very much in favor of like spiritual toleration. you know, he did not want, you know, any school, any religious school to say, we are the only correct school, everyone else is wrong and then just have them like holy wars and this kind of [__] He I mean he did not want that at all.

India in in in like fairness to ancient India. I mean they would have they'd have some acrimony, you know, they'd have some spirited debates, heated debates and so forth, but still they tended to take seriously this

non-hatred, nonviolence, non-hostility stuff. And you know, they they got along, you know, they would have civil debates, you know, polite debates.

And you know some of the Buddhist universities like Nalanda you know there'd be many different schools of Buddhism there they'd be doing their pimoka like their ceremonies separately because schism had already occurred by then but still I mean they're all attending the same classes and so forth. They're all fairly well getting along up until they were genocided by Muslim Turks.

So

you could say that Ashoka favored
Terraata but was not exclusively
favoring Terravada
especially if you take seriously the
idea that his son was ordained as a
Terraod and Biku. Um or you could just
say that he wasn't [clears throat]
really like picking favorites and it was
just whatever schools were you know in
that area were the ones he endorsed in
that area. And if he sent missionaries
beyond the the frontiers, they'd be
mainly monks that were closer to the
frontiers.

But I really can't say for absolute
certain because I don't think that
terravada tradition is completely

unbiased. Clearly, Terravada Buddhist tradition is biased in favor of Terravada Buddhism. So they want to believe that the Buddha spoke Poly and the Buddha himself was the first Terravada Buddhist.

But it's it's that is somewhat of an exaggeration.

Not a completely madeup fabrication, but it is kind of a a biased some some biased wishful thinking and exaggeration taking place.

[snorts]

[sighs] So I guess I'm just going to move on to Trezasiz's third question which is are bikunis or bikuni robes in

vineia different than those for beus or
are they exactly the same? And I already
I already explained to him in the
Discord server, but this is for the
benefit of all you out there who really
are keen to know about the robes of
ancient Buddhist nuns that the ancient
Buddhist nuns had two extra robes. Like
the monk has three robes. They're
[clears throat] all just rectangles of
cloth. One is the lower robe or the the
udasa that no, the Andawasaka. It's been
a while. The Andawasaka which he wears
as like a sarong. gets wrapped around
his waist, held on with a belt. Then
there's the udraasa which is the main
upper robe and then there's a thick

double robe called the sanati.

[clears throat] So the nuns have those same three but then they've got two extra ones. One is the chest binding cloth that they would wear as a brazier.

I assume the more flat chested ones could just have like one just wrapped around them somehow and then maybe the more buxom ones would kind of have it like in a sling kind of going crossways and like tying in the back of the neck or something and then they would also have another extra robe that was an extra lower robe to wear when they were menstruating.

So they would have five the the same

three as the monks have plus the chest binding cloth and the menstruation robe. So and then probably the bikunis nowadays that this the so-called bikunis nowadays don't care anything about that because they really did not insist upon becoming bikunis because they want to follow the rules of bikunis that are mandatory. Instead they want official status as beunies in for the sake of you know the political ideal of equality for women and so forth and then they just don't follow the rules.

That has been my limited experience with the new bikunis. At any rate, so I'm just going to move on to the next question which is from SG

and SG says, "It seems to me that someone in lay life might make better progress than a monastic. For instance, if I am quick to anger and decide to become a monastic, all I am really doing is removing the conditions where that arises, but that propensity is still there dormant and might emerge if conditions change." In contrast, in lay life, I can actually engage with the emotion and practice mindfulness and insight practices that can root out the problem at its source for good. What do you think about this idea? Well, I've had kind of similar ideas. For example, modern monks who are living in

comfortable monasteries, they know where they're going to sleep that night. They know where their next meal is coming from. Then in a way they're just sort of isolated from temptation, isolated from like challenges to their equanimity and a lot of them just don't make much progress because there's not much opportunity for them to make much progress. Like Rahm Das used to tell the story of this holy man who lived like in a cave or a forest somewhere and he's meditating alone in silence until light's just shining out of his eyes and he figures okay I'm ready to to rejoin society and he goes back into town and almost right away someone jostles

against him on the sidewalk and
[clears throat] irritation arises. Hey,
don't you realize I'm a holy man? Will
you jump and bumping me like this? And
so it was [clears throat] all of his
cultivated holiness was just, you know,
it was in isolation of any challenges.
But once the challenges came back, you
know, it was just it collapsed.

But

the Buddha [clears throat] set up the SA
for a reason that if you're if you're
practicing dharma the way monks were
supposed to practice dhamma like you
read in like the sutin pa and so forth
homeless wanderers just throwing

themselves on the mercy of the universe
so to speak then you're going to have
plenty of challenges and the thing is
being a monk simplifies that. I've said
before that being a lay person is like a
a higher difficulty setting than being a
monk. But the thing is most people if
you're living a lay life, you're just so
bombarded with distractions and
challenges and so forth that you don't
have much of a chance. So it's it's in a
way it's more scientific where you're
isolating yourself and kind of limiting
the challenges into a more simplified
influx so to speak so that you're much
more likely to be able to deal with
those challenges rather than just get

washed away by the flood.

So the Buddha set up the SA for an enlightened reason that I mean if you really are intent on becoming enlightened I mean just the very fact that I mean you're dedicating your life to working for a living and scrolling on X you know attending to your family paying the bills all this kind of stuff then you have less time to dedicate to just like higher practice like deep meditation and so forth, aesthetic practice. I mean, if you're living with a woman, she's not going to want to just sleep on a mat on the floor.

So, definitely to be a monastic,
especially if you're practicing the way
monks are supposed to practice in in the
texts, then yeah, you're you're much
better off than living the lay life
where you get more challenges. But as a
general rule, you're just so completely
inundated with challenges that you just
get swamped with them. You're
overwhelmed. You're just washed away.
You're lost in some sorrow because of
it.

So, nevertheless, I mean, not everybody
is the same. For some people, just
monasticism, just silence and simplicity
and discomfort
is just not optimal for their their

personality makeup or whatever to make the most spiritual progress. They might have to learn how to deal with other humans, for example, or just, you know, whatever it is. They got some need some kind of karmic issue that still needs to be worked out that they can't work out. Living alone in a cave, they got to be in the midst of other people, for example.

So, some people may make better spiritual progress um as lay people and some people may even become enlightened more easily as lay people. But um still just going with statistic, your odds are better if you are a monk who is

practicing, you know, conscientiously
and and more or less correctly.

[sighs and gasps]

And I ran out of coffee.

H.

So yeah, I mean, if you're quick to
anger and decide to become a manaster,
you're still going to get angry because
anger is like pride. I said that pride,
the pride comes first. The
rationalizations for it come later. So
if you're quick to anger and you're
living alone in a cave, you're still
going to get angry. It's just you're
going to get angry at at the rat that's
gnawing on something outside the cave
and keeping you from sleeping at night.

You're going to get annoyed at the ants.
You're going to get annoyed at the
mosquitoes. You're going to get annoyed
at the village loudspeaker. You're going
to get annoyed at the village wood
cutters that are chopping down your
forest. There's still I mean, you're
still going to get angry, but the thing
is, it's going to be simpler. It's going
to be more isolated so that you can
focus on that one thing instead of just
being inundated with all these stimuli
from all different directions.
But as I say, I mean some some people I
mean not everyone is the same.
[cough and clears throat]

And like like I've said before, it's like a simple math problem. If there's let's say let's say your your chances of becoming enlightened are a thousand times greater if you're a monk than if you're a lay person. But if there's 10,000 times more lay people than monks, then still there's going to be 10 times more enlightened lay people than there are enlightened monks.

It is true that being a lay person is a higher difficulty setting, but I mean if you if you can't really even like master the easy difficulty setting, then you're just kind of kidding yourself if you think you're going to master the higher difficulty setting when you couldn't

even like sit alone in a cave, you know,
for for a week straight with nothing to
do. Just stare at the wall and meditate.
because you should be able to do that,
too.

And I guess I'm just going to move on to
the next question. This is from PSA.

And PSA says, "I have a question about
the Canadian government mass deleting
its own people. I read that 95.6%
of people who got Mid, which is like
assisted assisted selfdeion, I guess, in
2024 were white. 95.6% 6% of Canadians
who went to the the the permanent sleep
centers were white in 2024. What's your
opinion on why white people are

self-deing like this? Well, I wouldn't be surprised if 95.6% of the population of Canada is white, in which case then it would just be kind of random, wouldn't it? I mean, what percentage of Canadians are white? I would guess it's it's still pretty high.

They got fewer Mexicans and black people. You might have like a higher number of like Indians or Chinese or something.

So [sighs] what's my opinion on why white people are selfdeing?

Well

gosh.

I mean leftist culture especially is really not particularly pro-white.

Especially I mean it doesn't I mean
white men are like the enemy like the
the neoarxists have replaced the the
bgeoisi or the capitalist class with
just white men

as as like the the the boogeyman.

At least that's the way it has been.

So

see what's my opinion on why white
people are selfdeleting?

Well, I mean, mainly they're just
self-deing by not reproducing,

which is I mean, that's their choice to
make, I suppose.

[sighs]

See, but really, I would guess that

Canada is I mean, has probably a very high percentage of of like people of European ancestry as their population anyhow.

Um, and then just Canada is Canada, you know, it's just

it's just another one of those sort of globalist castrated feminized societies and white men are just pretty much despised.

So, I mean, a lot of weaker feminized kind of beta males who just really can't stand up to society just being biased against them and just essentially insinuating that the world would be a better place if they all selfdeed anyway, then, you know, they just go

with that, I guess.

>> [sighs]

>> But I mean, people that aren't like beta male types, I mean, that can just like enrage them and have them just do the opposite.

You know, they're just going to stand up for themselves.

See? Yeah, I really don't have a whole heck of a lot to say about that. I really don't know very much about Canadian assisted selfdeion.

So, I'm just going to move on to PSA's next question anyway. He says, "Is suffering the only thing that is real? We're we're anata, you know, we're we're

without self. We're something like
consciousness trapped in this
contractual cause and effect experience
called samsara. So is suffering the only
real thing here?" Well,
my opinion is no. And also the
official doctrine of Theravada Buddhism is
no for different reasons. In the
official doctrine of Theravada Buddhism
like Abhidhamma and Abhidhamma
commentaries there's what like 128
ultimate realities with dukkha just
being one.

Um but then there are some saying you
know everything is sankhara dukkha. So
everything in samsara is dukkha of some
kind or at least conducive to dukkha but I

don't consider that to be ultimately real.

So I don't think that dooka is ultimately real. I think you could say consciousness is ultimately real but mental states which would include unhappy mental states those are like symbols and just illusory. It's Maya.

So my own personal interpretation of the situation is no, suffering is not the only thing that is real.

And from the official orthodox terraata point of view, then suffering also is not the only thing that is real. But according to Terraotus because there's

all these other things that are real too
like earth element and fire element and
perception and volition and masculinity
and just all these different realities.

Nibana would be one and consciousness
would be one and all these different
mental states and all these different
forms of matter that'd all be ultimately
real and I just I just can't accept
that. I I think nibbana so long as
you're not naming it symbolizing it then
that would be ultimately real
but [clears throat] dooka is not nibbana
and this almost like the opposite of
nibbana isn't it
because nibbana sometimes is defined as
the cessation of dooka.

So, Dooka would just be sort of like it's like the essence of unreality, you could say. You know, it's sort of like the the atmosphere of the matrix, but it's not ultimately real. And I'm going to move on to the next question. And this person, the protose monk, shame, shame on him because he asked four questions here.

And he asked kind of long questions, too. So, I better just get to the first one, which is not yet transgressive.

He says, "The four stages of enlightenment seem to make sense to me.

Why do you doubt them? I think one of your reasons was their non-appearance in

other religions, but I wouldn't expect other religions to speak of this as it only makes sense in a samsara nibbana context."

Um, four stages of enlightenment. Yeah, I I really doubt that they originally meant what they have come to mean now. like a sodapana probably was just like a a new convert to Buddhism in all likelihood and there is evidence to support that. For example, there's this obscure rule, a py desania rule in the py mocha saying that a monk should not be overly dependent upon a family of sodaponas.

And I mean the reason [clears throat] is that they're just too rich in faith and

they I mean they might try to donate beyond their means through excess of devotion that sort of thing.

Also, um, like I've mentioned before, like the first several sutas of the Idiaka, an obscure collection of texts in the Kurikanikaya, apparently uses anagami as a synonym for enlightenment. And it does make sense, a non- returnturner. It may have originally meant a fully enlightened being, but then it's just the systematizers, you know, tried to just kind of redefine it so that it fit more nicely into the system or whatever. Also I mean it is true no other system

mentions enlightenment and I do not or
mentions the four stages of arya hood and
I just cannot believe that only
Theravada Buddhism has some monopoly on
enlightenment even Mahayana Buddhists
interpret the four stages differently
different schools of Buddhism had
different interpretations of these same
four stages one there's one cardinal
Mahayana text I don't remember exactly
which one Lankavatara Sutra or
something like that that had like one of
the four stages being like a Paccekabuddha
and it just it was just this
bizarre I think they actually equated
the Anagami with with a a Buddha or
something and also like some texts like

the the uh the samaya palasuta which is
an relatively old text and it's one of
the first texts in the dean kaya I think
it's like the the second sutra suta in
the dean

the second suta of the entire
pseudapitica

where the Buddha is explaining to King
Ajata the this insequential order of
advancement what are the benefits of
renouncing the world and becoming a biku
and he doesn't mention anything about
these four stages you'd think that it'd
be up near the top of the of the the
attainments that you can have but he
goes from like Janna and psychic powers

just straight to enlightenment

So yeah, there's a number of reasons. I mean, St. John of the cross may have been a fully enlightened being and some of his experiences are I mean he was definitely a master of meditation master of Janna

and he did have uh like a threepart system very similar to the three-part system in terara Buddhism of the puja or common worldling the sika or the person still in training which is a person who has attainment and mastery but they're not fully enlightened yet and then you've got thea one no longer in training who is perfected and then St. John of the cross apparently completely

independently of terra Buddhism had the same he had the beginner which is 99.9% of the entire population then he had the adept which is a person who has mastered high contemplation or the the higher [snorts] jas from a Buddhist point of view but is not yet perfected and then he's got to my surprise he had the stage of the perfected the person who has mortified their own self-will and has become just a puppet of of God you know they're just acting entirely on the under the will of God which comes very close to the teachings in Terabana Buddhism just independently of each other just through empirical practical

pragmatic means they just St. John of the cross and the early Indian Buddhists apparently just came upon these ideas separately just because that's the way it is

and so like St. St. John of the Cross says you mortify your own self-will.

You're no longer acting upon will.

In Buddhism, Terraata Buddhism, the fully enlightened being no longer is creating karma, which is will. So, they've got it. I mean, of course, the Terra Buddhists don't say that you're a puppet of God. You're acting under the will of God. You're just you're always just automatically doing the right thing, apparently.

So you can have masters like extremely wise people different parts of the world coming up with similar ideas. They might have different cultural baggage that modifies that you know like the belief in God for the Christians and the lack of same in Buddhists but still it's very similar and this four stages sodapana sakadagami anagami arahhat as just this monopoly of terra Buddhism or some of the earlier earlier schools of Buddhism because even the Mahayana Buddhists had four stages but different definitions for the four stages.

It came to mean something different.

And I just do not believe that terabara

Buddhism has a monopoly on enlightenment.

And you think that it would at least be mentioned in the Somaya Palasut. The higher the higher Jas also aren't mentioned.

So

yeah, I mean that those are my main reasons. I guess and I'm still just I mean people just kind of stubbornly insist upon asking me what sodaponas can do and can't do and all this kind of thing and it's all academic to me because I think that the whole four stages are just made up.

So I'm just going to move on to the proseud's next question.

He says I feel a strong calling to the life of a biku. However, I have only one major concern. If a biku is supposedly a homeless wandering mendicant beggar only allowed to possess a few items and have the four requisites, does this mean a monk cannot read other books? The monk life may satisfy certain spiritual needs, but if I have no access to books or an electronic device with an internet connection, I may have no access to certain literature for satisfying intellectual needs. My second concern about becoming a monk is being limited in doing good for the world. And I also think reading books, the news, etc. can

make one potentially of better use to the world, you being an example of this? Well, there's no question there. Oh, wait. Here it is. Does this mean a [clears throat] monk cannot read other books? Well, I mean, before I became a monk, it was like I had certain concerns like I'm going to have to get rid of my book collection. I had this bookcase full of books and I was still like avidly reading books at the time and I valued my book collection. You know, it was always getting better and better because I had the system if I get a new book, I got to get rid of an old book because they all got to fit on that same bookcase.

So, there was that. I I actually was going to it was a challenge for me to go without watching pro football, although I have zero desire to watch pro football now, but at the time that was a challenge. And also, of course, it was like the the orgasm sex thing.

But I mean, let's see where is where does it say? Where does where does it where does he say intellectual needs? Have no access to certain literature for satisfying intellectual needs. They're not intellectual needs. They are cravings. And so, you're definitely going to have to deal with that. You're going to have to overcome your cravings

for intellectual stimulation or for the news. I knew this one monk. He was a very serious monk. He was a retired surgeon. He was Burmese. He he had been a surgeon, you know, for years. He was upper crust, kind of an aristocratic type. And then when he retired, he became a monk. And he was tried to be a very serious monk, but he had this one addiction. He had to listen to the news on the radio. And still he's like politically oriented. You know, he's still thinking about politics, which is just animal knowledge from the Buddhist point of you read the texts, news, polit politics. That's just like tier chana vija or just animal knowledge. Monks

shouldn't do that kind of stuff. And it may seem like it's difficult like I was talking about my book collection. It was that was a challenge for me that it it was like a difficult choice to make to get rid of almost all my books. I kept a few Dhamma books. I still have like a a copy of the Dhamapata I had since before I was a monk. But once I got rid of them, it was just like getting rid of them was the difficult part. But being rid of them afterwards was easy.

And so for years, um, all of my possessions I could carry, you know, at once. You know, everything I owned, I could just pick it up and go somewhere

else.

Um, for for several years as a monk, but then I start collecting books because, of course, I've got intellectual curiosity, too. Not exactly intellectual needs, but intellectual desires, I guess.

And then before long I had too many books. It was mainly books that I owned. Like half of like just going with weight, most of what I owned was books. That was back before internet, that sort of thing. Especially in Burma, especially in a Burmese forest.

So yeah, that it's it's just another attachment,

this desire for books. I mean I

eventually succumbed to the desire
enough that I started acquiring another
book collection while I was a monk more
more dharmic but still a book collection
but still it's not really a need it's
just craving it's an attachment
and then uh let's see second concern is
about doing good for the world and like
I told you with regard to or I've told
everybody in the Q&A's before Q's and
A's

that [clears throat] uh St. John of the
Cross used to say
that you got two people. One person is
tending the sick and clothing the the
people that don't have clothes and

feeding the hungry and providing homes
to the homeless and just serving mankind
24/7 with just naps every now and then.
And then there's another person who is
engaged in high contemplation in
solitude in a cell. And St. John of the
Cross says this second person is
actually helping the world more than the
first person is. And like the diamond
cutter sutra says something similar that
you could, you know, tend the sick, feed
the hungry, etc., etc. Or you could just
memorize and master one verse from the
Diamond Cutter Sutra. And actually,
you're doing better by memorizing and
mastering one verse from the Diamond
Cutter Sutra than doing all this worldly

stuff. Cuz all this worldly stuff, I mean, you're putting band-aids on a cancer on a cancer patient.

You know, you you're not really curing the cause. You're just treating symptoms.

And if you're practicing high contemplation, you're raising the level of consciousness of the earth. Or you could be like that one person in the Old Testament that God will not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for the sake of one good man.

So there's that too. And I mean it's just worldliness. It's like I don't want to wake up from this dream because I

want to tend to all the dream people
that I'm dreaming. I mean that's
essentially the attitude.

The world is not real.

Not ultimately real anyway. You can say
it's virtually real. seems virtually
real.

So doing good for the world.

Yeah, you you still do better good for
the world just for having just becoming
a sage

even if you stay in solitude for the
rest of your life.

So [sighs]

I think I'm just going to move on to
protoseudamon's third question
and this is a question on engaged

Buddhism. the soda pana bodhicatta he says assuming there is such a thing as stream entry so we're this is already an academic question apparently I was wondering if you are guaranteed enlightenment in seven lifetimes after entering the stream so there's no risk of some sara wouldn't there be an ethical obligation to engage in humanitarian works like feeding the hungry building schools etc I can't get out of my protestant conditioning work ethic it might It seems like if you are liberated, you just might as well help others. But when you're liberated, you realize those others aren't real.

There are inhabitants of a dream that you are dreaming.

But I'm just uh interrupting myself. It seems like if you are liberated, you just might as well help others. There's no loss, only gain. I know. I know that Ara has no use for good, but still, you just might as well help others. I can't really explain it. It just seems obvious.

Apparently it seems obvious to him that these others are ultimately real too. If as you have said an enlightened being and this is still a proseut speaking here. If as you have said an enlightened being will appear no different to an ordinary being the ethical value of his

realization of nibbana is zero. On the other hand engaging in humanitarian works would have a positive ethical value on other beings. And in general, how do you respond to the critics that the Arhant path is selfish? So this is protoseudamon is just asking questions all over the place. The second question divided into two questions and this one is dividing into two questions and you still got a transgressive fourth question which is actually a sixth question.

So [snorts]

I think there's one fairly obvious statement. I mean at least with regard

to [clears throat]

enlightened and unlightened beings. You got people are trapped in a burning building. This is just like a standard Buddhist symbol like a metaphor. We're all in a burning building. So

[clears throat and cough]

obviously it makes more sense to find a way out of the burning building than to stay in the burning building and treat the burn victims. I mean treating the burn victims that's very humanitarian and all but of course the h the building is on fire and [clears throat] there's just going to be more and more burn victims and really the way to help others is to find a way out and then

help others to get out of the building.
Not just like treating burn victims,
going back into the building after you
found a way out and just staying in the
building treating burn victims, that
doesn't make a whole hell of a lot of
sense.

I mean, even assuming that these beings
are real after you found a way out, then
you come back in if you choose, if it
seems appropriate to you in your
infinite wisdom to find to go back into
the building and then like help others
get out of the building. But of course,
most of them don't even want to leave.
They'll just tell you to [_] off. It's

like, yeah, yeah, this supposed outside the building. Yeah, we're going to go out there. Or it could be even worse. Most people don't even want to leave the building even though it's on fire. So then you have like the the Lotus Sutra. I think I read it a long long time ago where the Buddha uses [clears throat] like these tricks to like trick people into leaving the building. you know, he he makes these carts pulled by different animals to attract people out of the burning building because they're they're just too [_] stupid to leave the burning building of their own valition without being tricked into leaving it. And

that's sort of like the skillful means
of the different schools of Buddhism.

[sighs]

Okay. So

yeah, I mean it's like you wake up from
the dream and then you go back to sleep
and lucid dream in order to be nice to
the dream beings. That's essentially

what it amounts to cuz this is not
ultimate reality. We are in the matrix.

It's not a computerenerated matrix. It's
just a mind generated matrix but it's
still a matrix.

So I mean if first of all just get
yourself liberated get get enlightened
and then in your wisdom you will be

better able to decide whether you should spend the rest of your life feeding hungry people for example.

But number numero uno is find your own way out of the burning building and then you can make your decisions. But don't make your decisions before you become enlightened because they're going to be unenlightened decisions.

They're going to be unwise, delusional decisions

about what you're going to do after you become enlightened.

Maybe you become enlightened, you realize, wow, that was a stupid idea.

So, let's This is like,

see, question 3B. How do I respond to

the critics that the Arant path is selfish? Well, I mean it's kind of ironic that the Arhant path is like dedicated to no self.

So like the system that teaches no self and the realization of no self is somehow selfish. I mean it may look selfish to other people because they might want something out of you.

And Paul Lo did say that if you really want to become enlightened to some degree you do have to be selfish to some degree. Like if if I just tried to please my parents, I I would have got married and had kids for my for my mother to spoil. My mother I mean she

wanted she wanted grandkids to spoil and I just wouldn't give her any. So that was kind of selfish, wasn't it? I just cared about my own spiritual welfare more than I cared about my mother's desire for grandkids to spoil.

Well, I mean, you can call that selfish.

Fine. I mean, people say the Buddha himself was selfish. he'd abandon his wife and child. Of course, they were living in a palace and you know they weren't hurting for food or anything but still it was just selfish. People say that like Hindus especially I think the Buddha was selfish but I mean to some degree I mean you find your own way out of the burning building is selfish

because you're not treating the [_]
burn victims and burning to death
yourself in the process. So, I mean, who
cares what critics say? I mean, critics
can say all kinds of things. Critics can
say that the Buddha himself was just
like an [_] who abandoned his own
family.

So, I mean, critics can say whatever the
hell they want to say, and critics are
going to criticize no matter what.

They're going to find fault with
anything.

But to some degree, like Paul Lo says, I
mean, you have to appear selfish anyway
because you have to get like finding a

way out of that burning building has to be top priority for yourself. I mean, you got to find your own way out of that burning building. I mean, you're not just going to find some way for somebody else to get out of the building because I mean, you could get out, too. So, it's in really, you got to find a way for yourself to get out of the building in order for you to find a way for anyone else to get out of the building.

And people can call that selfish because you could be treating those burn victims.

But I mean, so what?

So the proto monk has also asked another fourth question and it's let's see it's

about depression and renunciation. how
they appear to be the same thing because
you fail to find pleasure in in every
[clears throat] in just ordinary things
that usually you would find pleasure
from.

And I'm not going to go into detail. I
mean there's already proto monk has
asked lots of questions this time. Um
but I mean my experience of depression
is that my mind contracts. It's like I
am contracted.

that is like the main cause of
everything else. It's like expansion and
contraction of of the mind somehow
[clears throat] and when I'm like

contracted in a contracted state then
like when I was a monk trying to
meditate while in one of these
contracted mental states it was like
trying to balance a marble on the tip of
a sharpened pencil. was virtually
impossible and just had no interest in
dharma even you know just no interest in
much of anything just want to sleep more
that kind of thing
so I mean renunciation and depression
are not the same thing I mean you can
still be a joyful renunciant
but you can't really be joyfully
depressed as far as I know but this is
like like a very transgressive extra
question and that's about as far as I'm

going to get with it I'm going to move on to the next question because we've already like getting up towards two and a half hours anyway. There's quite a few questions like at least 40 questions this time. So the next question is from Edel Vice Voyager and Edelvvice Voy Voyager says [clears throat] is the encourageable quality of an itchantica comparable to the spiritual [laughter] state of animals given that as you mentioned previously it is extremely difficult for animals to accumulate sufficient merit and achieve rebirth in human form. Do you agree with the Mahayana teaching

that despite their unfortunate nature
these beings still contain
enlightenment? So, ichant
it's a Mahayana [clears throat]
term and it's based I mean the poly
equivalent of like the verb would be
itchi which means to desire to want. So
I assume that an nichant even though
it's a mahayana term means like a a
desirer. It's just a person who's just
wallowing in samsara. They're clueless
with regard to anything other than
samsara, which is really most people it
seems to me. I mean, even religious
people who go to church, I mean, still
they're just like stuck in samsara and
clueless to the fact that they are stuck

in samsara.

So,

let's see. Is this encourageable quality of a ichantica or desirer a person just wholeheartedly wallowing in samsara comparable to the spiritual state of animals? Um yeah yeah it is. I think it's just that even one of these desirers if they hit that crisis, you know, let's say that all of a sudden they get some terminal illness or, you know, just they lose everything, they hit rock bottom and still I mean it can just like slam them or they they have a near-death experience or something. It can just slam them into a higher state

of consciousness just against their will
like kicking and screaming
like something like what happened to
Ehart Tollah where he was just like in a
state of just selfdeional depression and
he just couldn't stand it and it just
just jolted him into a higher level of
consciousness. Whether he was an
Echantica beforehand or not, I I can't
say. But still, there's there's always
the potential. I mean, you'd have to be
really super messed up like like Jeffrey
Dawnmer or somebody like that or, you
know, let's say Caligula if the the
histories about him are true, you know,
or Elgabilus or you can just name any
any number of like Hollywood celebrities

or like musical celebrities, that kind of thing, who are just wholeheartedly just wallowing in some sorrow. you know, any number of Instagram thoughts, that kind of thing, that still even though they're clueless with regard to anything higher than the matrix, you know, they're definitely bluepilled, still I mean it's they still at least have the potential

presumably if they have the comma for it to eventually get redpilled or at least they can be they can be wallowing wholeheartedly on s in samsara but still be like benevolent. Just because you're wallowing wholeheartedly

in samsara doesn't mean that you're evil.

So I mean still they can be you know helping their neighbor you know they can you know feeling love in their heart you know they have a soft spot for puppies especially if they got like a round belly and the hiccups you know there's you know they still I mean they're not evil people so still you can be earning merit so they'd probably be in a better position than animals even if they're just wholeheartedly wallowing in some sorrow without being evil

But animals also I I I really do not accept the Buddhist idea that animals just can't earn merit or that it's very

difficult for animals to earn merit
because I mean even for a mother animal
to love her babies. I mean you could say
that's just animal instinct and so
forth. It's just automatic behavior. But
you could say the same thing with regard
to most human women. It's maternal
instinct.

So I mean it's still love.

I mean animals can still be nice to each
other especially social animals.

So

yeah, it's it's comparable to the
spiritual state of animals. Although
being a human and having like higher
level of consciousness or at least a

more expansive consciousness, you know, a kind of consciousness that is can has the potential to be more complicated and absorb more things and so forth. That still there's going to be greater potential for some experience to turn them around and wake them up.

like anguli mala in the texts. I mean he was a serial killer. I mean regardless of anything else he probably had some you know wholesome merit meritorious karma and all this but still he was literally a serial killer and still the Buddha was able to convert him to Buddhism and he just turned right around became a saintly renunciant monk and eventually became enlightened.

So maybe the ichantica would rule out people that really have this this karmic potential for, you know, turning themselves around because I really am not an expert on the term because it really is a Mahayana Buddhist term and I've I can't recall even coming across this term before. I had to look it up to see what it meant. Although ichidi is is a poly term that means to desire or to want.

So that's it's understandable. I'm pretty sure it means desirer.

And I would assume it means just someone wholeheartedly wallowing in samsara, wallowing in delusion, just clueless

that there's anything higher than this.

Unless maybe it's just some

anthropomorphic god sitting on a throne

in heaven just within the same system of

some sorrow just higher up.

So see the question

see do you agree with the Mahayana

teaching that despite their unfortunate

nature these beings can still attain

enlightenment? Well if Mahayana

teachings say that still these people

wholeheartedly wallowing in samsara can

still attain enlightenment then it

wouldn't rule out the people that have

the potential for that. So yeah why not?

I mean, it probably will take some kind

of just severe crisis just bashing them

in the head, you know, like a near-death experience or something, but still, I mean, that's probably what it would take in in more extreme cases. And even in probably most cases, the near-death experience just wouldn't wouldn't be enough or whatever the crisis is.

But that's that's kind of a tough question because I'm really not an authority on what Mahayana Buddhism says about it people.

So I'm just going to move on. Next question. This is from Ruie and Ruie says to go with the season and the decorations in your home.

Would you prefer a few words on the temptations of the Buddha and those of Jesus? Well, all we know is what tradition says. And even tradition doesn't say a whole lot about the temptations of the Buddha except when he's sitting under the bodhi tree and Mara's daughters are just being as voluptuous as they can manage trying to tempt the Buddha. So it wasn't I mean Mara was sending armies and so forth to try to distract the Buddha out of his meditation but Mara himself wasn't coming up to the Buddha and say why don't you just become like a wheel turning monarch and become king of the world that kind of thing like Satan was

apparently or allegedly doing to Jesus of Nazareth.

So the temptations of the Buddha apparently they were mainly sexual temptations plus just attempts at of Mara to just kind of distract him from from being in a deep meditative state.

>> [snorts]

>> So yeah, I but probably I mean in [snorts] reality the Buddha was experiencing other temptations just remembering his wife and child that kind of thing that could be a temptation or after striving and striving and striving and you know just practically killing himself and still not succeeding. You

know, there might have been the occasional thought of maybe I should just go back and be king of of Capilawatu or something, but yeah, I mean, mainly the temptations that you read about in the tradition are just sexual temptations of Mara's daughters being as voluptuous as they can manage and still failing to get the Buddha to just lose his concentration by directing his concentration onto them.

with regard to Jesus. He's out in the wilderness out in the desert, I assume. And Satan comes to him and is it's like cast yourself off the top of the the mountain or um turn these turn

these rocks into bread and feed the
people

or you become king of the world. And you
know that was more of a the kind of
temptations that I mean besides the
sexual ones that a person might
experience at least I mean become king
of the world I mean you know that that
would be a temptation for a lot of
people just becoming a Roman emperor was
a huge temptation for a lot of Roman men
obviously even though they knew in all
likelihood they weren't going to survive
more than about two years after becoming
emperor especially during like what the
third century turnover rate for emperors

was really high in the 3rd century
when there was no shortage of men
wanting to be emperor just because of
power and glory and herums of beautiful
girls and so forth.

[sighs]

So yeah, I'm just going with tradition
because that's really all we can know. I
mean this all we have to see that isn't
just lost in the obscurity of time. The
Buddha was mainly tempted by sex and he
succeeded in resisting that temptation.
Jesus was tempted just first becoming
king of the world by Satan. Satan was
going to make him king of the world or
something something along those lines.
It's been a while since I've read the

New Testament. And then there was something about uh kind of like what the protose monk was saying. You know, it's like you know why renounce the world? You can turn these stones into bread and feed the masses. which I can't remember why Jesus turned that one down. And then uh

I think Satan took him up on top of a mountain to look down at the world and says something like cast yourself off and the the mountain and the angels will catch you. And then I think Jesus says, you know, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

[clears throat]

But uh yeah, I mean it was different
different kinds of temptations, I guess.
But I assume [clears throat] in reality
that their temptations would be fairly
similar because they were men, you know,
human beings with, you know, human
nature and so forth. So probably both of
them would have experienced some sexual
temptation before their
experience and also they might have some
temptations to just rejoin the world and
you know just make an honest living that
kind of thing instead of you know why am
I doing this [__] to myself.
So, let's see. That was a few words.
That's Ruy only asked for a few words
and so that was that was more than a

few. That was lots of words. So, I'm just going to move on to this question. This is from Ethiopian fake TIG. And Ethiopian fake Tig says, "Would you have had a kid if you have lived a normal life, and if so, how many? Or do you have any anti-natalist stance?" Well, like I was saying earlier, um you know, back in the 80s when I was a young man, um it was it just seemed like the world was obscenely overpop populated. You know, I was I was moving towards a degree in ecology at the time. If I had not become a monk, I probably would have gone to grad school and majored in like marine ecology or something.

And it just seemed like the world was just grotesqually overpopulated. And also, you know, there's always this threat of nuclear Armageddon and all these other things. And it's like, is it really responsible to bring a child in this world when you don't know what the world's going to be like 20 years from now? But in retrospect, if I knew then what I know now, I'd know that there's no real overpopulation crisis like people were saying, like the alarmists were saying. There's no real I mean, there was still the threat of nuclear war, but it just never happened. this global warming thing is even less of a threat than the nuclear Armageddon

thing. I mean, that's the the global warming thing is is largely just uh an attempt at just getting a foot in the door for glo like world government through international regulatory commissions and so forth. It seems to me

so I mean it would depend on the woman. Like I'd get married and it would depend on my wife's desire for children too. I mean nowadays I if I look back on it I think it'd probably be kind of a good thing to have children.

But I mean it's not absolutely necessary obviously because I've gotten this far without doing that. But I mean,

[clears throat]

if if I knew then what I know now,
um there's a good chance I'd settle
down, find my sweetheart earlier, and we
might have kids together and, you know,
I would have invested in Amazon stock
early on, buy some bought some Bitcoin
and have hundreds of millions of dollars
and just get a like a square mile of
forest land and set up a little house in
the middle and
lots of aquariums or something.
horses maybe.

So yeah, I'm I mean nowadays you see
that the overpopulation crisis and in
the 70s and 80s they're talking about
the world is too overpop populated.

Billions of people are going to be like
starving and be worldwide famine and on
and on and now it's like the opposite.

It's like especially the West is just
dying out or Korea also South Korea I
think they've got one of the lowest
reproductive rates of any country.

Japan.

But I mean, it's not going to they're
not just going to go extinct, you know?

It's just going to dwindle down till you
get to this nucleus of the people who
breed like bunnies and then it's just
going to go back up again.

Huh. So, yeah. I mean, there is a good
chance if if I lived a a normal life, I

would have had kids. Although, I didn't want kids when I was younger. But if I knew then what I know now, there's a good chance I would have kids. But I remember when I was a monk, especially a young monk, the one time I was happiest that I was a monk. This not with regard to like deep bliss and satisfaction, but just sort of a superficial joy that I'm not a that I am a monk is when I would every time I'd hear a screaming baby.

You know, I'd be walking through the village going for alms and then you hear some baby crying in one of these bamboo huts and then you hear this exasperated female voice, you know, saying bathe they don't. It's like what is it now?

This kind of thing. Then I would just be thrilled that I was a monk because the sound of screaming babies is I've never liked the sound of screaming babies.

I remember when I was like in my 20s, I had these two friends. They were like party animals and then they kind of settled down and had kids and I mean I I became friends with them back when we were all party animals together and then they have kids and it's like one was like one was like three and the other one was like four or something two and four something like that and they would cry about every 30 minutes but it wasn't completely in

sync. So sometimes one of them would be crying like at 15minute intervals from the other one and then every once in a while they'd get into sync and they'd both be crying at the same time and I'd just be like sitting on the couch just like my eyes bulging out just kind of like my head and my hands just you know and Carol the the the mother of the children would look at me and just kind of laugh and poor David

because I mean they were they were numb to it you know they were used to it. it was every day for them. So, I guess if you become a parent, you just first of all, you're kind of doped up on parenthood hormones that kind of gives

you resistance or something.

But

yeah, there's a good chance it would it would depend on various circumstances and I'd have to know then at least a little bit of what I know now.

But yeah, I might have kids, might have four kids,

but who knows? It's all it's all academic because it it's it's just kind of dealing with a sort of alternate fantasy world. So, I'm just going to move on to Ethiopian fake Tig's next question,

which is if you timetraveled back to the Buddhist time, do you think it would be

just like how the myth said, or do you think he would just be an ordinary person that knows Dharma? Well, well, that's a false dichotomy. I don't think I'd pick either one. I don't think it would be just how the myth said because then the Buddha would be like 27 feet tall and all this kind of stuff. He would have the 32 marks of the the Maha Poresa which are would be impossible to all be on the same person at the same time. So that'd be just like literally impossible.

Um but I don't think he was just like some ordinary guy. Like I I knew this one person who had been a monk for about 13 years and then dropped out and then

became sort of like an anti-B Buddhist
and he told me once or maybe more than
once that in his opinion the Buddha was
just sort of like an ancient Joseph
Goldstein

was like an ancient Dharma teacher
[clears throat] but I don't think either
one of those is likely. I think he was a
sage. I mean he was I mean if if
enlightenment is possible in this world
then he'd be a prime example of of a
candidate for that but it I mean within
a samsar context there's sort of a
paradox of you know how how are you
fully enlightened within the context of
samsara and so forth but yeah I mean he

was a sage I don't think he was just
like a an ancient jack cornfield

So yeah, I mean I a long time ago I sort
of came up with this theme for like a
science fiction short story of a time
machine going back to the Buddhist time.

And you'd have like [clears throat]
this this woman who gets to go in the
time machine because she's famous for
writing books like how to awaken the
Buddha within this kind of stuff like a
self-help guru. Then you'd have like the
uh like the Burmese seat, traditionalist
Burmese seat. He'd get to go to go visit
the Buddha. And then you'd have like a
Richard Gomer type, like some academic
Buddhistic scholar.

And then you'd have [clears throat] um
like just the technician running the
time machine. You know, he's you know,
the the lab assistant who's been trained
on how to work the time machine. He'd
have to go, too. So the the woman who
wrote the book, you know, how to awaken
the Buddha within, she all of a sudden
gets sick right before and she can't go.
You know, there's there's going to be
like an implication that she's just
having like a panic attack. She can't
dare to face the Buddha. This kind of
thing. So you have the smug academic
scholar, the the staunchly
faithoriented seat and the humble

technician go back in time and they see this they go to I mean they're asking where to where to find the Buddha. The the seat is amazed that nobody can understand his poly. So the the smug academic uh scholar you know he knows more how to pronounce the language more correctly. It's not pure poly, you know, he's speaking like muggedy, this kind of thing. So, he's having to act as an interpreter. So, he wants to meet the Buddha. They they say he's he's over there. So, they go and they see this this scy looking guy. He's got stubble. He looks like a normal person. Got stubble. Maybe he's got like a fly crawling on the side of his head. He's

wearing rags. Maybe doesn't smell very good. And the seat is indignant. He's That can't be the Buddha. He's not 27 feet tall and he just stomps off in a huff, refuses to even talk to him. But I mean, it really is the Buddha. It's go to my Buddha. He's just an aesthetic. He's a man who hasn't bathed in two weeks, got a fly crawling on his head. And so the academic scholar goes and has this smug conversation, mainly just sort of asking questions um and kind of kind of bragging about his his own theories and so forth. And the Buddha really doesn't get very far with him because the academic scholars his mind is all

full of these ideas of you know academic theories and so forth. And then he politely excuses himself because he he also wants to go talk with Macau Gosala and they're on a limited schedule. And so off he goes with this smug smile on his face. And so finally [clears throat] they're ready to go back in into the future again. And where's the technician? Where's this humble ordinary technician guy that they're looking around, they find that he is like on his knees in front of the Buddha, you know, he's just like begging for, you know, he wants to go forth from the home into homelessness, this kind of thing.

So the the techni or the the technician

just stays and becomes a monk whereas
the [clears throat] the faith-oriented
seat can't won't even go close to the
Buddha because he thinks it's not the
real Buddha because he looks like an
ordinary scy

like aesthetic and then the smug scholar
he's just full of his own ideas and he
doesn't care

but how does that have anything to do if
I time travel to the Buddhist times

Yeah, I think I mean, yeah, he he'd be
uh an enlightened sage, but he wouldn't
be 27 feet tall or anything like that.

And I'm just going to move on to the
next question after I hijacked that

question by just talking about my own idea for a science fiction short story. So, Ethiopian fake Tigs, next question. I spent a lot of time alone and I'm very anti the idea that mastering Janna is going to give me superpowers. Spending time alone weakens one's ego and identity and I don't want to believe anything my mind tells me how did you manage to stay sane in Burma when you were alone and meditating a lot because it can feel very weird and a lot of stuff can happen to the mind where you begin to have weird thoughts. Well, I mean the purpose of being a monk is to go sane.

You know, [snorts] practicing dharma

makes you more sane. You're observing your mind, you're observing like the the foibless of it and so forth. It is true that if you live alone for a long time, you can start drifting away from normality. I mean, you might be a really good meditator, but you're going to be eccentric, too. So, that happens. I I've acquired the habit of of just talking to myself. You know, when I'm at work, sometimes I'll just be talking to myself. There's a lot of people that look like they're talking to themselves, but they got like earbuds and they're talking on the phone. I don't have the earbuds. It's just a habit. It's like a

human instinct

even in like babies that [clears throat]

can't speak English yet or speak any

language yet that you just want to

speak. And if you don't have people to

talk to, you'll talk to dogs, you'll

talk to lizards, you talk to yourself.

It's just it just happens, you It's just

kind of a stereotype of the the the

hermit, you know, the misanthropic

hermit living out in the desert in

Arizona or something who's just like

muttering to himself all the time.

So I mean there is that if you're not

careful and you don't have any feedback

from others like a like a teacher like a

wise friend then you can start drifting

in weird directions just through isolation and no feedback kind of helping it keep you on the straight and narrow so to speak of like normal humanity. But at the same time, if you're doing deep meditation, I mean, you're going sane more than you're you're you're going weird.

[snorts] So, I mean, I'm just a loner by nature. I really am self-sufficient for the most part. I've never really needed human companionship, and I I really do not really love the human race as much as the average person does.

So I mean it was just in harmony with my nature and it's one of the best reasons

for becoming a monk. Desire for enlightenment ironically is not the best reason for becoming a monk. One of the best reasons I mean a better reason than just desire for enlightenment is just the the consideration that it's like your sacred duty to strive for enlightenment if you're able to. I mean that I think would be a better better reason than this desire for something that you cannot possibly understand until you get there anyway. But another possible [clears throat] better reason for becoming a monk is or a good reason for becoming a monk is just living a life of solitude and quietness and simplicity is just in harmony with your

nature.

You're introspective. You're not a socially oriented person. You don't require comfort. You know, you're kind of auster austere by nature. than just going alone, just camping in the wilderness for the rest of your life. I mean, that is is a fairly good reason for being a monk if it's just the lifestyle is in harmony with your character, which was pretty much the case in my case, although I remained stubbornly heterosexual in my like animal my human nature and I just got as far as I could with it. And so after several years of of

stagnation as a monk, I decided to try something else.

[snorts] So

I mean, Janna could give you superpowers anyway.

But see, spending time alone weakens one's ego and identity. Yeah, that's that's that's one of the points of it. You're not getting it reinforced.

And the ego is illusion. It's like the the root of all delusion and suffering is the conceit. I am.

So you don't want to believe anything your mind tells you. Then you practice intensive mindfulness meditation and you just observe mental states arising and passing away, which you can do better if

you're living alone in a cave.

So there's certain give and take, but the positives seem to outweigh the negatives. Unless you just are a social being, you require comfort and you just need human feedback in order to keep you from going nuts. In which case, you're better off not becoming a solitary renunciant recluse monk.

And I'm just going to move on to the next question because, yeah, we're getting kind of close to the bottom. We don't have very many questions to go.

So, it might be a little over three hours, but we're not going to set any records this time.

>> [sighs]

>> But just to make sure that it goes at least three hours, I will mention that two days ago at work, I became a cartoon character temporarily and that I was walking across the dock carrying a piece of plywood and all of a sudden my feet just shoot out from under me. I land on my backside with this loud bang from the plywood hitting the floor next to me.

And I'm thinking, what could have been that slippery? What could I have stepped in? I'm thinking must be a puddle of oil or transmission fluid or something. And I looked down and there's a banana peel. I had stepped on a banana peel just like in the cartoons.

And there was this only one other person saw it at work. He was this really silent guy. He doesn't talk hardly at all. If he has to say something, he does. But for the most part, he's just like silent poker face at work. And he was he was literally laughing. It's the only time I ever saw that guy laugh is after I slipped on a banana peel. So, it works. The site gag works in real life. But getting back to Raphael here and his question, Raphael says, "Are you informed about the current conflict between Cambodia and Thailand? Is it fair to say that it is absolutely insane that Buddhist soldiers fight each other

and die over an ancient Hindu temple?

Well, they're probably not fighting each other and dying over literally over an ancient Hindu temple. I mean, I really don't know the details about the conflict between Cambodia and Thailand other than Donald Trump has bragged about ending that war.

Um, but I mean generally, I mean, Buddhist countries have fought against each other. Burma and Thailand, Burma and Syiam as it used to be called. I mean, they were like arch enemies. They were sort of like England and France or Sparta and Athens, you know, they were just arch enemies, but I mean, mainly they were fighting over territory,

you know, that's that's a political thing. You know, the Hindu temple thing maybe I mean, they don't really care that it's a Hindu temple so much as, you know, it could be valuable property, valuable addition to their territory if they haven't acquired it yet. that kind of thing. So, you know, most most wars are fought over like territory.

You know, even the Trojan War, you know, is supposed to be Helen of Troy, the face that launched a thousand ships and all that, but Helen of Troy had been I mean, she'd been abducted or eloped with what was his name? Paris for it was like 10 years or something

before the Greeks decided, well, we better go and avenge this outrage. I mean, probably it was Troy was right there on the shipping lanes, you know, from the Black Sea into the AGN Sea and so it was territory or just control of shipping lanes in this case or I mean that was the beginning of the Bronze Age collapse. So, it was just the fashion to be sacking other cities and acquiring their their loot, their booty.

And uh I think the Christmas tree just went out. It's on an automatic timer.

So,

am I informed about the current conflict between Cambodia and Thailand? Not very. Is it fair to say that absolutely insane

for Buddhist soldiers fight each other
and die over an ancient Hindu temple?

Well, you have to be insane to be uh
like in samsara. Anyway,

old old poly saying pujino um which
means the common person is insane.

But it's it's just the standard like
politics. I really don't think they care
that if it's a Hindu temple or not. It's
just valuable territory. That would be
my guess.

And [clears throat]

I mean it's whether you're Buddhist or I
mean Christians you read the Christian
Bible and it's like turn the other
cheek, you know, it's like you're not

supposed to be violent. And then there's Christians have been like fighting wars forever. Ever since there's been Christian or ever since they got into power, there's been Christian holy wars and just Christian Christians fighting each other over territory.

So yeah, it's it's insane. I'm going to move on to Raphael's next question. Your opinion on those tweets. Apparently a Korean Oh, okay. He says, "Your appear opinion on those tweets." And then he just sent like a screenshot of some two tweets made by someone with a Korean name. I mean, they maybe they aren't really Korean. I don't know. They or maybe they're just into Korean Buddhism

or something. But this person, apparently a Korean Buddhist, was referring to a Jataka story in which the bodhisattva kills a murderer on a boat who presumably was going to kill the other people on the boat. And then this person claims that the bodhisattva actually did good karma and that killing compassionately is good. And I think this is a Mahayana Jataka story and the Mahayana were kind of going like a more tantric route than the Theravada or the Tibetan Buddhists. I don't think it's I mean I could be wrong but I don't think it's in the Theravada Buddhist like the Pali Jaticas because the Buddha just would

not do this. I mean the bodhic sata
maybe and but then he'd like go to hell
for it.

[sighs and gasps]

So the idea is if you kill a murderer
that's actually good and not bad but
according to Buddhist ethics it just
doesn't work that way at all. At least
not terra Buddhist ethics. I mean, you
could like tie him up, incapacitate him,
something like that. That wouldn't be so
bad, you know, just capture him and
shackle him for the authorities to deal
with. I mean, that would probably be the
enlightened thing to do.

So, yeah, I mean, this is just opening a
can of Mahayana Buddhist worms. It seems

to me

that I mean from the point of view of Buddhist ethics, killing is one of the worst things you can possibly do and you're better off just not doing it. And if some murderer kills other people, that's on them. Just to stand there and do nothing is morally neutral.

>> [sighs]

>> So, I mean, the the terravada Buddhist answer to the the proverbial trolley problem, you know, you got the the trolley car on the tracks heading towards 10 people tied to the tracks and all you got to do is pull a lever and it'll divert the trolley car. Instead of

squishing those 10 people, it'll only squish one person on these other tracks. And what's the ethical thing to do from the Buddhist point of view? You just don't do anything. It's going to squish those 10 people. Well, it's not on you. It's just that the West has this utilitarian ethic that is just alien to Buddhism. And so, a lot of even Western Buddhists just cannot wrap their head around Buddhist ethics. They just don't get it. They just do not realize that you're living in a dream world of your own creation and that what you do is good or bad depending on your own mental states. So, I mean, technically, you could say

that you kill one person in order to
save 100 people. Then you're doing some
good, but you're also doing some evil.

And for someone striving for
enlightenment, you're better off doing
neither good nor evil.

Because good is just good karma, which
keeps you in samsara. It may land you in
a heaven realm, but it's still in
samsara. You do evil, that's bad karma.

It's just lands you in more samsara
either way. But if you do nothing, you
just observe

like with equanimity

literally means just looking upon then
that is just ethically neutral so long

as your your mental states are neutral.

So, I mean, in some cases, and I've I've discussed this before, that especially a lay person, if you're not a monk, you're not totally committed to being a saint anyhow, then you may choose, as is your right, to take a moral hit.

You know, you think, well, I'm going to make some bad karma by killing this guy, but still,

it's worth it in order to save those hundred other people. And that's your choice to make.

You're still going to be doing bad karma by doing it, but it's you have the right to make that choice.

[clears throat]

So, I'm just going to go on to the next question, I guess. But I do not think that that is a terra Buddhist story.

The next question is from Newman.

And Newman says, "Is life in the world the existential equivalent to scrolling?"

like doom scrolling I think and monk life is logging off. No, I think monk life is just you're you got a very simplified app and uh you're not scrolling as much or you're just scrolling like

a lot of it is just the same post over and over again like a mantra just om.

But until you become enlightened you're

not logged off.

So I mean it's it's just a kind of a loose kind of arbitrary analogy I think. Is life in the world the existential equivalent to scrolling or doom scrolling to some degree? Yeah. I mean it's just doom scrolling is just a symptom of you know people do it so much because it's just in accordance with human nature. You just want you know more and more stimulation. It's just an easy way of getting stimulation and like dopamine hits or whatever it is.

So monk life and you definitely I mean you're still I mean if life for an ordinary person is scrolling then being a monk would still be scrolling it would

just be like a much reduced simplified
kind of scrolling

and logging off would be enlightenment I
suppose or at least part of nibbana
would be logging off

huh that is kind of a strange question
though I'm just going to move on to the

next question this is from Cyrus frame
name and Cyrus frame says I have found
sankara a difficult concept to get my

head around. I am particularly

interested in it as a dharma in the five
aggregates of of the sipatana. It seems

to be composed of volition emotions and
habits. Calling it mental formation

suggests it is things that is nouns but

maybe it is better to see its components as verbs rather than nouns. So processes, but a process is still a noun, isn't it? For example, perhaps volition is a process more than a thing. What do you think? Okay. Well, yeah. I mean, first of all, dividing things up into like verbs and nouns or like subject and predicate in a sentence is just an arbitrary like grammatical thing. It's it's not really reflective of reality that you have to have like like form and function separate from each other. But form and function are not separate from each other. They're I mean it's right there in the it's part of the same thing. So dividing it up

into the noun and the verb or the subject and the predicate or whatever that's just grammar. It's not reflective of reality. It's just a quirk of human human psychology.

So sankara

[clears throat] in the sutas sankara

I mean sankara has different meanings

like sab sankara duka all things are

conducive to suffering. Sankara there it

just means anything samsaric

anything conditioned anything with a a

cause anything with a beginning and an

end that would be a sankara in that

case. But sankara the the the

aggregate of sankara

which is one of the five aggregates
which composes a human being then
according to the sutas that's will
that's essentially your volition and
essentially your karma although
according to abidama and the abidama
commentarial tradition then you've got
52 mental states that are ultimately
real and for some reason the Buddha
divided about
sya or perception and let's see
or feeling those those two and the other
50 are all sankara the other 50 mental
states but that is just a commentarial
thing and I really do think that it's
volition that some caracanda is will
also karma and then I mean one One of

the first

the first Buddhist philosophical essay I ever wrote was caused by me trying to figure out which comes first the the perception or the volition. Like for example, you start to notice something. So you perceive something but I mean you have to draw your attention to it before you can really really perceive it. But why would you draw your attention to it before you'd perceived it? So it's like how does that work? I was sitting in this cave trying to figure it out and I happened to read uh it was like volume two of Buddhist logic by some early Russian Buddhistic scholar named

Cherbatsky who made this statement just in passing. I think it was like in a footnote or something about just sort of the arbitrary division between a thing and its function. You know the the noun and the verb. And then it just dawned on me that really perception and volition. They're just two functions of the same thing. It's like wind and blowing. You can't have blowing without wind. You can't have wind without blowing or light and shining. Light is a noun. Shining is a verb, but you can't have light without shining. And you can't have shining without light. I mean, they're just necessarily just the same.

And that's the way I it just kind of

dawned on me. Perception and volition
are like the same kind of thing.

That perception is just sort of like the
noun aspect or the spatial aspect or the
like the static aspect and volition is
more like the verb aspect, you know,
the kinetic aspect of the same the same
phenomenon.

And so Schopenhauer had the world as will
and representation which is samsara as
chidana and sya.

So

let's see did I answer the question
calling it mental formation suggesting
it is things that is nouns but maybe it
is better to see its components as

verbs. I mean dividing the noun and the verb is just this artificial grammatical distinction that's just a peculiarity of of human psychology.

I mean to say that it's a a verb rather than a noun. So it's a process. But process is a noun too.

So perhaps valition is a process more than a thing. What do you think? Yeah, I think it's like the the verb aspect of perception

and perception is the noun aspect of volition. You know, a thing and its behavior. You cannot separate a thing and its behavior especially if just sitting there motionless is a kind of behavior.

So it's this whole kind of thinking has
I mean it kind of played hob with the
idea like I think it was Mahatma Gandhi
said you don't hate the sinner you just
hate the sin but you cannot
differentiate the two you cannot
differentiate like pole pot from what he
did because his behavior was pull pot
too.

So yeah, I think you could probably
tease out an answer to your question in
all the verbiage I just spewed. And I'm
just going to move on to the very last
question. By golly, it's been more than
three hours. This is from Snore Locos.
And Snore Locos says, "It's long been a

tradition to tell ghost stories on Christmas Eve. Would you kindly also Burmese ghost stories and ghost stories? I mean, my favorite Buddhist ghost story is from the Paw Watu. I've already told it a number of times. I won't I won't belabor it by telling the same story, but it's about this woman who was unfaithful to her husband one time. She was a devout Buddhist woman, very virtuous, but she was unfaithful to her husband one time. And worse than that, when he called her out on it or he found out or heard a rumor about it or something, she lied and swore up and down that she was not unfaithful to him. And that was even

worse than being unfaithful to him from the ethical point of view of this story. So she winds up because she was a virtuous woman. Aside from that one incident, she winds up like a terrestrial dava or goddess living in the foothills of the Himalayas in this palatial compound with celestial trees and all this stuff. Beautiful, living thousands of years. But every night she would go into like this trance state and go down to the the lotus pool in front of the mansion and this big dog would devour her. The bones would fall into the pond where they would reconstitute into the woman. She'd climb out, go back

up to bed and go to sleep until the next night and it would just every night this would happen. And that's kind of the way Buddhist ghosts can be. You know, it's there's a continuum of ghosts at one end and like gods at the other. And so the highest ghost and the lowest god are just right up against each other. It may be very hard to tell the difference.

But I mean the hungry ghosts that's a kind of a different different aspect of ancient Indian philosophy that's I mean the idea of hungry ghosts where they've got a huge belly and a tiny mouth or a huge mouth and a tiny belly so they can never be satisfied. that comes from ancestor worship and it was originally

ancestors

fathers pas I mean the word the word for
ghost in Buddhism literally means father
pa or pa in Sanskrit

it's the ancestors that were not given
food offerings you know in ancient
Indian ancestor worship you don't you
don't sustain your ancestors they go
hungry they become hungry ghosts

But

with regard to my own personal life, I
apparently was able to see a ghost when
I was a little when I was a toddler. I
vaguely remember just barely remember
like this was like when I was like three
or four years old where we lived in a

house where this lady had died in the house before my father bought the house. And apparently I could see the lady and she never spoke to me, but she there was just this older lady wearing like a a print dress and she was just smile at me. She apparently liked little kids. Go figure. Why do why do old ladies like little kids? I don't know. But she apparently liked me. I mean, she didn't scare me or anything. I was too young to be scared. But I would explain to my father about the lady I keep seeing. and he'd ask me what she looked like and I would say and he he was like asking the neighbors and found out that you know I was fairly well describing the lady that

used to live there and so on and so forth. My father firmly believed in ghosts. He used to do seances and Snorlo may have heard me talking about uh the seance tape I listened to a few times when I was a kid of my father and my mother who were attending the seance. And uh so [clears throat] he could he could he said that he had seen ghosts a few times, but when he would see a ghost, he said that he'd seen a ghost a few times, but it was always just sort of like this hazy white shape in the room. And ghosts apparently cause coldness in the room. And it would seem like the closest you're going to

get to a scientific explanation for that is they have to absorb energy to kind of maintain their existence. So they're kind of sucking the heat out of the room in order to use that heat energy just to maintain their manifestation in this version of existence or some such. He did have one of those nightmares or I mean sometimes it's called a ghost. I think a lot of people do believe them to be ghosts where you know you kind of wake up in the night and there's like this angry dark being kind of holding you down like pushing you down on the bed. It's a it's a common nightmare. I've read about this in like a psychology book before. But I mean that

could be just a common sort of
archetypal nightmare or it could be some
kind of spirit like my father thought it
was. He thought it was the former owner
of this other house that that he was
living in at the time. My little brother
used to see a ghost. It was called he
just called him the man and he was a
black man. And [clears throat] my father
was asking um asking him questions about
the man and so forth. And at one of the
seances he went to he was talking to
Uncle Henry who was [clears throat] he
was like formerly a slave of my
greatgrandfather
or some such and then after the slaves

were freed then he just became like a member of the family. He, you know, he was sort of like the butler or something. You know, he's he was free, but he chose to still live there. And he was the only person who would stand up to my great-grandfather, call him Baptist. His his middle name was Baptist.

He [clears throat] was the only person who could get away with calling him Baptist to his face. And so my father asked because my brother my little brother when he's a kid would see see this this man, you know, it's someone's going to sit down in a chair and oh, don't sit there. the man is sitting

there and you could I think most people
would say it's just a little kid's
imagination that he's just kind of
taking too seriously but if you could
see the man at night he'd get he'd be
he'd start yelling he'd be scared during
the daytime it was fine but at night my
brother was afraid of the dark he'd have
to have a nightlight and everything so
my father at this seance uncle Henry
comes through and my father says I mean
have you been around our house lately
and and Uncle Henry says yes and he says
I'd appreciate it if if you kind of
don't don't come around the house too
much cuz you're scaring the hell out for

my little kid. So then my brother stopped seeing the man after that. But I mean whether that's a real ghost or not or whether it's just you know tricks of human psychology that's anyone can decide for themselves I suppose.

Most like Burmese ghosts they're more of the monstrous type. Um you know they they kind of take the the whole pa you know the Buddhist lower realm idea um more literally I guess.

But uh in Burma, the asane is uh considered to be the worst or the most dangerous kind of ghost. And an asane is someone who dies a violent or otherwise unnatural death. And the religion of the Burmese before they converted to

Buddhism was the Nat cult. It was like
30 gnats. And a natn comes from the the
poly word nata which means like lord.
But they were like small G gods that
were a sane. They were they were humans
in their previous life and they died
like this violent or unnatural death and
they became powerful like terrestrial
gods. You know you just did not violate
their taboos in their territory, that
sort of thing. Like there's like lord of
the lord of the white elephant or
something like that is one of these
gnats that the Burmese a lot of them
still take seriously and it's like you
can't travel with a certain number of

people.

It's like he doesn't like six people or something like that that are traveling together. So in the case that you got just for whatever reason six people all traveling through this territory of Lord of the white elephant or lord of the white horse or whatever his name is then you you like pick up a rock before you leave. You invite the rock to come with you and that becomes like the seventh passenger and then you can sort of not break the taboo by doing that. But you can still see like Nat shrines in Burma and Thailand from like the pre pre Buddhist animism. And but then when the Burmese converted to Buddhism, they uh

they just made Saka, king of gods, like the headnat, a leader of all the other gnats. And then that kind of incorporated him incorporated the NAT cult into Buddhism.

But yeah, the Burmese are definitely more afraid of ghosts in general than than like western people are. Like there's a cemetery I had to walk through to get to Layier Village. And some people would just they'd be afraid. It was just a road going through there, a dirt road. Some people just be afraid to go through there alone or at night. I had one uh female supporter who she had to come in at night to tell

me something. There was some sort of information she had to tell me. I don't remember what it was, but I mean she was just obviously terrified, you know. I mean, Burby's villagers tend to be pretty brown. Their complexion is is fairly brown, but I mean, she was just ashen looking. She was so scared having to go through that cemetery at night. Even though most of them have never seen a ghost or any such thing, but they definitely believe in them. Same is true in Thailand.

But uh none of these are really the kind of ghost stories that Snore Locos was asking for, I assume, other than me maybe seeing seeing the lady when I was

three or four years old. But, uh, I guess that's the best you're going to have to deal with because we've been going for three hours and 19 minutes according to this. And I need to do other things. I suppose I should I should do other things. So, I guess this will this will be good. And uh like I should always say at the beginning and practically never do. If you got any questions you think I can answer, especially about dharma, you know, terra Buddhism, early Buddhism, meditation, just philosophy in general, maybe. I mean, the farther away you get from Terravada Buddhism and early Buddhism,

the less likely I'll be able to give an intelligent answer. Uh maybe some Western philosophy or just me personally, that kind of thing. That's I I'm on fairly firm ground with regard to some of that, but uh no more than three questions and count those question marks. If you've got what you consider to be one question, but there's four question marks distributed throughout the paragraph, then in all likelihood that would really be four questions, wouldn't it?

And uh look at the uh URL links below.

Special shout out to Hans who made a very generous donation to the cause earlier today or maybe just yesterday. I

just didn't see it in my email till today. And uh like and subscribe if you have not done so already. Consider obtaining one of my books if you like my teachings because I'm more coherent in my writing than in my speaking. I don't say uh um you know like kind of stuff when I'm writing nearly as much as when I'm speaking impromptu.

And like and subscribe. I think I already said that. And be happy.